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Celtic Tiger, Hidden Tales: Living Stories of Career Success for Community Employment Scheme Participants: a Critical Interpretive Analysis

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Celtic Tiger, Hidden Tales:

Living Stories of Career Success for Community Employment Scheme Participants

– A Critical Interpretive Analysis

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Dublin Institute of Technology

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School of Marketing in the College of Business

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Abstract

**Celtic Tiger, Hidden Tales: Living Stories of Career Success for
Community Employment Scheme Participants – A Critical Interpretive Analysis**
Sue Mulhall

This dissertation explores how Community Employment scheme participants (former non-employed individuals on active labour market programmes) construct and interpret their career experiences in changing micro-individual and macro-social contexts.

It finds that the former non-employed are largely excluded from career success research. My qualitative study argues that this omission has resulted in a gap in the career and career success literature and research, as there is a dearth of inquiries on the former non-employed. This in-depth analysis addresses this limitation. I contribute to the careers field by demonstrating the complexity and variability of an underrepresented group's career (re)constructions through providing a more holistic analysis than previous inquiries by integrating micro and macro positions to appreciate how the participants (re)construct their career identity in an ever-evolving environment.

The study adopts a criticalist and constructivist ontology and a critical hermeneutic and critical interpretive epistemology. It employs a narrative research strategy (understands experience in a person's life through their stories), collecting the data through episodic interviews to explore the career success stories of 27 participants.

Using the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space (an approach for restorying field texts) allows me to work through the narratives interpretivistically. It permits me to identify a critical moment in each of the participants' lives, a moment over which they had varying degrees of control, represented by a choice/fate continuum, e.g., bereavement, illness or altering family responsibilities. I chart their critical moments onto the cornerstones of the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space, and then plot their reactions to these moments, including their evaluation of the outcome of their career experiences (objective and/or subjective factors), and their perception of their agency, or otherwise, over these experiences (fateful or fatalistic responses). Four different strategies of career (re)construction are distinguished. I also describe the impact of one primary structural influence on their career (re)construction strategies, respectively. To understand the participants' change process, Giddens' fateful moment is operationalised by cross-referencing each person's critical moment, career (re)construction strategy and primary structural influence, with the eight principal elements of the fateful moment. The participants' interpretations of their career experiences during periods of discontinuity are also revealed.

The research makes three contributions: (1) fusing career theory with narrative inquiry within a systems framework to develop the Three-Dimensional Career Success Inquiry Systems Framework; (2) proposing seven categories of career success for the sample; and (3) recommending that a career should be synonymous with life career development, entailing one's whole life, not just that which is occupationally orientated. The necessity to incorporate the multifaceted, micro-dynamics of career and identity to comprehend career (re)construction for individuals, in addition to the requirement to take account of structural influences in narrative inquiry in the field of career research, is underlined from the findings.

Declaration

I certify that this thesis, which I now submit for examination for the award of Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others, save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

This thesis was prepared according to the regulations for postgraduate study by research of the Dublin Institute of Technology and has not been submitted in whole or in part for another award in any Institute.

The work reported on in this thesis conforms to the principles and requirements of the Institute's guidelines for ethics in research.

The Institute has permission to keep, lend or copy this thesis in whole or in part, on condition that any such use of the material of the thesis is duly acknowledged.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

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In particular, I would like to thank the three people involved in supervising this research. Eoghan O'Grady commenced the voyage with me, but unfortunately had to disembark in early 2010. Thank you, Eoghan, for helping me to formulate my initial thoughts and ideas. I would like to greatly acknowledge Dr. Paul Donnelly and Dr.

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On a personal level, there are four people I want to specifically mention: two who set me on a particular path and two who helped me to remain on that sometimes rugged road. My parents, Ann and Dave Mulhall, raised me in an environment where education was a taken-for-granted reality of my existence. What was not taken-for-granted, however, was knowledge, as I was brought up to question existing dogma and challenge conventional orthodoxy. The product of my upbringing is, I believe, evident in this piece of research. Finally, the two most important people in my life, Mark Campbell (my husband) and Claire Campbell (my daughter), hold a special place in the framing, researching and writing up of this study. They inspired me when I doubted myself, encouraged me when I flagged and provided a sympathetic ear when required. Most of all, they both demonstrated unstinting and unwavering love and support throughout the entire journey.

To my princess and my king,
you are my everything.
Without you two,
I could only do,
half of the things that I want to.

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Chapter One

Introduction: Research Questions

and Purpose of the Study

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Titles matter. Human beings give meanings to objects in the social world, and subsequently orientate their behaviour towards these objects in terms of the significance applied to them (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). Consider the popular names used to describe the following three women, Florence Nightingale, Margaret Thatcher and Michelle Obama: the „lady with the lamp'; the „iron lady'; and the „first lady'. The images that these phrases tend to evoke are: compassionate and caring; dogged and determined; and historic and heroic. Our response to these iconic individuals, therefore, differs accordingly because our perceptions and thoughts are controlled by language (Sapir, 1931). The designations that we apply to people are socially constructed, and historically, culturally and temporally located. Take the example of how the archetypal architects of the „Celtic Tiger'[1], the builders, bankers and developers, once the darlings of the Irish economic success story, have become the detested symbols of the country's slump.

The title of this dissertation, *Celtic Tiger, Hidden Tales: Living Stories of Career Success for Community Employment Scheme Participants - A Critical Interpretive Analysis*, reflects Ely's contention (2007: 567) that titles are „gatekeepers', as they „signify the author's intent, stance and style. At their best, they hint at what's to come'. This dissertation's title unlocks the door to a research study with three distinct levels:

- The film title, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000), is reworked to embody the individual and collective stories of the actors in this inquiry, with the

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[1] The term „Celtic Tiger' was coined by Kevin Gardiner from Morgan Stanley Investment Bankers in 1994 to signify an era characterised by low unemployment rates and rapid economic growth (Kirby, Gibbons & Cronin, 2002).

opening words of the dissertation's title, *Celtic Tiger, Hidden Tales*, acting as a trailer for the main event. The central themes in this motion picture are hiding and revealing identities, resistance to gender inequality and hope (Cai, 2005; Chan, 2004; Fairlamb, 2007). These topics, *inter alia*, resonate with the participants in this study.

- The dissertation chronicles the *living stories of career success for Community Employment scheme participants.* The word *living* represents life as it develops (Clandinin, 2007), capturing the temporal changes in the respondents' past and in their unfolding present (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). This temporality is comprehended through the use of *stories*, that is, a narrative approach to make meaning of experiences and events in a person's life through their stories (Clanindin & Connelly, 2000). The object of knowledge to be apprehended is *career success* (explained in Section 1.4) for *participants* on *Community Employment schemes* (described in Section 1.2).

- The dominant paradigm in the study is *interpretive analysis* and the lens through which I am peering is *critical* theory (discussed in Section 1.3).

The dissertation examines each of these issues in greater detail. This introductory chapter starts by outlining the scope of the study, describing the sample under investigation and delineating the central research question and sub-questions. The methodological approach is then presented. Themes from career and career success theory relevant to this inquiry are reviewed, identifying the gaps that this research attempts to bridge. The conceptual and theoretical contributions of the study are outlined and this is followed by a section summarising the structure and layout of the remaining chapters.

1.2 SCOPE, SAMPLE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study takes place at the intersection between career theory and narrative inquiry. It studies an underrepresented group in career research using narrative inquiry to understand how participants on an active labour market programme, Community Employment, formerly non-employed[2] individuals, (re)construct their career identity in a continually changing micro-individual and macro-social context (depicted in Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1 Scope of Study
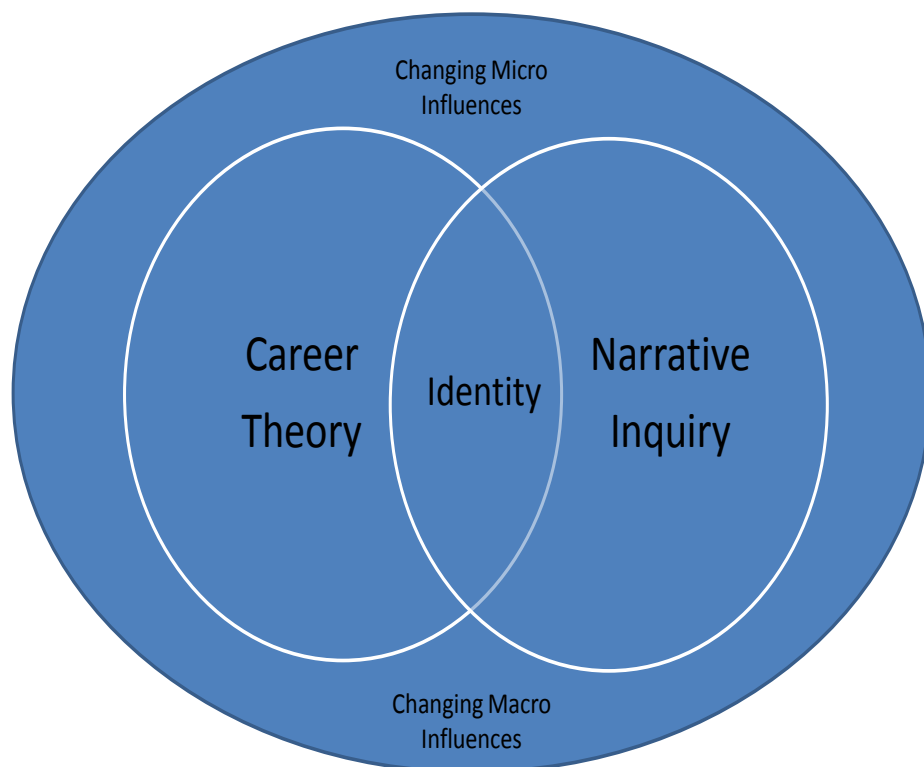
Source: Developed by author, Sue Mulhall.

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[2] Persons not engaging in the active labour market, or on programmes to progress to that domain (Ferrie *et al*., 1995), such as the unemployed, volunteers, carers, etc.

The main thrust of active labour market policies is direct support for labour market integration (Kluve & Card, 2007). The Community Employment scheme is Ireland's principal active labour market programme (OECD, 2009). It is operated by FÁS, the country's training and employment authority. Its purpose is to facilitate participants to re-enter the active workforce by breaking their experience of unemployment through a return-to-work routine, and to assist them to develop both their technical and personal skills, which can then be used in the workplace (FÁS, 2008). From my analysis of FÁS annual reports, the dominant discourse of employment is evident in Ireland's active labour market policy, finding a progressive prominence of a market-oriented philosophy within Community Employment.

The research concerns the career stories of 27 participants from seven different schemes in South Dublin and North County Wicklow. The personal profiles of the respondents are: 24 women and three men, spanning a range of ages; 26 are white Irish and one is an Irish traveller[3]; 17 are single; 20 of them have at least one child; they have achieved various levels of educational attainment; and represent a variety of socio-economic backgrounds (categories self-declared). They all work in community based organisations, employed in a diversity of roles: seven childcare workers; five administrators; four receptionists; two cleaner/caretakers; two security/caretakers; and a care worker for the elderly, gardener, graphic designer, information and welfare officer, public relations officer, recreational assistant and youth project worker.

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[3] According to Section 13(1) of the Housing Act, a traveller is an individual belonging to the class of persons who traditionally pursue, or have pursued, a nomadic way of life (Department of the Environment, 1988).

The status of Community Employment scheme participants is nebulous. They are referred to by FÁS as participants on flexible training and employment programmes (FÁS, 2008); yet, they simultaneously hold a contract of employment with their employing organisation (public body or voluntary group). Their terms and conditions are negotiated by a nationwide collective agreement with FÁS, consequently can be altered by the training and employment authority at national level, rather than by each individual employer at local level (FÁS, 1998b). This creates an ambiguous position for people partaking on Community Employment, occupying a dual role of both employee and apprentice, a former non-employed person, employed by a not-for-profit organisation, but on a state-sponsored work experience/training programme.

The objective of the study is to conduct a detailed examination of an underexplored category, people who are participating on an active labour market programme, Community Employment, with particular emphasis on developing a more holistic career and change framework for this specific sample. The aim is to deepen our understanding of the former non-employed, individuals who have encountered significant transformation in their lives and careers, and to comprehend the identity implications of experiencing revised career outcomes after undergoing such transition. There is one central research question and five sub-questions formulated for exploration in this dissertation.

Central question: How do Community Employment scheme participants construct, interpret and make sense of their career experiences? As noted in Chapter Three, there is a dearth of research exploring the understanding of such participants, the former non-employed, of their career experiences. Combined with the virtual exclusion of the non-employed in empirical career success studies, explicated in Chapter Four, this narrative

inquiry is a step towards bridging these gaps. The focus of this research question is to examine how the participants view their social world through their own cognitive processes (Berger & Luckmann, 1967), looking at one aspect of this reality, the (re)construction of their career identity.

Sub-question one: What do Community Employment scheme participants view as career success? Career success is „the accomplishment of desirable work-related outcomes at any point in a person's work experiences over time' (Arthur, Khapova & Wilderom, 2005: 179). It appears to be pre-determined for the participants by FÁS, that is, to re-enter the active workforce (FÁS, 2008). This research question involves the participants' evaluation of their achievements at any point during their work experiences (Gattiker & Larwood, 1990). This reality may involve objective criteria, such as status, rank and material success and/or subjective criteria, like intrinsic job satisfaction, self-worth, fulfilling relationships and moral satisfaction (Nicholson & De Waal-Andrews, 2005).

Sub-question two: How is this reality created and sustained for Community Employment scheme participants? This question sets out to understand the contextual conditions under which the knowledge apprehended about the participants' perception of their career success has been created. It documents the processes by which their everyday social reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1967) is constructed, managed and sustained, taking account of the social, cultural, situational and temporal circumstances that serve to affect their career experiences.

Sub-question three: What stories do Community Employment scheme participants tell about the personal and social resources in their career experiences? When someone narrates a story, he or she forms, shapes and performs the self, and his or her experience and reality (Chase, 2005). The objective of this question is on understanding how the participants make sense of their career experiences through storytelling, with a particular emphasis on capturing their perceptions of how their personal resources (education, skills, abilities, etc.) and social resources (support from others, personal and work networks, access to information, etc.) have significance for their identity construction.

Sub-question four: How do these personal and social resources enable and constrain the Community Employment scheme participants' career experiences? This research question explores the patterns in the storied selves, subjectivities and realities that the participants create during particular times and in particular places, which help and hinder their career (re)construction. These include the possibilities for self and reality construction that are intelligible within the participant's community, local setting, organisational and social memberships, and cultural and historical location (Chase, 2005).

Sub-question five: How do discursive practices in the careers discourse enable and constrain the Community Employment scheme participants' views as to what is career success? Career identity is created and sustained within social structures that are themselves performance texts, which play into ongoing, and always changing, social and cultural constructions (Langellier, 1989). The purpose of this question is to examine ideologies and rhetoric (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000) in the career success discourse,

researching if, and how, these facilitate and inhibit the participants' autonomy in the choices and decisions they make regarding their career outcomes.

To explore these questions, I adopt a contextualising discourse (Young & Collin, 2004), locating the participants and their careers within their social, economic, cultural, historical, temporal and other settings. Specifically, I use the Systems Theory Framework (STF) perspective (Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a, 2006b) to position these influences at and across the level of both the individual system and the contextual system, in an attempt to understand critical moments (Thomson *et al*., 2002) and fateful moments (Giddens, 1991) of change, and to determine their consequence for career identity formation.

1.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

This study embraces a pragmatic, paradigmatic approach (Watson, 1997, 2001), which builds its own, structurally sound, ontological, epistemological and methodological foundation stones to explore how the participants (re)construct their career experiences. I adopt a criticalist and constructivist ontology, and a critical hermeneutic and critical interpretive epistemology. The dominant theoretical paradigm is constructivist/ interpretive, where everyday knowledge and cognition become the basis on which I develop a more formalised and generalised version of the world (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). The theoretical lens is critical theory, used to engender an understanding of the hidden structures and tacit cultural dynamics that insidiously inscribe social meanings and values (Cary, 1996).

I employ a narrative research strategy and collect the empirical data through episodic interviews to explore the career success stories of 27 participants. The relevance of narrative inquiry for careers research is in its ability to facilitate individuals to make sense of their career experiences, decisions and transitions, in addition to its capacity to take account of the temporal and developmental aspects of a career. In placing lived and living experience as the ultimate source of, and site of, validation for knowledge, I do not, however, exclude the possibility of investigating the effects of macro-social processes (Langellier, 1989), which both enable and constrain possibilities for human praxis (O'Connor, 2000). As this study examines particular aspects of the participants' lives, that is, their career experiences, the episodic interview, a narrative technique, is deemed an applicable *modus operandi* (Flick, 2000, 2009).

This narrative study adopts an abductive research strategy, whereby theory, data collection and data analysis are developed simultaneously in a dialectical process (Blaikie, 2007, 2010). The three-dimensional narrative inquiry space (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) is an appropriate approach for studying the empirical material because the method involves thematic coding, which is suitable for analysing data from episodic interviews (Flick, 2000, 2009). Interpreting the narratives using this framework permits me to „zoom out' from a detailed description of the participants' lives and careers, telescoping to the wider world (Czarniawska-Joerges, 2004: 120).

1.4 LITERATURE REVIEW OVERVIEW

The extant literature on career and career success theory relevant to this study is examined in Chapter Four. A consensus seems to have emerged that the established description of career emanates from Arthur, Hall and Lawrence (1989: 8) as: „the unfolding sequence of any person's work experiences over time'. Career theory proposes an inherent two-sidedness of the career concept (Arthur *et al.*, 2005). The objective element emulates the more or less publicly observable positions, situations and status that serve as benchmarks for gauging a person's movement through the social locale (Barley, 1989). The subjective dimension reflects the individual's own sense of his or her career and what it is becoming (Stebbins, 1970).

Career success is an outcome of a person's career experiences and involves the individual's evaluation of desirable work-related outcomes at any point during these experiences (Gattiker & Larwood, 1990). As with careers, there are two distinct aspects of career success: objective and subjective. Objective career success may be characterised as an external perspective that delineates more or less tangible indicators of an individual's career situation (Van Maanen, 1977). Subjective career success may be described as the individual's internal apprehension and evaluation of his or her career, across any dimensions that are important to that individual (Van Maanen, 1977). Whether career attainments lead people to experience career success is likely to depend upon the standards against which they are evaluated. People can assess their career success using self-referent and other-referent criteria, drawn from both the objective and subjective domains (Heslin, 2005). In this study, career is regarded as encompassing both the objective and subjective dimensions.

Numerous commentators observe that contemporary careers are synonymous with change and that change is a constant feature of the career experience (e.g., Arnold & Cohen, 2008; Hall, 1996, 2002). Individuals experience many transitions during their career and these occurrences may also be associated with a period of non-employment (e.g., unemployment, caring, homemaking and/or volunteerism). In a review of 89 journal articles over an 18-year period, I consider how people who experience career change, particularly the non-employed, are dealt with by empirical career success studies. This examination underlines some gaps in contemporary career theory and research, which this study endeavours to bridge. It finds that those who have encountered transformation in their careers, experiencing periods of non-employment, are largely excluded from career success research. This omission runs counter to the current conceptualistion of the career concept and its associated construct of career success, a situation that this study seeks to address. Career is used in this dissertation in its broader connotation, synonymous with life career development, entailing one's whole life, not just that which is occupationally orientated.

1.5 CONCEPTUAL AND THORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Chapter Eight presents the conceptual contributions of the study. It returns to the research questions (see Section 1.2) and proposes a number of frameworks to enhance understanding in these areas, grounded in the inquiry's findings. This dissertation advances our knowledge of career theory in general, and career success research in particular, in three distinct ways. The first two contributions illuminate the central research question and four of the sub-questions, and the third contribution elucidates the fifth sub-question.

Firstly, by fusing career theory and narrative research within a systems framework, a deeper comprehension of the complex and dynamic nature of career success is facilitated, as it allows for the myriad of micro-individual and macro-structural influences on a person's career experiences to be accommodated. The proposed model, the Three-Dimensional Career Success Inquiry Systems Framework (3-D CSI SF), locates career success within temporal and transformational contexts by considering the interrelationship of past critical moments and present career experiences, with the individual's plans for the future. This permits an examination of how the participants construct, interpret and make sense of their career experiences and assists in developing an awareness of their evolving career identity over time. It also facilitates the operationalisation of Giddens' (1991) fateful moment, represented in Chapter Eight, as a means of appreciating the change evident in the participants' careers.

Secondly, the proposed typologies of career success for Community Employment scheme participants (advancer, enjoyment seeker, monetarist, recognition seeker, providential, security seeker and worker) are exploratory groupings, attempting to reflect the change inherent in the contemporary career experience. This, I believe, is a significant contribution to careers research, as it extends our understanding regarding the complexity of concerns an individual faces when he or she encounters transition points in his or her life, which impact on the choices and decisions that he or she makes. As the outcome of this transformation involves, *inter alia*, a person's ability to enhance his or her skills and interpersonal qualities, necessitating lifelong learning and continual adaptation, the „advancer' classification is particularly promoted as complementing and supplementing the current conceptualisation of the career concept.

Finally, based on this research, it appears that the current conceptualisation of the career concept and the construct of career success are unable to fully account for the transformation manifest in the participants' career stories. This is due to how the underpinning theory is presently conceived, located as it is in the dominant discourse of employment. Building on the previously mentioned investigation of career success research, an examination of active labour market policy, and an analysis of the participants' transcripts, I propose that a person's career should be synonymous with their life career development. This entails one's whole life not just that which is occupationally orientated (Wolfe & Kolb, 1980). This shift in emphasis would diminish the identification of „work' with paid work and promote activities, such as caring, volunteering and homemaking, as endeavours that have social and economic value. It is my belief and the participants' also, that everyone should have an opportunity to assess the outcome of their work experiences; it should not be confined to those in employment. Going through change influences our interpretation of our career experiences, and people who have encountered such events should be included in career success research, reflecting both their reality and the contemporary conceptualisation of the career concept, that is, altering career patterns with multiple movements in and out of the workforce.

1.6 STRUCTURE: OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS' CONTENT

The dissertation commences with the research philosophy and methodology chapter, because, as a biographically situated inquirer (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), my background as a former consultant with the Community Employment scheme structure, and my revised worldview regarding that realm, have played a crucial role in this study.

The contextualistion chapter immediately follows the research philosophy and methodology to assist readers to appreciate the careers of the former non-employed (individuals who may be unfamiliar to this inquiry's audience) and to facilitate them to identify with the accounts that the participants articulate. The ensuing chapters cover: the extant literature on career and career success theory (Chapter Four); the theoretical frameworks grounding the research (Chapter Five); the findings and discussions, which are divided into two chapters, micro and macro perspectives (Chapters Six and Seven, respectively); the conceptual contributions emanating from this study (Chapter Eight); and the conclusion and recommendations deriving from the findings of the inquiry (Chapter Nine).

The earlier sections in this introductory chapter proffer a summary of the subject matter from a number of the dissertation's chapters, so do not need to be reiterated: the research philosophy and methodology is explained in Sections 1.2 and 1.3; the information contextualising the inquiry is detailed in Section 1.2; the extant literature on career and career success theory is described in Section 1.4; and the conceptual contributions of the research are outlined in Section 1.5.

Chapter Five explicates the theoretical frameworks underpinning the dissertation. The particular concepts that are deemed pertinent to the research are: power, knowledge and language (Derrida, 1976, 1978a, 1978b, 1982, 1989; Foucault, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1982); ideology and hegemony (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1992; Forgacs, 1988; Gramsci, 1971; Van Dijk, 2001); agency and structure (Archer, 1995; Barley, 1989; Giddens, 1977, 1979, 1981, 1982, 1984, 1985, 1990, 1992, 1993; Weick, 2001); real time and retrospective sensemaking (Archer, 2003, 2007; Weick, 1995, 2001, 2009); and identity, identification and narrative (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Bauman, 2001;

Deetz, 1992; Foucault, 1988; Giddens, 1991; Holland & Thomson, 2009; Thomas, 2009; Thomson *et al*., 2002, 2004; Plumridge & Thomson, 2003).

These frameworks are applied in the analysis of the participants' narratives, rendered in two findings and discussion chapters. Chapter Six focuses on the micro picture, narrating stories of career success from an individual context, so real time and retrospective sensemaking, and identity, identification and narrative, are relevant. Using the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) allows me to work through the narratives interpretivistically, restorying the participants' experiences. Chapter Seven concentrates on the macro scene, articulating accounts of the participants' perception of career success from a structural angle thus, identity, identification and narrative, agency and structure, ideology and hegemony, and power, knowledge and language, are germane. This chapter also describes the impact of one primary structural influence, derived from the participants' narratives, on each of their career (re)construction strategies. To understand the change process inherent in the participants' stories, Giddens' (1991) fateful moment is operationalised.

The final chapter of the dissertation summarises the conclusions of the study, offers recommendations for further research and recognises the limitations of the study. Finally, it returns to the research questions posed in Chapter One to elucidate the conceptual contributions of the inquiry.

Chapter Two

Research Philosophy and

Methodology

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The philosophy and methodology that underpins this study is presented in this chapter, thus positioning the research undertaken for the dissertation. As mentioned in Chapter One, the status of Community Employment scheme participants is tenuous, creating an ambiguous position for people partaking on such schemes, occupying a dual role of both apprentice and employee, consequently raising issues about the application of career theory and research to this group, as they are neither employees, nor are they unemployed (see Chapter Four).

To facilitate the discussion about the applicability of career theory and research to such participants, this chapter situates the research approach underpinning the dissertation. The structure of the chapter adopts Denzin and Lincoln's (2005) five phases of the research process: it commences with how my background influences the study; then explains the theoretical paradigm and interpretive framework grounding the research; followed by sections on the research strategy that I employed and how I practised interpretation and evaluation. The chapter ends with reflections on my doctoral journey, thereby acknowledging that behind and within each of these five stages of research stands the biographically situated inquirer (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

2.2 RESEARCHER'S BACKGROUND AND PERSPECTIVE

2.2.1 Self Beliefs and Assumptions in Research

A researcher approaches the world with a collection of ideas, that is, a framework (ontology/reality) that specifies an array of questions (epistemology/knowledge) that he or she then examines in specific ways (methodology), and which is influenced by a set of values (axiology) and a particular language (rhetoric) (Andrews, 2008; Creswell, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2003, 2005; Mason, 2002; Morgan & Smircich, 1980; Putnam, 1983). Reflexivity, the process of reflecting critically on the self (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Mason, 2002), facilitates an inquirer to come to terms, not only with his or her choice of research problem, and with those he or she engages with during the process, but also with the multiple identities that represent the fluid self in the research setting (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).

Not only do we „bring the self to the field … [we also] create the self in the field' (Reinharz, 1997: 3). It is claimed that the selves we take to the research process can be classified into three categories: research-based selves, brought selves (the selves that historically, socially and personally create our perspectives) and situationally created selves (Reinharz, 1997). Each of these plays a role in the research setting and, consequently, voices a distinctive viewpoint. The ways in which research efforts are moulded by these selves need to be interrogated to ascertain how the inquirer's assumptions about social reality and knowledge acquisition affect the design, method and procedures of his or her study (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Mason, 2002; Putnam, 1983).

As part of my own reflexivity, I discuss my „brought' self by explaining how my background influenced the inquiry (this section). I then describe my „research-based' self and my „situationally created' self by charting my PhD journey (Section 2.7).

2.2.2 Self-Employed Consultant as Researcher

My „brought' self (Reinharz, 1997) has been significantly shaped by my professional background. Prior to pursuing my doctoral studies on a full-time basis in January 2009, I was a Director of my own coaching, consulting and training business for eight years, preceded by twelve years in human resource management positions in paid employment. This study has its genesis in my period of self-employment, as owner-manager of my own organisation (2001 to 2008). In any financial year, approximately 40 per cent of my company's revenue was generated from Community Employment schemes. The contextualisation chapter (Chapter Three) describes the operation of these schemes in greater detail, in addition to how my role as an external consultant fits in with the overall structure of Community Employment.

The training and coaching services that I delivered to individuals involved with Community Employment from 2001 to 2008 are represented in Table 2.1. Over two fifths (43 per cent) of the work I provided to these schemes involved career support, either on a group or a one-to-one basis, to participants, their supervisors and their board members (397 people). The type of career support offered comprised both group workshops (predominantly skills based, focusing on competency assessment and CV writing, job search and interview techniques), and individual consultation sessions (concentrating on coaching people to progress in their careers). The balance of the services I offered to Community Employment schemes was composed of personal

development and soft skills training to participants, such as confidence building, customer service and presentation skills (41 per cent of the business I provided to the sector involved this service), and management development training to supervisors and board members (16 per cent of the business).

Table 2.1 Training and Coaching Services Provided by Researcher as a Self-Employed Consultant to Individuals Involved with Community Employment (CE) From 2001-2008

CE Participants			
	Individuals on a Group Basis	Individuals on a One-to-One Basis	Total
Personal development training and coaching	373	1	374
Career training and coaching	340	39	379
Total	*713*	*40*	*753*
CE Supervisors and Board Members			
	Individuals on a Group Basis	Individuals on a One-to-One Basis	Total
Management development training and coaching	143	0	143
Career training and coaching	15	3	18
Total	*158*	*3*	*161*

Source: Developed by author, Sue Mulhall.

Working as a self-employed consultant, I delivered coaching and training in the South Dublin and North Wicklow regions of Ireland to 753 Community Employment scheme participants. This is equivalent to 3.29 per cent of the 22,896 people engaging on Community Employment nationally, as per the most recent statistics (FÁS, 2008). These services were aimed at facilitating the participants to (re)enter the labour market. During the majority of this period, the dominant discourse of employment (Bauman, 1999) influenced my thinking about how the participants enacted their careers. My definition of career success for these participants was for them to have the competence and competencies to decide on their career direction, assess their skills, write a CV, search for jobs, attend interviews and obtain a job offer in paid employment. I believed that they should use the information that I provided to help them achieve what I then perceived as career success, that is, to (re)enter the labour market. This was my taken-for-granted assumption (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). It strongly shaped how I operated as a consultant and how I designed my initial research project. Ultimately, it was a premise that I questioned and, subsequently altered, during my doctoral journey (Sections 2.3.2 and 2.3.3 refer)

As a former self-employed consultant steeped in the tradition of the Community Employment sector, I contend that I epitomise what Flick (2002: 59) terms the „insider research role'. This, I maintain, provides me with a unique vantage point from which to shed light on the views of Community Employment scheme participants about their career experiences from their own perspective. I acknowledge, however, that my prior close proximity to both the setting of the study and involvement with some participants located in the sector raises ethical issues about my entry into the field and the collection and analysis of my empirical materials. Before I address these concerns (Sections 2.5

and 2.6, respectively), the theoretical paradigm and interpretive perspective underpinning this dissertation is outlined.

2.3 THEORETICAL PARADIGM AND INTERPRETIVE PERSPECTIVE

2.3.1 Research Design, Assumptions and Choices

Research design involves the entire process of research from conceptualising a problem to writing research questions, and on to data collection, analysis, interpretation and report writing (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). The design is the logical sequence that connects the empirical data to a study's initial research questions and, ultimately, to its conclusions (Mason, 2002; Yin, 2003). It begins with philosophical assumptions that the inquirer makes in deciding to undertake the study. As mentioned in Section 2.2.1, researchers bring their own sets of beliefs (paradigms) to the project, and these inform the conduct and writing of the study. In addition, the researcher can use various interpretive and theoretical frameworks to mould the study. Good research requires making these assumptions, paradigms and frameworks explicit, in addition to being aware of how they impact on the practice of inquiry (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Creswell, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Mason, 2002).

A researcher shapes the study by bringing in his or her paradigms or worldviews (Creswell, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Mason, 2002). A paradigm, or an interpretive framework, is the net that contains the researcher's ontological, epistemological and methodological premises. It is the researcher's basic set of beliefs that guides action (Guba, 1990), impacting on the questions that the inquirer asks and the interpretations that he or she makes (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Research is steered by the inquirer's

beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Flick, 2002; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2003, 2005; Mason, 2002; Morgan & Smircich, 1980; Putnam, 1983). The research process constitutes a (re)construction of the social reality, where inquirers actively interpret, and continually create representations for themselves. These personifications selectively highlight certain claims as to how processes can be understood, whilst simultaneously discarding alternative construals (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000; Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2003, 2005).

There are four major paradigms that structure social science research: positivist/postpositivist; constructivist/interpretive; critical; and postmodern/ poststructural (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Some commentators maintain that the four paradigms are mutually exclusive, offering alternative views of social reality (e.g., Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Jackson & Carter, 1991; Morgan, 1980). This rigid stance of confining research to only one of the paradigms has been criticised by numerous scholars for forcing researchers to make artificial, stultifying „either/or' choices (e.g., Ackroyd, 1992; Alvesson & Deetz, 2000; Connell & Nord, 1996; Putnam, 1983; Reed, 1985, 1990, 1992; Watson, 1997; Willmott, 1990, 1993). A pragmatic, paradigmatic approach, focusing on the outcomes of the research has been advocated by an increasing number of observers (e.g., Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009; Cherryholmes, 1992; Murphy & Murphy, 1990; Patton, 2002; Rorty, 1990; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003; Watson, 1997, 2001). This perspective supports researchers having the freedom to choose the methods, techniques and procedures that most appropriately meet their requirements (this study's approach).

2.3.2 Researcher's Inter-Paradigmatic Journey

The impact of an inquirer's belief system is evidenced from the following chronicle, which charts my inter-paradigmatic doctoral journey from positivist/postpositivist to constructivist/interpretive research. My doctoral studies commenced on a part-time basis in October 2005, whilst I was a self-employed consultant, researching „The Role of Emotional Intelligence in Career Development: A Model for Career Coaching in the Community Sector'. The focus of the study was to examine the factors that apparently contributed to some Community Employment participants using career coaching and training opportunities to lead to career success, while others did not. Career success was defined as acquiring the requisite knowledge and skills to (re)enter the labour market, as the objective of engagement on a Community Employment programme is to work in mainstream employment.

This definition of career success was central to my role as coach and trainer because I considered that the purpose of career support was to enable people to become more effective in their careers (Feldman, 2001; Nathan & Hill, 2005; Zeus & Skiffington, 2000). For me, „effective' was progression from Community Employment to conventional employment. The objective of this (post)positivist research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), located in the functionalist paradigm (Burrell & Morgan, 1979), was to investigate if there was a relationship between emotional intelligence (input/independent factor) and career success (output/dependent factor), mediated by career coaching, for the participants. The study was conceptualised as an input-output model that treated the careers of the participants as „variables' (Mehan, 1979). It assumed that the factors leading to career success were situated within the psychological field, exploring why individuals behave as they do (Patton, 2002). It focused on the

domain of emotional intelligence, which determines a person's capacity for learning skills, combined with their emotional competence, which influences how much of that potential a person can realise by mastering these skills and translating them into on-the-job expertise (Goleman, 1995, 1998, 2001). It also presumed that these attributes could be coached, resulting in career success for an individual (Merlevede, Bridoux & Wilkinson-Carr, 2004; Wall, 2007; Wasylyshyn, Gronsky & Haas, 2006). The research was to be a quantitative study, anticipating a one-way causal relationship between emotional intelligence and career success, interceded by career coaching. It reflected the „managerial bias' (Putnam, 1983) of my work as a self-employed consultant, contracted to deal with human resource issues by providing solutions and solving problems, the ethos being that people are inputs to a process that produces outcomes.

In the early stages of my research, I believed that I could distance myself from the scene that I was analysing through the rigour and technique of objective and value-free scientific methods to generate empirical knowledge (Morgan, 1980). From late 2007, whilst reflecting on the literature surrounding research philosophy and methodology, I started to question my assumptions about social reality and knowledge acquisition (Creswell, 2007; Morgan & Smircich, 1980; Putnam, 1983). My inter-paradigmatic journey from the functionalist to the interpretive paradigm (Burrell & Morgan, 1979) commenced when I realised that, for me, reality can never be fully apprehended, only approximated, and that it does not exist in any concrete sense, but is the product of the subjective and inter-subjective experience of individuals (Morgan, 1980). Reality for me was best understood by studying people in their natural settings, and attempting to make sense of the phenomenon in question in terms of the meanings people bring to it, that is, a qualitative research perspective (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Flick, 2002; Mason, 2002; Morgan, 1980; Patton, 2002).

My „epistemological break' (Burrell & Morgan, 1979: 25) involved what Denzin and Lincoln (2005: 11) describe as „doing the same things differently': exploring a similar issue (career success among Community Employment scheme participants), but as a social scientist operating within the interpretive paradigm. At the beginning of 2008, I started to research the „Living Experiences of Career Success for Community Employment Scheme Participants – A Critical Interpretative Analysis'. (The study focused on „experience', rather than „stories', at that juncture.) My approach to the inquiry entailed a critical sensibility, as I did not want to silence the voices of the participants (Chase, 2005; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Langellier, 1989). It was, and still is, my belief that Community Employment is society's conceptual machinery designed to maintain the official universe (employment) against the heretical challenge (unemployment), and participation on the scheme re-socialises the deviant (the unemployed) into the objective reality of the symbolic universe of society (Berger & Luckmann, 1967); a contention explicated in Chapter Five. My revised worldview has significantly fashioned the framing of this dissertation, its dominant paradigm and interpretive perspective. (The account of my doctoral journey is continued in Section 2.7.)

2.3.3 Study's Dominant Theoretical Paradigms and Interpretive Perspectives

The philosophical assumptions underpinning this dissertation are: the social world is internal to individual cognition and consists of names, concepts and labels that are used to structure reality (nominalism); to understand the social world inquirers should obtain first-hand knowledge of the subject (anti-positivism); individuals have control over their environment (voluntarism); researchers should get as close as possible to the participants, so a topic can be studied within its context and an emerging design should

be used, influenced by the researcher's experience in collecting and analysing the data (ideographic) (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Creswell, 2007).

In my opinion, to understand the actions of people in everyday life, an inquiry should not be limited to the confines of one particular paradigm because individuals have multiple identities and deal with numerous realities (Davies & Harré, 2001; Gergen, 2001; Weick, 1995). This study, therefore, adopts a pragmatic, paradigmatic approach (Cherryholmes, 1992; Burke Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Murphy & Murphy, 1990; Patton, 2002; Rorty, 1990; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003; Watson, 1997, 2001), termed pragmatic pluralism by Watson (1997). It builds its own, structurally sound, ontological, epistemological and methodological foundation stones to explore how Community Employment scheme participants (re)construct their career experiences. I am what Denzin and Lincoln (2005) describe as a bricoleur, creating a bricolage by drawing on methodological strategies as they are needed in the unfolding context of the research situation (Kincheloe & McLarnen, 2005). The dominant theoretical paradigm I bring to the research is constructivist/interpretive and the theoretical lens through which I am peering is critical theory. In terms of the philosophy of this study's research design, I adopt a criticalist and constructivist ontology and a critical hermeneutic and critical interpretive epistemology.

The constructivist/interpretive paradigm ontologically views the social world not as a fixed or objective entity, external to individuals and impacting on them in a deterministic way, but as created by people through their own cognitive processes (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Cohen, Duberley & Mallon, 2004; Creswell, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). It contends that the world cannot be known directly, but, rather, by the construction imposed on it by the mind. This paradigm represents an

epistemological perspective concerned with how we know and, by implication, how we develop meaning. These processes are internal to the person, integrating knowledge (meaning) into pre-existing schemes (assimilation), or changing the schemes to fit the environment (accommodation) (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969).

This worldview claims that facts only become relevant through their meanings and interpretations (Schütz, 1962). It perceives access to the world of experience (the natural and social environment and the events and activities that it contains), as operating through the concepts constructed by the perceiving subject and the knowledge derived from these thoughts (Creswell, 2007; Flick, 2004). These are used to interpret experiences or to understand and attribute meanings, as illustrated in Figure 2.1. This is what Ricoeur (1981, 1984) calls the ‚mimetic process': experience of human action (mimesis$_1$); construction (mimesis$_2$); and interpretation (mimesis$_3$).

Figure 2.1 Construction and Interpretation as Means of Access to the World of Experience
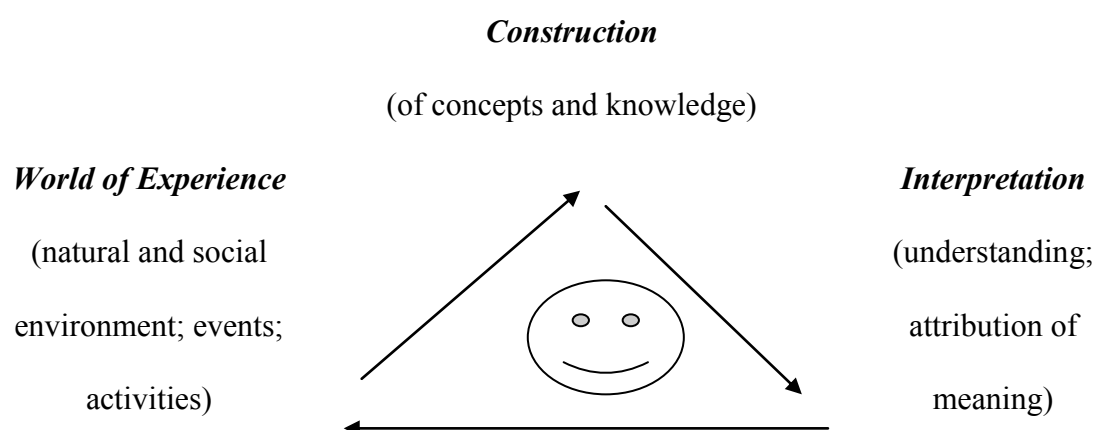
Source: Adapted from Flick (2004: 90).

In the constructivist/interpretive paradigm, everyday knowledge and cognition become the basis on which the social science researcher develops a more formalised and generalised version of the world, a world of many realities (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Schütz, 1962). Within the overall constructivist family, there are several differing positions, but three are frequently mentioned (Flick, 2004, 2009; Young & Collin, 2004). Radical constructivists, (e.g., von Glaserfeld, 1995), maintain that what the thinking subject makes of his or her experiences constitute the only world that he or she consciously lives in. More moderate constructivists, like Kelly (1955) and Piaget (1969), acknowledge that individual constructions take place within a systematic relationship to the external world. Finally, social constructivists, (e.g., Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Bruner, 1990; Gergen, 1999; Schütz, 1962; Vygotsky, 1978), recognise that influences on individual construction are derived from, and preceded by, social relationships. Social constructionism is sometimes subsumed under the general label of constructivism, but it is a distinct perspective (Bujold, 2004; Young & Collin, 2004). Social constructionism has a social focus claiming that knowledge and meaning are historically and culturally constructed through social processes and actions, whereas constructivism focuses on how the individual cognitively engages in the construction of knowledge (Bujold, 2004; Young & Collin, 2004).

It has been argued that taking constructivist/interpretive thinking to its full potential results in some form of fundamental questioning similar to a critical orientation, with scholars increasingly asserting that all research is interpretive and fundamentally political, which results in a blurring of the boundaries between interpretive and critical research (e.g., Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2007; Connor, 1997; Creed, Langstraat & Scully, 2002; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Everett, 2002; Mir & Mir, 2002; Prasad, 2002; Prasad & Prasad, 2002; Rosenau, 1992; Wray-Bliss, 2002). Whilst located within the

constructivist/interpretive paradigm, this inquiry adopts an explicitly critical position, what Putnam (1983) terms a critical interpretive approach and Patton (2002) calls a critical orientational inquiry. I am what Kincheloe and McLaren (2003, 2005) describe as a criticalist, attempting to use my research as a form of social criticism.

My critical thinking involves four components (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000; Brookfield, 1987):

- Identifying and challenging assumptions behind ordinary ways of perceiving, conceiving and enacting career experiences.

- Recognising the influence of history, culture and social positioning on beliefs and actions.

- Imagining and exploring extraordinary alternatives, ones that may disrupt routine and established orders.

- Being appropriately skeptical about any knowledge or solution that claims to be the only truth or alternative.

As a criticalist, my objective is to examine social institutions, ideologies, discourses and forms of consciousness, exploring if, and how, these enable and constrain human autonomy and decision-making (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000). This involves studying meaning (hermeneutics) and participating in the hermeneutical circle of interpretation by comprehending the unknown via the mediation of what is already known (Czarniawska-Joerges, 2004) to make sense of what has been observed (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2003). By injecting critical theory into the hermeneutical circle, I want to facilitate an understanding of the hidden structures and tacit cultural dynamics that insidiously inscribe social meanings and values (Cary, 1996; Gallagher, 1992; Kellner, 1995) in the careers discourse.

Using critical theory as my interpretive lens, I operate in a critical hermeneutical circle (a process of analysis seeking the historical and social dynamics that shape textual interpretation), moving back-and-forth, studying parts in relation to the whole and the whole in relation to parts (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2003, 2005). This movement of whole to parts is combined with an analytic flow between abstract and concrete, linking interpretation of the interplay of larger social forces (the general/macro) to the everyday lives of individuals (the particular/micro). Concentration on the parts is the dynamic that brings the particular into focus, with the aim of heightening our understanding of the participant's construal of his or her career experience in light of the social and psychological forces that affect him or her. I contend that by studying the micro perspective (the local text) the macro (the social context) can be accessed (Creed *et al*., 2002; Everett, 2002; Prasad, 2002). Engagement in the critical hermeneutical circle facilitates the review of existing conceptualisations in light of new understandings and may engender the development of new metaphors to influence my analysis in ways that potentially unsettle familiar modes of thinking (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2003, 2005).

This interpretive study is grounded in a critical social philosophy, with attention paid to asymmetrical relations of power and taken-for-granted assumptions and beliefs (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000) underpinning the definition of career and the construct of career success. The research aims to make the hidden obvious, to illuminate things that we did not know, but should know (Schlechty & Noblit, 1982; Patton, 2002). It investigates the arbitrary and rigid ways we understand our social reality and is orientated towards: challenging, rather than confirming, that which is established; disrupting, rather than reproducing, cultural traditions and conventions; opening up and showing tensions in language use, rather than continuing its domination; and

encouraging productive dissension, rather than taking surface consensus as a point of departure (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000).

2.4 RESEARCH STRATEGY

2.4.1 Qualitative Research

It is not simply an issue of researcher-bias that impacts on the choice of approach in a study. Whilst acknowledging that this research topic reflects my philosophical stance regarding my ontological, epistemological, axiological and methodological assumptions, I also recognise that the suitability of a particular strategy is contingent upon the research question to be addressed (Creswell, 2007; Flick, 2002; Hammersley, 1992; Marshall & Rossman, 2010; Mason, 2002; Punch, 2005; Silverman, 2006, 2009).

> [It] depends on the nature of what we are trying to describe, on the likely accuracy of our descriptions, on our purposes, and on the resources available to us; not on ideological commitment to one methodological paradigm or another. (Hammersley, 1992: 163)

A researcher should, therefore, select a strategy that is appropriate to what he or she is attempting to find out. The research question defines the most appropriate method. As I am concerned with exploring how Community Employment scheme participants construct, interpret and make sense of their career experiences, a qualitative method is a suitable choice, as it facilitates studying and understanding people's everyday behaviour (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Flick, 2002; Mason, 2002; Silverman, 2009). It allows me to find out about the career experiences of the participants, by asking what career means for them, how it affects them and what they do about it (Patton, 2002).

Qualitative research is a broad approach to the study of social phenomena, consisting of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Flick, 2002; Marshall & Rossman, 2010; Mason, 2002). The characteristics underpinning qualitative research, and those who engage in such an activity, are summarised in Table 2.2. As a set of activities, qualitative research favours no single methodological practice over another. It has no theory or paradigm that is distinctly its own, nor does it possess a definite set of methods (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Flick, 2002; Mason, 2002). The „province of qualitative research is the world of lived experience for this is where individual belief and action intersect with culture' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005: 8).

Table 2.2 Characteristics of Qualitative Research and Researchers

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Qualitative research typically:
- Is enacted in naturalistic settings.
- Draws on multiple methods that respect the humanity of the participants in the study.
- Focuses on context.
- Is emergent and evolving.
- Is fundamentally interpretive.

Qualitative researchers tend to:
- View social worlds as holistic and complex.
- Engage in systematic reflection on the conduct of the research.
- Remain sensitive to their own biographies/social identities and how these shape the study (that is, they are reflexive).
- Rely on complex reasoning that moves dialectically between deduction and induction.

Source: Marshall and Rossman (2010: 2).

2.4.2 Narrative Research

Narrative research, a genre of qualitative research (Creswell, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Flick, 2002; Patton, 2002), privileges lived and living experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 2006). It is a way of comprehending experience and assists an inquirer to make sense of life as lived and to understand and make meaning of experiences and events in a person's life through their stories (Clanindin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Flick, 2009; Josselson, 2007). Narrative inquiry assumes that people construct their realities by narrating their stories (Marshall & Rossman, 2010). It poses two questions: what does this narrative reveal about the person and world from which he or she emanates?; and how can this narrative be interpreted, so that it provides an understanding of, and illuminates, the life that created it (Patton, 2002)? Narrative research is, therefore, both a phenomenon (referring to the experience to be studied) and a method (denoting the patterns of inquiry) (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

Not all discourse and not every text is a narrative and not every narrative is a story (Czarniawska-Joerges, 2004; Gabriel, 2004; Webster & Mertova, 2007). Narratives are particular types of text involving: temporal chains of interrelated events or actions undertaken by characters; verbs indicating what characters did or what happened to them; and a sequencing of what was experienced (Bruner, 1990; Czarniawska, 1997, 1999; Labov, 1972; Polkinghorne, 1988; Ricoeur, 1984; Weick, 1995). There are, therefore, three elements to a narrative: chronicle (what is happening); mimesis (how does it look, a dimension that allows the researcher to construct a virtual picture of the experiences/events); and emplotment (how things are connected, a structure that makes sense of the experiences/events) (Czarniawska-Joerges, 2004).

There is, however, no single definition of what a narrative is, just as there is no specific way to conduct narrative research (Chase, 2005; Mishler, 1995; Riessman, 2008). The terms that narrative researchers use to describe the empirical material that they study (people's stories) have flexible meanings, as evidenced by Chase's (2005) definition of what a narrative is:

> A narrative may be oral or written and may be elicited or heard during fieldwork, an interview, or a naturally occurring conversation. In any of these situations, a narrative may be (a) a short topical story about a particular event and specific characters such as an encounter with a friend, boss, or doctor; (b) an extended story about a significant aspect of one's life, such as schooling, work, marriage, divorce, childbirth, an illness, a trauma, or participation in a war or social movement; or (c) a narrative of one's entire life, from birth to the present. (Chase, 2005: 652)

Adopting Chase's (2005) description, my research draws out oral stories from Community Employment scheme participants during interviews, focusing on one significant aspect of their lives, their career experiences. Using Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber's (1998) terminology, it is a holistic-content inquiry of the participant's career story, focusing on the topics presented in the story and analysing the meaning that emerges from said story.

There are two main theoretical divisions in narrative inquiry: research focusing on the spoken recounting of particular past events that the person telling the story has encountered, that is, event narratives; and experience-centred work, examining stories that may be about general or imagined phenomena, things that have happened to the narrator, or distant matters that they have only heard about (Squire, Andrews & Tamboukou, 2008). What is shared across both types of research is that a narrative affords external expression to individual, internal representations of phenomena (events, thoughts and feelings). Event-centred inquiry assumes that these internal and individual representations are more or less constant. Experience-centred studies stress that such

representations vary over time and across the circumstances within which one lives, so that a single phenomenon may produce different stories, even from the same person (Squire *et al.*, 2008).

This dissertation is an experience-oriented narrative study exploring the stories the participants tell, as they construct, interpret and make sense of their career experiences (albeit a career experience chronicled at a particular point in time). An experience-oriented approach assumes that personal narratives (Squire, 2008):

- Include all sequential and meaningful stories of personal experience.

- Are the means of human sensemaking.

- Re-present experience, reconstituting it, in addition to expressing it.

- Display transformation or change.

Experience-oriented narrative research inquires into an individual's experience in the world and takes the immediacy of lived experiences, specifically its narrative qualities, as a fundamental reality to be examined and acted on (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). It holds a pragmatic view of knowledge, advocating that a person's representations arise from experience and must return to that experience for their validation (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). This type of research is, therefore, situated at the constructivist end of the epistemological continuum (Crotty, 2003; Gergen, 1985; Hall, 1997; Josselson & Lieblich, 1995; Mensinga, 2009; Riessman, 1993).

Arguments for the development and use of narrative inquiry come out of a view of human experience in which people, individually and socially, lead storied lives (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 2006; Gabriel, 2004; Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007;

Webster & Mertova, 2007). In everyday talk, we tell stories, or personal narratives, about our experiences, the mundane happenings of an ordinary day and extraordinary events that mark our lives (Langellier, 1998). Stories allow us to gain knowledge about what an experience can do to the people who are living that experience (Webster & Mertova, 2007), such as career experiences. Narrative inquiry is relevant for career research, as it facilitates individuals to make sense of their career experiences, decisions and transitions, in addition to taking account of the temporal and developmental aspects of a career (Arnold & Cohen, 2008; Bujold, 2004; Cochran, 1990b; Walton & Mallon, 2004). Examples of narrative studies in career research have included explorations of career choice (Mensinga, 2009; Robb *et al.*, 2007), career transitions (Sinisalo & Komulainen, 2008), careers at the international level (Crowley-Henry & Weir, 2007), career redundancy (Ezzy, 2004), career re-structuring (Walton & Mallon, 2004) and career success (Cohen *et al.*, 2004; Wagner & Wodak, 2006).

Narrative research assumes that storytelling is integral to understanding lives, and that people form narratives as a process in constructing and reconstructing their identity (Clandinin & Huber, 2002; Marshall & Rossman, 2010; Sfard & Prusak, 2005). Telling stories helps people to think about, and understand, their personal or another individual's thinking, actions and reactions (Bruner, 1986, 1990; Langley, 1999; Mishler, 1986; Polkinghorne, 1988; Ricoeur & Valdés, 1991). Individuals interpret experiences and events in the stories they construct collaboratively with listeners (Gergen, 1994, 2001).

Narratives are, therefore, a discursive resource used to make sense of experience, including the meaning of the self and relationships with others (Ainsworth & Hardy, 2004; Gabriel, 2004; Gergen, 1994, 2001; Grant *et al.*, 2004; Ollerenshaw & Creswell,

2002; Phoenix, 2008; Riessman, 2008; Squire, 2008). Identities are thus produced in the stories that people tell about themselves (Lieblich *et al.*, 1998; Rosenwald & Ochberg, 1992). Self-identity is constituted as actors attempt to configure a coherent, continuous biography where their life-story is the sensible result of a series of related events or cohesive themes (Gergen, 1994, 2001). In creating a particular version of their own identity, an actor also constructs identities of others (Davis & Harré, 2001). In telling a story, the narrative is addressed to an audience, actual or imagined, and negotiated between the teller and the listener (Ainsworth & Hardy, 2004; Czarniawska, 1997; Gergen, 2001; Mishler, 1986; Pavlenko, 2007; Salmon & Riessman, 2008; Umphrey, 1999). Narratives, consequently, are performed within a particular social context and employ commonly accepted rules if they are to be accepted as legitimate (Ainsworth & Hardy, 2004; Czarniawska, 1997; Gergen, 2001; Riessman, 1993).

In placing lived experience as the ultimate source of, and site of, validation for knowledge, the narrative inquirer does not, however, exclude the possibility of analysing the effects of macro-social processes (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Josselson, 2007; Langellier, 1989; Mensinga, 2009; Mishler, 1995; Pavlenko, 2007). The life of an individual cannot be adequately understood without reference to the institutions within which his or her biography is enacted because much of human life consists of playing roles within specific institutions (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Mills, 1959; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007). Accordingly, narratives are structured, socialised and politicised by institutional and cultural conventions, such that actors can only choose from the broader cultural collection of discursive resources (Ainsworth & Hardy, 2004; Goodley, Lawthom, Clough & Moore, 2004).

Access to such cultural repertoires is not equally distributed among social groups. Not all individuals have the opportunity to tell stories or, if they do, not all narratives are equally powerful in influencing ongoing social relationships in a particular context (Ainsworth & Hardy, 2004; Grant *et al.*, 2004). For example, Boje (1995) examines how the animators who participated in the 1941 Disney strike were literally written out of the official story about the corporation. Narrative can also reproduce a group's own submission and contribute towards its social reproduction (Willis, 1977). Through constructing, telling and concealing stories, people reproduce power relationships rooted in institutional and societal structures (Putnam & Fairhurst, 2001; Willis, 1977). For example, Helmer (1993) notes that female grooms in the horse racing industry reproduced each other as marginalised members through telling stories about ‚girls' who use their sexuality to gain success.

By focusing on narrative, researchers are able to investigate not just how stories are structured and the ways in which they work, but also who produces them and by what means, the mechanisms by which they are consumed, and how narratives are silenced, contested or accepted (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007; Squire *et al.*, 2008). Narratives can, therefore, be conceived as political praxis, raising questions about relations among power, knowledge, ideology and identity (Ewick & Silbey, 1995; Langellier, 1989; Mumby, 2004). When viewed as political praxis, narratives are seen not as fixed texts, but as performances that are ‚embodied, material, and concrete' (Langellier, 1989: 267), occurring with, and reproducing/resisting, particular relations of power (Mumby, 2004).

This study represents an approach that Langellier (1989) terms political praxis and Mishler (1995) describes as the politics of narrative. Such a perspective argues that personal narratives produce ways of seeing the world, which privilege certain discourses

and meanings over others. It highlights that people create a range of narrative strategies in relation to their discursive environments, that is, individuals' stories are constrained, but not necessarily determined, by hegemonic discourses (Chase, 2005). This research aims to analyse the narratives of Community Employment scheme participants as performances within complex discursive articulations that both enable and constrain possibilities for human communicative praxis (O'Connor, 2000). It examines the ways social actors, as knowledgeable agents, are both subjects and objects of narrative processes (Mumby, 2004). In so doing, it listens on the margins of society and gives voice to silent groups; silent because their stories and meanings have not been privileged, that is, previously told (Bates, 2004; Chase, 2005; Langellier, 1989; Marshall & Rossman, 2010). According to Goodley *et al.* (2004: ix, emphasis in original), „maybe this is the truly emancipatory position - when a story *by* challenges a story *of*''.

2.4.3 Episodic Interviewing

To hear the career stories of Community Employment scheme participants, and to explore the meaning of a particular issue to them, I asked them questions to find out about their experiences (Patton, 2002). The interview is a frequently cited elicitation technique in qualitative research, allowing the respondents to express their understanding of their world in their own terms (Flick, 2002; Marshall & Rossman, 2010; Mason, 2002; Patton, 2002; Silverman, 2009). As this study examines particular aspects of the participants' lives, that is, their career experiences, the episodic interview, a narrative technique, was deemed an appropriate approach (Flick, 2000, 2009).

The episodic interview was developed as an approach to social representations (Flick, 2000, 2009; Flick & Röhnsch, 2007). The theoretical background of studies using the episodic interview is the social construction of reality during the presentation of experiences (Flick, 2002). A social representation is a form of social knowledge (a system of values, ideas and practices) shared by those who are members of a specific social group (Moscovici, 1973, 1988). Studies researching social representations are concerned with how a phenomenon is constructed by members of social groups. Such inquiries pose two questions: how is this understanding influenced by the person's conditions of living and how does it shape his or her practices in everyday life; and what similarities and differences can empirically be found in these interpretations (Flick & Röhnsch, 2007; Herzlich & Douglas, 1973)? Episodic interviewing was developed in the context of a study on the social representation of technological change in everyday life (Flick, 2000, 2002, 2009). The original research recognised that the phenomenon under consideration impacted on most aspects of daily life, and on the everyday existence of almost everyone, and that it manifested itself in concrete situational contexts over time (Flick, 2000).

The episodic interview is based on two theoretical assumptions: the processes underpinning the structure of narrative as experience; and how individuals store and use knowledge (Flick, 2000). The first theoretical pillar presupposes that experience and life are constructed in the form of a narrative (Polkinghorn, 1988; Riesmann, 1993). Reconstructing these experiences involves two kinds of negotiation for the individual: internal cognition negotiation to ensure a fit between a person's experience and the prototypical narratives in a given culture; and external negotiation with listeners, whereby third parties are convinced (or otherwise) of the validity of a narrator's story. The results of these two processes are contextualised in socially shared forms of

knowledge (Flick, 2000). The second theoretical pillar is the distinction between different types of knowledge. Cognitive psychologists (e.g., Eysenck & Keane, 2005; Moody, Blanton & Cheney, 1998; Sternberg, 2009) have identified two components of knowledge, processual and organisational. The processual dimension entails procedural knowledge (knowing how) and declarative knowledge (knowing that), whereas the organisational dimension comprises episodic knowledge (biographical and experiential) and semantic knowledge (abstract and generalised assumptions and relations).

The episodic interview focuses on the organisational domain of knowledge, encompassing episodic and semantic knowledge (Flick, 2000). Episodic knowledge is organised by time and place, and is described by its perceptual characteristics, that is, it is autonoetic (individual). For example, asking someone what he or she was doing on 9/11. Semantic knowledge is arranged in a hierarchy of relationships and is distinct from any temporal or spatial referents, thus it is not dependent upon context. It is concerned with conceptual knowledge, rule knowledge and/or knowledge of schemes of events. Flick (1992, 2000) designed the episodic interviewing technique to collect and analyse both forms of knowledge: episodic, using narratives; and semantic, by employing directed questions (Flick, 2009).

The episodic interview yields context-related presentations about particular experiences, events and/or situations that the interviewee remembers in the form of a narrative (Flick, 2000, 2009). The selection of the episodic-situational forms of experiential knowledge is made by the interviewee according to the subjective relevance that he or she places on the topic under discussion (Flick, 2009). Routine and normal everyday phenomena (such as career experiences) can be analysed with episodic interviewing (Flick, 2000, 2009). This technique draws out descriptions of specific episodes or features in the

interviewee's daily life (Flick, 2000, 2009). The goal is to analyse the interviewee's everyday knowledge about a particular realm in a way that allows the researcher to compare the knowledge of interviewees from different social groups, that is, as a social representation (Flick, 2000).

Examples of studies using episodic interviews include: public information needs of a working-class community in Ireland (Bates, 2004); abuse and violence among young Mexican women in the family home (Belknapp & Cruz, 2007); general experiences of individuals who are homeless and living in squatter settlements in Ghana (de-Graft Aikins & Ofori-Atta, 2007); and understanding the meaning of health for German adolescents experiencing homelessness (Flick & Röhnsch, 2007). Episodic interviewing has been utilised in situations where interviewees have difficulty responding to a formal line of questioning (Bates, 2004; de-Graft Aikins & Ofori-Atta, 2007; Flick & Röhnsch, 2007). It is, therefore, relevant for studies focusing on marginalised members of society, whose stories have not been previously privileged, such as with this research.

There are nine phases to an episodic interview (Flick, 2000, 2009):

1. Prepare an interview guide based on the researcher's experience of the area under study, theoretical accounts of this area, other studies and their results, and/or from a preparatory analysis of the relevant domain.

2. Devise a comprehensive introduction for the interviewee to explain the general principles of the interview (e.g., „in this interview, I will repeatedly ask you to recount situations where you had experiences with ...').

3. Develop questions to allow the interviewee to provide subjective definitions of the issue under study (e.g., „what does the word/phrase xxx mean to you?').

4. Ask the interviewee to present narratives of the topic to access their episodic knowledge from their everyday life (e.g., „if you look back, what was your first encounter with …?').

5. Probe the interviewee's personal relationship to the central issue under consideration, including their future expectations (e.g., „what developments do you expect about xxx this time next year?').

6. Garner personal or situational references in the interviewee's responses even when discussing abstract (semantic) knowledge (e.g., „in your opinion, who should be responsible for …?').

7. Allow small-talk and conversation at the end of the interview to facilitate reflection by the interviewee (e.g., „what was missing from the interview that could have provided you with an opportunity to further explain your point of view?').

8. Write a context protocol immediately after the interview to include, *inter alia*, information regarding the respondent's responses and behaviour and the overall impression of the content and conduct of the conversation.

9. Choose an appropriate method for coding and interpreting the tape-recorded transcripts, such as thematic coding (explained in Section 2.6.3).

The episodic interview encourages storytelling, which can be beneficial where the researcher needs to gain an insight into the daily experiences of the interviewee, and how he or she makes sense of his or her experiences within his or her wider environment (Bates, 2004). It provides the inquirer with a window into the interviewee's world, inviting respondents to become narrators, telling stories that are meaningful to them. The episodic interview combines the advantages of both the narrative interview (a format that facilitates comprehensive descriptions) and the semi-

structured interview (a technique that involves stimulus-response sequences) (Flick, 1992, 2000, 2009). Episodic interviews rely on the interviewee's competence to present his or her experiences as narratives (Flick, 2009). They recognise that interviews are a form of discourse, thus acknowledging that they are speech events, where the dialogue is jointly constructed by the interviewer and informant, and the meanings of questions and answers are contextually grounded (Mishler, 1986). Using the episodic technique also allows the researcher to intervene and direct the interview through a series of key questions prompting the interviewee to recount and define germane situations. Thus, the potentially one-sided and artificial situation of the narrative interview is supplemented by a more open discussion in which narratives are utilised as only one form of data. By linking general descriptions (emanating from the narrative interview format) and question-answer schema (originating from the semi-structured interview), episodic interviews realise the triangulation of different approaches as the basis of data collection (Flick, 2009).

This approach, however, has potential limitations (Flick, 2009). As with all interviews that generate narratives, the calibre of the communication skills of the narrator is an issue (further discussed in Chapter Nine). This, however, is somewhat mitigated by requesting several delimited narratives, rather than one single, overall account. In addition, the interviewing technique of the researcher is crucial, in that he or she has to ensure that all situations mentioned by the interviewee are afforded an opportunity for an adequate recounting. This concern is somewhat allayed given my experience and qualifications as a trained interviewer (Section 2.2.2). Finally, the application of this method is confined to the analysis of everyday knowledge of objects and topics, and the interviewee's own history of them, which is ultimately the purpose of the study.

2.5 METHODS OF COLLECTION

2.5.1 Preparing for the Episodic Interviews: Interview Guide, Interview Questions and Interview Format

Following Flick's (2000, 2009) recommendation, the first step in episodic interviewing is to prepare an interview guide to orient the interviewer to the topical domains under consideration. The interview guide is intended as an index of subjects that should be referred to over the course of the interview (Flick, 2000, 2009; Flick & Röhnsch, 2007; Marshall & Rossman, 2010; Punch, 2005; Silverman, 2009; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). It is divided into broad categories for discussion and then sub-divided into specific issues (Creswell, 2007; Patton, 2002).

As per Flick's (2000, 2009) suggestion, the themes that I explored in the interview guide (Appendix A) were based on a review of the pertinent career theory and research (Chapter Four), in addition to my own experiences with Community Employment schemes (Section 2.2.2). The seven themes were:

- Meaning of career and career success – asking the participants about their views on their career.
- General experiences and career experiences on the Community Employment scheme – enquiring about their general and career experiences on the scheme.
- Personal and social resources – posing questions about the participant's personal resources (education, skills, abilities, etc.) and their social resources (support from others, personal and work networks, access to information, etc.).
- Freedom, choice and agency – raising a discussion about the choices and decisions that the participants have made in their career.

- Identity and primary socialisation – inviting a conversation about the impact of their family on their career.

- Identity and secondary socialisation – exploring the influence of people outside of their family on their career.

- Impact of cultural institutions – asking about the effect of different organisations on their career.

The topics were ordered to allow the participants to initially talk about a current issue that they may have found easier to discuss (such as career experiences) and then moved to areas that may have required more detailed probing (like the impact of cultural institutions). Following four pilot interviews, two additional questions were incorporated: future career plans; and perceptions of their career when they were unemployed (italicised in Appendix A).

The aim of the questions were to assist the participant to understand his or her career experience, organise events and people into a meaningful whole and to connect and see the consequences of actions, incidents and people over time (Bujold, 2004; Chase, 2005; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 2006; Cochran, 1990a; Peräkylä, 2005). To encourage the participants to narrate their career story, open-ended questions were used, and to increase the depth of the responses, probing/developing questions were employed (Flick, 2000, 2002; Hermanowicz, 2002; Squire, 2008; Webster & Mertova, 2007). These were supplemented by more directed questions to ensure that the issue being researched, the participants' personal or situational reference to their career experiences, was fully explored (Flick, 2000, 2009). Dichotomous questions that generated ‚yes' or ‚no' answers were avoided, as they tend to close down conversations (Patton, 2002).

As an experienced interviewer, I recognised that my behaviour could influence the interviewee, so listening carefully to the stories that people told was as important as asking well-designed questions, thus yielding unexpected, but valuable data (Hydén, 2008; Hermanowicz, 2002; Mason, 2002; Mehan, 1979; Webster & Mertova, 2007).

The structure I used during the interviews was similar to the format explained in Section 2.4.3 (Flick, 2000, 2009). The particular framework that I adopted is detailed in Appendix B. As advocated by commentators (e.g., Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Flick, 2000; Silverman, 2009; Patton, 2002), consent forms to both participate in the exercise, and to tape-record the discussion, were completed at the beginning of the interview (see Appendix C). Socio-demographic details concerning potentially sensitive inquiries (e.g., age, education, ethnic status) were filled out at the end of the interview (see Appendix D). The consent forms are discussed in Section 2.6.2.

2.5.2 Sourcing Community Employment Scheme Participants for the Episodic Interviews: Sampling and Profile of Participants

Sampling and selection are principles and procedures used to identify, choose and gain access to relevant data, applying the researcher's chosen methods to develop an empirically and theoretically grounded argument that addresses the research question(s) (Mason, 2002). In this study of career experiences, data was collected according to theoretical sampling, a process developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). With theoretical sampling (also known as theory-based or purposive sampling), the researcher looks for manifestations of the theoretical concept of interest, so as to elaborate and examine the construct and its variations (Cohen *et al*., 2007; Patton, 2002; Punch, 2005). The data collection is controlled by the emerging theory and the participants are

selected based on an expected level of new insight for the developing theory in relation to the state of theory elaboration to date (Flick, 2002; Mason, 2002; Silverman, 2006). The process continues until saturation of data is reached, that is, the inquirer ceases integrating further cases when no additional information is found (Cohen *et al.*, 2007; Creswell, 2007; Flick, 2002; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Mason, 2002; Silverman, 2009; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998).

To explore how Community Employment scheme participants make sense of their career experiences, I contacted seven schemes that I had previously provided services to in the South Dublin and North County Wicklow region. (The contextualisation chapter describes the structure of Community Employment and the types of organisations represented by the respondents.) I requested permission from each of the scheme's supervisors to interview the participants, excluding those people with whom I had professionally worked in the past (see Appendix C). Once agreement was secured, the participants self-selected themselves in (or out) of the process. A total of 28 episodic interviews were conducted from mid-February 2009 to early-June 2009, all carried out at the informant's place of work. One of the interviews was not tape-recorded, as the participant did not give her permission to record the discussion. From a research perspective, this interview is valid, but I do not feel that I can portray the participant's voice accurately without a recorded transcript, particularly as I found myself focusing on noting what she was saying, rather than listening to what she was narrating. Consequently, this woman's career story is not included. In total, 27 „usable' episodic interviews were undertaken until saturation of data was reached, that is, until I found no additional information. Of these, the first four interviews were pilots, but, as the participants chronicled such rich descriptions of their careers, I include them in the analysis.

The interviews were tape-recorded with the participants' permission (the consent form is contained in Appendix C) and subsequently transcribed verbatim. Table 2.3 (p.65) describes the personal profile of the participants and the logistical arrangements surrounding the interviews. The classification of the respondents' details replicates the format used in the 2006 census and is described in Appendix D (educational attainment, marital status, family unit, ethnic origin and socio-economic status) (CSO, 2007a, b, c, d). The participants are listed in the sequential order that the interviews were conducted.

All participants are portrayed by a pseudonym, even though 18 out of 27 individuals agreed to use both their own name and the name of the scheme to identify themselves. The reason I employ an alias for all interviewees, despite the majority opting for public representation, is to guarantee confidentiality, as I believe that I may be unable to control how the informants' voices will be depicted in the future (Gready, 2008). The average length of an interview was 38 minutes, with the range extending from 20 to 60 minutes. This was somewhat shorter than the expected duration of between 60 to 90 minutes (Flick, 2000) due to the underdeveloped communication skills of some of the participants, a recognised potential difficulty with episodic interviewing (Flick, 2009). This issue is further discussed in Chapter Nine.

A global summary of the personal details gleaned from the 27 respondents is presented in Table 2.4 (p.69). The majority of the participants are female (22 out of 27, that is, 82 per cent). In relation to ethnicity, the preponderant group is white Irish (26 out of 27), with one informant being an Irish traveller. The participants also span a range of ages, with the majority (44 per cent) at the mid-life stage: six individuals are aged 35 to 39; and six are 40 to 44 years. Three people in the sample (11 per cent) have a disability, two physical and one intellectual.

Regarding educational qualifications: three participants completed primary-school level only, though one of these subsequently went on to attain a technical/vocational qualification; 13 respondents left school upon finishing lower second-level, nonetheless, three of these went on to achieve a technical/vocational qualification; seven respondents left school at upper second-level, however, one of these later acquired a technical/vocational qualification; and four people went to college, three at primary degree level and one at non-degree level. In terms of socio-economic status (self declared, but with an explanation from me): a total of 10 participants claim that they are semi-skilled; six are unskilled; five say manual skilled; three maintain non-manual; and three state lower professional. (The participant's socio-economic status is not directly correlated with educational standards). Of the 27 participants, 17 are single (have never married) and 20 of them have at least one child.

Table 2.3 Personal Profiles of the Research Participants

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Education*^	Marital Status*	Family Unit*	Ethnicity*	Socio-Economic Status*	Portrayal in Dissertation	Duration of Interview	Date of Interview
Anna (p)	Female	55 - 59	Primary only	Single (never married)	No children	White Irish	Semi-skilled	Own name & scheme name	60 mins	11/02/09
Betty (p)	Female	35 - 39	Non-degree	Single (never married)	1 child	White Irish	Semi-skilled	Own name & scheme name	40 mins	18/02/09
Dorothy (p)	Female	45 - 49	Lower secondary and technical or vocational	Divorced	2 children	White Irish	Manual skilled	Own name & scheme name	35 mins	18/02/09
Colm (p)	Male	40 - 44	Lower secondary and technical or vocational	Single (never married)	No children	White Irish	Manual skilled	Own name & scheme name	50 mins	18/02/09
Elizabeth	Female	40 - 44	Primary degree	Separated (including deserted)	1 child	White Irish	Lower professional	Unnamed & scheme unnamed	43 mins	18/03/09
Fiona	Female	35 - 39	Upper secondary	Single (never married)	1 child	White Irish	Semi-skilled	Own name & scheme name	40 mins	18/03/09

Name	Gender	Age	Education*^	Marital Status*	Family Unit*	Ethnicity*	Socio-Economic Status*	Portrayal in Dissertation	Duration of Interview	Date of Interview
Geraldine	Female	35 - 39	Lower secondary	Single (never married)	2 children	White Irish	Unskilled	Unnamed & scheme unnamed	39 mins	31/03/09
Hilda	Female	45 - 49	Lower secondary	Separated (including deserted)	2 children	White Irish	Unskilled	Unnamed & scheme unnamed	33 mins	31/03/09
Isobel	Female	35 - 39	Primary degree	Single (never married)	No children	White Irish	Non-manual	Unnamed & scheme unnamed	44 mins	31/03/09
John	Male	35 - 39	Upper secondary	Single (never married)	No children	White Irish	Semi-skilled	Own name & scheme name	34 mins	01/04/09
Katrina	Female	55 - 59	Lower secondary	Widowed	6 children	White Irish	Unskilled	Own name & scheme name	29 mins	07/04/09
Lara	Female	40 - 44	Upper secondary	Widowed	4 children	White Irish	Unskilled	Own name & scheme name	37 mins	07/04/09
Maura	Female	50 - 54	Lower secondary	Divorced	2 children	White Irish	Lower professional	Unnamed & scheme unnamed	51 mins	07/04/09
Nora	Female	40 - 44	Primary only	Single (never married)	2 children	White Irish	Unskilled	Own name & scheme name	40 mins	07/04/09

Name	Gender	Age	Education*^	Marital Status*	Family Unit*	Ethnicity*	Socio-Economic Status*	Portrayal in Dissertation	Duration of Interview	Date of Interview
Oliver	Male	25 - 29	Primary degree	Single (never married)	No children	White Irish	Lower professional	Unnamed & scheme unnamed	50 mins	13/05/09
Penelope	Female	55 - 59	Primary and technical or vocational	Single (never married)	1 child	White Irish	Semi-skilled	Unnamed & scheme unnamed	36 mins	13/05/09
Queenie	Female	60 - 64	Upper secondary	Married (first marriage)	5 children - 2 deceased	White Irish	Non-manual	Unnamed & scheme unnamed	46 mins	13/05/09
Rachel	Female	40 - 44	Lower secondary	Single (never married)	3 children	White Irish	Semi-skilled	Own name & scheme name	25 mins	13/05/09
Sharon	Female	25 - 29	Upper secondary and technical or vocational	Single (never married)	No children	White Irish	Non-manual	Unnamed & scheme unnamed	30 mins	20/05/09
Tanya	Female	45 - 49	Upper secondary	Single (never married)	5 children	White Irish	Manual skilled	Own name & scheme name	25 mins	27/05/09
Ursula	Female	55 - 59	Upper secondary	Widowed	4 children	White Irish	Semi-skilled	Own name & scheme name	38 mins	27/05/09
Violet	Female	45 - 49	Lower secondary	Single (never married)	5 children	White Irish	Semi-skilled	Own name & scheme name	34 mins	27/05/09

Name	Gender	Age	Education*^	Marital Status*	Family unit*	Ethnicity*	Socio-economic status*	Portrayal in dissertation	Duration of interview	Date of Interview
Wendy	Female	35 - 39	Lower secondary	Single (never married)	3 children	White Irish	Semi-skilled	Own name & scheme name	26 mins	27/05/09
Xandra	Female	20 - 24	Lower secondary	Single (never married)	No children	White Irish	Semi-skilled	Own name & scheme name	20 mins	27/05/09
Yvonne	Female	55 - 59	Lower secondary	Single (never married)	1 child	White Irish	Manual skilled	Own name & scheme name	34 mins	28/05/09
Zach	Male	40 - 44	Lower secondary	Separated (including deserted)	6 children	White Irish Traveller	Unskilled	Own name & scheme name	43 mins	08/06/09
Aaron	Male	50 - 54	Lower secondary and technical or vocational	Married (first marriage)	3 children	White Irish	Manual skilled	Own name & scheme name	33 mins	09/06/09

Source: Developed by author, Sue Mulhall.

Notes:

* Denotes classification used by the CSO in Ireland's 2006 census (CSO, 2007a, b, c, d).

(p) Indicates pilot interviewee, so interview not as comprehensive as full interviewees.

^ The Republic of Ireland offers three levels of education - primary, secondary and third-level. Children start primary education at the age of four or five and continue there for eight years. Thereupon, they enter at least five years of secondary education, with one optional, additional year of non-academic schooling available. Secondary education finishes when the student takes his or her final state examination (Leaving Certificate), usually at age 17 or 18. As the legal school-leaving age is 16 (Citizens Information, 2010b), not all children attain this qualification. Students who enter tertiary education opt for a course of study accredited under the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). The NFQ is a system of ten levels, based on standards of knowledge, skill and competence. It provides a structure to compare and contrast different qualifications, with „1' signifying certificate level and „10' denoting doctorate degree. Levels 1 to 6 are accredited by the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) and levels 6 to 10 by the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) (NFQ, 2010).

Table 2.4 Global Summary from the Personal Profiles of the Research Participants

Category	Classification	Number of Participants (n=27)
Gender	Female	5
	Male	22
Age	< 20 years	0
	20 – 24 years	1
	25 – 29 years	2
	30 – 34 years	0
	35 – 39 years	6
	40 – 44 years	6
	45 – 49 years	4
	50 – 54 years	2
	55 – 59 years	5
	60 – 64 years	1
	65+ years	0
Marital status	Single (never married)	17
	Married (first marriage)	2
	Remarried (following widowhood)	0
	Remarried (following dissolution of previous marriage)	0
	Separated (including deserted)	3
	Divorced	2
	Widowed	3
	Other	0
Family unit	No children	7
	Children	20
Ethnic or cultural background	White:	
	Irish	26
	Irish traveller	1
	Any other White background	0
	Black or Black Irish:	
	African	0
	Any other Black background	0
	Asian or Asian Irish:	
	Chinese	0
	Any other Asian background	0
	Other (including mixed background)	0

Category	Classification	Number of Participants
Socio-economic group (self-declared)	Employer/manager	0
	Higher professional	0
	Lower professional	3
	Non-manual	3
	Manual skilled	5
	Semi-skilled	10
	Unskilled	6
	Own account worker	0
	Farmer	0
	Agricultural worker	0
	Gainfully occupied, but unknown	0
Educational qualifications	No formal education	0
	Primary education only	2
	Secondary education only:	
	Lower secondary	10
	Upper secondary	6
	Both primary education and technical or vocational	1
	Both lower secondary and technical or vocational	3
	Both upper secondary and technical or vocational	1
	Third-level education:	
	Non-degree	1
	Primary degree	3
	Professional qualification (of degree status at least)	0
	Both a degree and a professional qualification	0
	Postgraduate certificate or diploma	0
	Postgraduate degree (masters)	0
	Doctorate (PhD)	0
		0
How voice of participant is to be portrayed	Use own name and scheme name	18
	Use unnamed participant and unnamed scheme	9
Duration of interview	Average length	38 minutes
	Minimum length	20 minutes
	Maximum length	60 minutes

Source: Developed by author, Sue Mulhall.

2.6 INTERPRETATION AND EVALUATION

2.6.1 Abductive Approach

In the final phase of Denzin and Lincoln's (2005) five-stage research process, qualitative interpretations are constructed by the researcher. This narrative study adopts an abductive research strategy, whereby theory, data collection and data analysis are developed simultaneously in a dialectical process, as I move back and forth between data analysis and the process of explanation (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009; Blaikie, 2007, 2010; Mason, 2002; Reichertz, 2007). In abduction, a single case is interpreted from a hypothetic overarching pattern, which, if it were true, explains the case in question, so the elucidation should then be strengthened by new observations. During this process, the empirical area of application is successively developed and the theory (the proposed overarching pattern) is also adjusted and refined (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009). Using this approach, I alternate between previous theory and empirical facts, so that both are successively reinterpreted in the light of each other (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009; Blaikie, 2007, 2010; Mason, 2002; Reichertz, 2007; Silverman, 2009). Consequently, to explore how the participants construct, interpret and make sense of their career experiences, I adhere to Czarniawska-Joerges' (2004) stages in the narrative research process, but not in the linear sequence she depicts (collection of stories, interpretation, analysis, deconstruction, reconstruction and comparison/integration with other stories). The process results in new propositions appearing at each stage of interpretation and evaluation, such that the data is not finalised at an early stage, but new theories are constantly developed and redeveloped (Reichertz, 2007), as evidenced in the findings and discussions chapters.

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2.6.2 Ensuring Ethical Episodic Interviews: Research Practice, Triangulation, Reliability and Validity

Conducting ethical qualitative research involves principled practice and appropriate codes of conduct (Marshall & Rossman, 2010; Mason, 2002; Patton, 2002; Punch, 2005; Silverman, 2006, 2009; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). Ethical behaviour rests on the maxim of assuring the free consent of respondents to engage in the study, guarding the confidentiality of the material and protecting participants from any harm that may ensue from their involvement (Josselson, 2007; Kvale, 1996; Sieber, 1992; Smythe & Murray, 2000; Stark, 1998). Given the background of people partaking on Community Employment, individuals who have experienced long-term unemployment (see Chapter Three), I am conscious of my role as an ethical researcher to safeguard their integrity. In addition, my familiarity with the sector (see Section 2.2.1) alerts me to the possibility that my research involves sensitive events and topics (Hydén, 2008; Josselson, 2007). Consequently, my approach needs to be ethical to ensure that people are not potentially damaged from participation in this inquiry. As it transpired, a number of the participants used the interview to articulate delicate areas of their lives, narrating stories that they had never previously told. These issues are described in the findings and discussions chapters. The strategies I embrace to establish ethical interviews (described in Table 2.5) involve four distinct areas of practice: gaining permission to enter the field; carrying out the interviews; transcribing the interviews; and maintaining confidentiality. I believe that these actions protect the informants and ensure an ethical relationship between myself, as interviewer, and the Community Employment scheme participant, as interviewee (Gready, 2008; Hollingsworth & Dybdahl, 2007; Hydén, 2008; Mishler, 1986; Squire *et al.*, 2008).

Table 2.5 Strategies to Ensure Ethical Research Practice

Phase	*Strategy*	*Outcome*
Entering the field	Obtained permission from schemes through Supervisors (Appendix C)	7 schemes representing 12 organisations contacted All agreed to partake in the study (Chapter Three)
	Supervisors advised participants had the option to accept or decline	28 participants decided to be interviewed
Conducting interviews	Purpose of the interview was outlined (Appendices B and C)	All 28 participants gave written consent
	Written consent to engage in the interview was sought (Appendix C)	All 28 participants gave written consent
	Written consent to tape-record the interview was sought (Appendix C)	27 participants gave written consent (Section 2.5.2)
	Advised participants that tape-recorder could be turned off at any stage	2 participants availed of this before resuming the recorded conversation
	Participants had choice about providing personal details (Appendix D)	All 28 participants supplied the information
	To facilitate reflection about the content and context of the interview	Wrote field notes immediately after each interview Maintained a journal of the experience

Phase	Strategy	Outcome
Transcribing interviews	Informed participants that they could receive a copy of the typed transcript to peruse, check, edit and/or delete	3 participants asked for copies of their transcripts, but none requested amendments
	Ensured accuracy of information	Contacted 2 participants post-interview to clarify details of the taped discussion (Chapter Nine)
	Ensured accuracy of transcription	Average time to transcribe an interview was 6½ hours
Maintaining confidentiality	Provided options to participants to decide on the depiction of their voice in the final analysis (Appendix C)	18 agreed to public portrayal and 9 preferred a pseudonym (Section 2.5.2)
	Storage of the documentation	1 participant asked for a written guarantee that the taped record would be erased

Source: Developed by author, Sue Mulhall.

As part of my ethical approach, the interviews are supported by field notes and a journal to facilitate continued self-reflection (Mills, 1959). Numerous authors have recommended that researchers keep dual field texts: notes that chronicle the existential, outward events; plus journal entries that record the researcher's inner responses (e.g., Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Flick, 2002; Mason, 2002; Mills, 1959; Silverman, 2006). These reflections are a record of oneself as the researcher experiencing the experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). I used my journal as a form of triangulation to assist in the validation of this research. My observations on my doctoral journey, based on this journal, are contained in Section 2.7.

Narrative inquiry seeks to elaborate and investigate an individual's interpretation of his or her thoughts and feelings surrounding the experiences and events that he or she encounters (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Gabriel, 2004; Riessman, 2008; Squire *et al*., 2008; Webster & Mertova, 2007). It is, therefore, not an exact replica of what happened, but is more concerned with individual truths than identifying generalisable and repeatable occurrences (Czarniawska-Joerges, 2004). Consequently, the definitions of reliability and validity, commonly used in traditional research, require a rethinking and redefining for narrative inquiry (Polkinghorne, 1988; Webster & Mertova, 2007). Polkinghorne (1988) argues that reliability should relate to the accuracy and trustworthiness of the notes or transcripts, not to the stability of measurement, and that validity should be more closely associated with meaningful analysis that is well grounded and supported by the data that has been collected, than with consequences. According to Polkinghorne (1988), we need to re-orientate our measures when using narrative inquiry because the traditional criteria of reliability and validity are not appropriate to this research. Huberman (1995) contends that if the narrative

researcher can demonstrate rigorous methods of reading and interpreting that enable other inquirers to track down their conclusions, then reliability can be achieved.

It has been suggested that measures such as access, honesty, verisimilitude, authenticity, familiarity, transferability and economy are applicable to the narrative genre (Gabriel, 2004; Huberman, 1995; Webster & Mertova, 2007). All seven criteria are evident in my research:

- Access – access can be viewed in two ways: access by readers of the study to the participants, their cultural context and the process of the construction of knowledge between the researcher and participants of the study; and availability and the representation to the same audience of the research notes, transcripts and data on which the researcher has based the findings (Webster & Mertova, 2007). To facilitate access on both of these counts, I use the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 2006) as my method of analysis (described in Section 2.6.3).

- Honesty – „truth value' can be demonstrated, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985: 296), when the researcher shows that he or she has portrayed the interviewee's multiple constructions adequately, that is, ensures that the interpretation is credible to the creator of the original manifold realities. As part of my ethical practice, I rely on „communicative validation' (Flick, 2000: 90), in which the interviewee is shown the data and/or interpretations resulting from his or her interview, so that he or she may consent, reject or correct them (as noted in Table 2.5).

- Verisimilitude – truthfulness can be created through the researcher telling coherent stories that resonate with readers, which display a level of plausibility (Gabriel,

2004; Webster & Mertova, 2007). By employing the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space, I link both the individual's local (micro) context with the broader (macro) environment to produce a systems theory approach to narrative inquiry, so that the reader has a comparative framework against which to view the stories.

- Authenticity – realism can be achieved when the researcher provides sufficient information to convince the reader that the story is told in an intelligible manner, with the well-formed narrative being culturally and historically situated (Gergen, 2001; Webster & Mertova, 2007). In narrating the career stories of the former non-employed, I use traditional storytelling conventions, such as incorporating the narrator's goals, actions and events in an ordered arrangement and exploring identity issues and causal linkages in their chronicles (Gergen, 2001).

- Familiarity – „dulling' occurs when our ways of conceiving of things become routine, thus we cease to know that we are thinking in a certain way, or why we are doing so (Amsterdam & Bruner, 2000: 1). To avoid this state of affairs, a researcher should make „the familiar strange again' (Bruner, 2002: 12). To uncover the assumptions underpinning career theory and research is one of the core aims of this inquiry.

- Transferability – application in another setting can be achieved when the researcher provides the tools to permit a person contemplating a similar study to conduct a comparable inquiry (Watson, 1997; Webster & Mertova, 2007). In my opinion, the research philosophy and methodology described in this chapter, combined with an explanation of the Community Employment scheme structure in Chapter Three, and the analysis and discussion of the findings, affords inquirers with the knowledge base to carry out an analogous study.

- Economy – transcripts can produce voluminous material, so an efficient method is required that will not compromise the integrity of the data or its findings (Flick, 2002; Pavlenko, 2007). The three-dimensional narrative inquiry space is such a framework of analysis.

2.6.3 Analysing Episodic Interviews: Three-Dimensional Narrative Inquiry Space

The three-dimensional narrative inquiry space (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 2006) is an appropriate approach for examining this study's empirical material because the method involves thematic coding, which is suitable for analysing data from episodic interviews (Flick, 2000, 2009). Thematic coding is applied as a two-stage procedure: firstly, interpreting the single case and producing a description for each case; and, secondly, cross-checking the developed categories and thematic domains linked to the single cases for comparative purposes (Flick, 2009). The theoretical background of thematic coding is the diversity of social worlds as assumed in the concept of social representations, that is, a constructivist/interpretive approach for understanding individual experience (Flick, 2000, 2009). As mentioned previously (Section 2.4.2), narrative approaches for comprehending the meaning of an individual's stories are what Lieblich *et al*. (1998) term holistic-content (Mensinga, 2009; Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002). The holistic-content analysis of field texts, such as interview transcripts, necessitates a set of steps based on the central feature of restorying a story from the original raw data (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002). The process of restorying includes reading the transcript, analysing this story to understand the living experiences, and then retelling the story. This is similar to Hernadi's (1987) hermeneutic triad of explication, explanation and exploration.

Restorying is the process of gathering stories, analysing them for their key elements (e.g., time, place, plot and scene), and then rewriting the story to place it within a chronological sequence. In the restorying of the participant's story and the telling of the themes, the narrative researcher includes rich detail about the setting or context of the participant's experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 2006; Webster & Mertova, 2007).

The metaphorical three-dimensional narrative inquiry space is an approach for retelling or restorying field texts (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002). Connelly and Clandinin (2006), based on their own work with narrative inquiry and grounded in a review of others' writing about narrative inquiry (e.g., Lieblich, 1995; Polkinghorne, 1988), identified three commonplaces of narrative inquiry - attention to temporality, place and sociality (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). In an earlier conceptualisation of the model, the cornerstones were referred to as continuity, situation and interaction, respectively (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). These three touchstones specify the dimensions of narrative inquiry and mark out its landscape space (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). The keystones concern the events and experiences in a person's narrative according to the timeframe in which they occurred (temporality), the significant settings in which they happened (place) and the personal and social resources utilised during these events and experiences (sociality). This creates a metaphorical three-dimensional narrative inquiry space, with temporality along one dimension, place along a second axis and sociality along the third. The cornerstones in Connelly and Clandinin's (2006) conceptualisation of the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space are detailed in Table 2.6, which are an adaptation of Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) earlier version of the framework.

Table 2.6 Conceptualisation of Connelly and Clandinin's (2006) Three-Dimensional Narrative Inquiry Space

Cornerstones of Narrative Inquiry					
Temporality			Place	Sociality	
Past	Present	Future		Personal	Social
Look backward to remembered experiences, feelings and stories from events, people and objects in earlier times	Look at current experiences, feelings and stories relating to present events, people and objects	Look forward to implied and possible experiences and plot lines from anticipated future events, people and objects	Look at concrete, physical and topological boundaries of place where the inquiry and events happen	Look inward to internal conditions, feelings, hopes, desires, aesthetic reactions and moral dispositions	Look outward to existential conditions in the environment and factors, forces and people that form the personal context

Source: Adapted from Ollerenshaw and Creswell (2002: 340).

Examples of narrative inquiries that have utilised this approach include: student teachers' experiences in a South African university (Barkhuzien, 2008); an account of an Inuit artist and mother (Clandinin & Huber, 2002); stories of developmentally disabled individuals (Clandinin & Raymond, 2006); experiences of pre- and in-service teachers (Mitton-Kükner, Nelson & Desrochers, 2010); and insights into immigrant Chinese educational experiences in Canada (Xu *et al*., 2007).

Narrative analyses, such as those generated by the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space, assist the researcher to identify the „critical moments' in a person's life; events that have potentially life-changing implications, around which pivotal decisions revolve (Webster & Mertova, 2007). Additionally, the method of data collection used in this study, the episodic interview, provides respondents with the benefit of hindsight to look back over

a long period of time, and enables me, the researcher, to pinpoint what were the critical moments, rather than just events that are fresh in the mind, thus deemed as important (Goodwin & O'Connor, 2009). Having collected the career stories from the 27 Community Employment scheme participants, I worked through them interpretivistically, restorying their experiences individually and then collectively, in the two-stage procedure involved in analysing data using thematic coding (Flick, 2000, 2009). This approach is further detailed in Chapter Six. It allowed me to „zoom out' from a detailed description of the critical moments in the participants' lives and careers, telescoping to the wider world (Czarniawska-Joerges, 2004: 120). The individual, micro-findings are described in Chapter Six and the global, macro-findings are discussed in Chapter Seven.

2.7 RESEARCHER'S REFLECTIONS ON HER DOCTORAL JOURNEY

As a biographically situated inquirer (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), I believe that my journal entries facilitate my self-knowledge and self-reflection. They have assisted me to tease out which aspects of what I have „observed' derive from me (researcher), which emanate from the object of observation (participant) and which from the interaction between us (Josselson, 2007). This reflexivity, in my opinion, is an integral part of my ethical research practice.

The metaphor of a journey is often used to make sense of experiences (Inkson & Elkin, 2008). In October 2005, I commenced my doctoral journey, albeit on a part-time basis, similar to how I managed all other aspects of my life; with energy and enthusiasm and in a linear, compartmentalised manner. This approach had always proved a productive path for

me, with one exception: becoming a mother. Being a parent is an all-pervasive activity, just like being a PhD student! It takes over every waking minute and even permeates the sleeping ones. From the conception of an idea for a dissertation, to nurturing the tentative steps of development, and on to witnessing the former fledgling becoming a fully formed, independent entity, I believe that I am now ready to allow this dissertation ('my baby') to speak for itself.

During this voyage, both the content of the dissertation, and the author of the text, me, have changed significantly (see Sections 2.2.2 and 2.3.2), with this final version reflecting how I now perceive my world, and act in that reality. I consider that I have moved from management expert to student, from problem-solver to reflector and from consultant to scholar. This transformation can be observed at each of the five stages of research postulated by Denzin and Lincoln (2005): researcher's background and viewpoint; theoretical paradigm and interpretive perspective; research strategy; methods of collection; and interpretation and evaluation (as evidenced from the preceding sections).

Throughout this personal odyssey, I have gained knowledge and information about topics and ways of thinking that I did not know actually existed, particularly from the critical literature. I also encountered many highs, including: transferring to the doctoral register (20.06.08); receiving a full-time scholarship from DIT (from 01.01.09 onwards); conducting my initial episodic interviews (11.02.09); reaching saturation of data (09.06.09); participating in my first doctoral colloquium and academic conference at the Academy of Management (07.08.09); and presenting papers nationally and internationally (Mulhall 2009, 2010a, b, c).

Obviously, the journey would not be complete without some cul-de-sacs and wrong turns. For me, the biggest disappointment I encountered was the feedback I received from my supervisors after submitting the first draft of my findings in mid-December 2009. I spent two months analysing the data from the interviews using the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space. In my opinion, I was being creative by extending the metaphorical quality of the model to explain each of the participants' stories through using an overall film metaphor to frame the dissertation, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (see Chapter One), and then paralleling every story with a character and associated plot from a well-known film. What I was actually doing was generating a huge amount of unnecessary work for myself, in tandem with only completing the first step of analysis in thematic coding (Flick, 2000, 2009). My supervisors observed that the stories comprised the raw data, rather than any in-depth analysis, and it was strongly suggested to omit the film metaphors, as they did not contribute to the stories, which I duly did.

My journal entries reflected my huge sense of frustration at their response:

> I was absolutely unprepared for the feedback, as I believed that what I submitted was what was required - a summary of all of the 27 career success stories arranged by career orientation. It will take me some time to reflect on the deliberations at this meeting and to identify clusters and patterns between the stories and map these against the table summarising Connelly and Clandinin's (2006) three-dimensional inquiry space model (15.12.09).

> I have spent a considerable period of time digesting the feedback and ruminating on how to re-work my findings into clusters and patterns. A tentative framework is beginning to emerge from the fog clouding my thinking, to use Giddens' (1991) „fateful moments' and Webster and Mertova's (1997) „critical incidents' as a starting point for the updated framework. The material I have sourced will certainly facilitate this process, but I am still struggling with how to revise the format (17.12.09).

I can honestly say that this was the only period of time during the past five years that I questioned my own ability to successfully complete a doctoral degree. As the findings and discussion chapters demonstrate, I readily accepted my supervisors' comments in the spirit that they were intended (constructive criticism). Their observations on this matter, and indeed many other issues, have considerably enhanced the overall dissertation; a piece of research that, I believe, makes a significant contribution to the careers literature.

2.8 CONCLUSION

As a narrative inquirer, I can contribute to career research by demonstrating both the complexity and variability of Community Employment scheme participants' career (re)constructions, in tandem with how the power of historical, social, cultural, organisational, discursive and interactional circumstances, shape the range of possibilities for the participants' career (re)construction. To achieve this, the study adopts a criticalist and constructivist ontology and a critical hermeneutic and critical interpretive epistemology (philosophy of the research design). It employs a narrative research strategy and collects the empirical data through episodic interviews to explore the career success stories of 27 participants (methodology).

The next chapter contextualises the study by placing the Community Employment scheme in the wider context of active labour market policy through providing an overview of such programmes, in addition to a comprehensive review of the Community Employment scheme.

Chapter Three

Contextualisation of the Study

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to furnish readers with appropriate background knowledge to understand a narrative inquiry that explores how 27 participants on an active labour market programme in Ireland, Community Employment, construct, interpret and make sense of their career experiences. Given the interpretative nature of the research, the chapter also contains my reflections concerning the context in which the inquiry is positioned.

The study agrees with Clandinin and Rosiek's (2007: 62) contention that an „individual's experience is shaped by macro-social processes of which he or she is often unaware and that the same individual's experience is more than the living out of a socially determined script'. This chapter, therefore, places Community Employment schemes within the wider environment of Irish active labour market programmes, which themselves are located in the broader parameters of national, European and international labour market policy. The chapter concentrates on the aims of active labour market programmes, both nationally and internationally, and how these objectives impact on the career experiences of those involved with such schemes. Its focus provides a platform for the latter part of the dissertation, which explores how the participants create and impose order on their careers. The chapter is supplemented and complimented by my prior experience as an external consultant with these schemes over an eight-year period (Chapter Two refers). It is recognised that this research could be further contextualised with reference to Ireland's economic and social policy, its socio-economic history, the major institutional players that shape Irish society and the country's transformed and transforming labour market. These

issues are addressed when the narratives are interpreted from a macro-structural perspective (see Chapter Seven).

The contextualisation chapter is divided into two sections: the first provides an overview of active labour market policies and programmes internationally and in Ireland; and the second offers a comprehensive review of the Community Employment scheme structure, Ireland's principal direct employment active labour market programme. The purpose of this chapter is to facilitate readers to appreciate the careers of the former non-employed, participants on Community Employment, and to assist them to identify with the stories that these respondents render.

3.2 ACTIVE LABOUR MARKET POLICIES

3.2.1 Evolution of Active Labour Market Policies Internationally

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 states that „everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment' (Auer, Efendioğlu & Leschke, 2005: 5). It is within this context that the International Labour Conference adopted the Employment Policy Convention (No. 122), pronouncing:

> With a view to stimulating economic growth and development, raising levels of living, meeting manpower requirements and overcoming unemployment and underdevelopment, each Member shall declare and pursue, as a major goal, an active policy designed to promote full, productive and freely chosen employment. (ILO, 1964: 1)

An active labour market policy is only one of the ways to „promote full, productive and freely chosen employment' (ILO, 1964: 1), but these policies are an increasingly important element of overall labour market policy, as witnessed from a growing reliance by the OECD countries on such programmes, particularly in the EU (Auer, 2000; Auer *et al*., 2005; de Koning, Mosley & Schmid, 2001; Kluve & Card, 2007; Martin, 2000; Nativel, 2004; OECD, 2009; Timonen, 2003). Labour market policies provide income replacement and integration measures to those seeking work, usually the unemployed, but also the underemployed and the employed looking for improved conditions. Policies concerned with affording alternative income during periods of joblessness or job search are termed passive policies, while active policies refer to labour market integration through demand or supply measures.

Commentators have maintained that the broader argument in favour of labour market policies in general, and active labour market policies in particular, is the need for insurance against the employment risks linked to globalisation, such as job losses and a more volatile labour market (e.g., Auer, 2006; Auer *et al*., 2005; de Koning *et al*., 2001; World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, 2004). The main thrust of active labour market policies is direct support for labour market (re)integration and they are explicitly contingent upon participation programmes that enhance this objective (Auer *et al*., 2005; de Koning *et al*., 2001; Kluve & Card, 2007; Hill & Halpen, 2008; Martin, 2000; Nativel, 2004; O'Connell & McGinnity, 1997; OECD, 2000).

The OECD (2000) delineates five main categories of active labour market programmes:

1. Public employment services and administration, encompassing the activities of job placement, benefits administration and the referral of jobseekers to available places on labour market programmes.

2. Labour market training, involving spending on vocational and remedial training for the unemployed and training for employed adults for labour market reasons.

3. Youth measures, consisting of training and employment programmes targeted at the young unemployed and apprenticeship training, aimed predominantly at school leavers.

4. Subsidised employment, embracing hiring subsidies paid to private-sector employers to encourage them to hire unemployed workers, assistance to unemployed persons, who wish to start their own business and direct employment/job creation for the unemployed in the public/not-for-profit sectors.

5. Measures for the disabled, including vocational rehabilitation, involving training to make this group more employable and sheltered work programmes that directly employ people with disabilities.

This study is located within the fourth group of active labour market programmes, subsidised employment, as Community Employment is an example of a direct employment scheme (Hill & Halpin, 2008; O'Connell, 2002; O'Connell & McGinnity, 1997).

Developing gradually over the twentieth century, the role of active labour market policy has undergone a fundamental transformation (Auer *et al*., 2005; Deloitte & Touche, 1998; de Koning *et al*., 2001; Hill & Halpen, 2008; O'Connell & McGinnity, 1997). Specific measures, such as job creation schemes, were introduced extensively during the Great

Depression in the 1930s. Training for the unemployed was applied on a wide scale after the Second World War, when there was a shortage of skilled labour. Active labour market policy, as an integral part of socio-economic policy, was first conceived and applied in Sweden, not as a response to widespread unemployment, but as a social democratic tool of macro-economic management to counter inflationary pressures resulting from full employment (Esping-Anderson, 1985). The Swedish model was taken up by the OECD in the 1960s, as a reaction to the combination of strong economic growth and full employment (OECD, 1964). At that time, active labour market policies included a range of measures designed to mobilise labour supply, improve the quality of the labour force through vocational training and augment the matching of vacancies and job seekers through enhanced placement and counselling services.

The sharp increase in unemployment throughout the advanced industrial countries in the aftermath of the first oil price shock in 1973 revealed marked changes in labour market relationships, as mass unemployment and slow growth coincided with rapid inflation (Auer *et al*., 2005; de Koning *et al*., 2001; Hill & Halpen, 2008; O'Connell & McGinnity, 1997). Initial actions to counter unemployment were based on the assumption that the problems were cyclical, and, therefore, temporary, and there was a shift in labour market policies to demand side measures. These included wage subsidies to stimulate the demand for labour, as well as promotion of early retirement to reduce labour supply, and, by the 1980s, temporary direct job creation schemes to absorb surplus labour.

The persistence of soaring unemployment, however, even during the expansionary periods of the 1980s, led to the realisation that high unemployment and other labour market problems were neither temporary nor simply due to insufficient demand. In the 1990s, this resulted in a further change in labour market policies based on the premise that structural difficulties in the market were primarily on the supply side, generating a renewed emphasis on earlier policies to mobilise the supply of labour (Auer *et al*., 2005; de Koning *et al*., 2001; Hill & Halpen, 2008; O'Connell & McGinnity, 1997). This change was reflected in the policy recommendations of the OECD (1993) to transfer labour market expenditures from passive measures, which provide protection for unemployed workers, to active programmes, which mobilise labour supply, develop the skills and competencies of the labour force and strengthen the job search process.

From the 1990s onwards, European policymakers have viewed active labour market policy as a means of ameliorating unemployment, especially long-term unemployment. Unemployment was, and is, viewed as a major cause of poverty and social exclusion (de Koning, van Nes & van der Veen, 1999; OECD, 2009; Ramprakash, 1994). Consequently, the prevention of long-term and recurrent unemployment is perceived as a major contribution towards combating poverty and social exclusion (de Koning *et al*., 2001; Spicker, 2008). Active labour market policies are now recognised as important tools in combating social exclusion by reducing unemployment and, in particular, long-term unemployment (de Koning *et al*., 2001; Spicker, 2008).

This emphasis is particularly evident in the UK, where involvement in waged labour is considered by the government to be the principal route out of poverty and social exclusion, as well as a means of increasing economic competitiveness (McDowell, 2004, 2005). The New Deal (renamed the Flexible New Deal in October 2009) is a programme of active labour market policies introduced by the Labour government in 1998, which combines labour market policy, fiscal policy and welfare policy to prevent social exclusion. It was initiated to encourage individuals to enter employment and, thereby, enhance national competitiveness, in addition to challenging social exclusion. These objectives are achieved by providing training, subsidised employment and voluntary work to the unemployed, offering tax credits to support the working poor, and instigating a reduction of the value of welfare benefits for those not in waged work (McDowell *et al.*, 2005, 2006). The policies aim to address the underemployment of low-income families, especially female lone parents, in addition to combating the poverty, social exclusion and limited social capital of working class children in certain geographic locations in the UK (Scott *et al.*, 2002). The rationale underpinning the New Deal is that it is the state's responsibility to remove potential barriers that prevent engagement in paid employment, such as a lack of childcare facilities that may discourage, for example, female labour force participation (McArthur, 1999; Scott *et al.*, 2002). As part of an integrated set of policies focused on „making work pay' (McDowell, 2005: 367), tax credits have been introduced for low income parents with dependent children, as well as financial support for childcare, the establishment of a national childcare strategy, and the introduction of a programme (entitled Sure Start) to assist young children in inner city areas, by bringing together early education, childcare, plus health and family support (McDowell, 2005).

3.2.2 Evolution of Active Labour Market Policies in Ireland

Numerous commentators have charted the development of active labour market policies in Ireland (Coakley, 2004; Deloitte & Touche, 1998; Denny, Harmon & O'Connell, 2000; Hill & Halpen, 2008; Ó Cinnéide & Ryan, 2004; O'Connell, 2002; O'Connell & McGinnity, 1997). During the 1960s and 1970s, labour market policy was mainly confined to the organisation of apprenticeship training and facilitating the efficient matching of supply and demand for labour. These policies were in line with the OECD's manpower policy aimed at achieving full employment and strong growth (OECD, 1964). By the latter half of the 1970s, the government introduced a variety of active labour market measures aimed at alleviating unemployment: Community Youth Training programme and Premium Employment programme in 1975; Environmental Improvement scheme and Temporary Grant scheme for Youth Employment (later renamed Teamwork) in 1976; Employment Incentive scheme in 1977; Community Training Workshops in 1977; and a Work Experience programme in 1978 (O'Connell & McGinnity, 1997).

By the 1980s, active labour market polices had taken centre stage in the state's response to mass unemployment, particularly long-term unemployment (Duggan, 1999; Hill & Halpin, 2008; O'Connell & McGinnity, 1997). For example, the Social Employment scheme, a direct employment scheme, was introduced in 1984, and was succeeded by the Community Employment scheme in 1994. Many of these programmes were originally intended as temporary, designed to overcome what was viewed as a cyclical increase in total unemployment (Dineen, 1984; OECD, 1993). The National Economic and Social Council (NESC) contended that the perception of the unemployment crisis in Ireland as transitory

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had a significant impact on the evolution of active labour market programmes (NESC, 1986). The development of these measures tended to be *ad hoc*, responding to specific difficulties at particular times, rather than in the context of an overall manpower policy. Consequently, active labour market policy was characterised by a distinct lack of co-ordination and strategic planning (O'Connell & McGinnity, 1997). The establishment of FÁS in 1988, from the merger of three disparate organisations dealing with training, job search and youth unemployment created a more integrated service (FÁS, 2007).

Between 1983 and 2002, two patterns are discernible in active labour market programmes in Ireland (see Table 3.1): a general period of expansion, from 1983 to 1997, and a re-orientation of emphasis in public policy, from 1998 to 2002 (Hill & Halpin, 2008), a model that has continued up to the present day.

Table 3.1 Indicative Active Labour Market Programme Participation Rates in Ireland (1983-2002)

Year	Training		Employment Subsidies		Direct Employment*		Total
	Numbers	%	Numbers	%	Numbers	%	
1983	29,958	65.2	11,000	23.9	5,000	10.9	45,958
1990	37,686	66.0	4,792	8.4	14,598	25.6	57,076
1992	30,600	58.8	3,831	7.4	17,642	33.9	52,073
1993	29,065	51.5	9,532	16.9	17,822	31.6	56,419
1994	33,682	38.2	17,420	19.8	37,038	42.0	88,140
1997	28,850	26.0	26,115	23.5	56,090	50.5	111,055
1998	14,238	14.9	41,859	43.8	39,520	41.3	95,617
1999	15,789	17.2	39,581	43.0	36,579	39.8	91,949
2000	15,510	18.1	36,686	42.8	33,549	39.1	85,745
2001	17,693	21.5	33,807	41.1	30,692	37.3	82,192
2002	17,533	22.4	32,862	42.1	27,718	35.5	78,113
Mean	*20,471*	*22.6*	*32,619*	*36.6*	*37,312*	*40.8*	*90,402*

Source: Hill and Halpin (2008: 10).

Note:
* Includes Community Employment (Social Employment pre-1995), Teamwork (pre-1997) and Part-Time Job Opportunities (pre-1997).

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The growth in participation in active labour market programmes during the first period, from 1983 to 1997, reflected a deterioration of the Irish macro-economy, with unemployment peaking at 17.1 per cent in 1986 and the long-term unemployment rate reaching its nadir in 1990 at 70.5 per cent (Hill & Halpin, 2008). In 1983, a total of 45,055 people participated on active labour market programmes (representing 3.5 per cent of the labour force and 25.1 per cent of the unemployed), comprising: 65 per cent training; 24 per cent employment subsidies; and 11 per cent direct employment. By 1997, some 111,055 people were engaged on these programmes (corresponding to 7.2 per cent of the labour force and 69.8 per cent of the unemployed), composed of: training 26 per cent; employment subsidies 24 per cent; and direct employment 50 per cent (Hill & Halpin, 2008; O'Connell & McGinnity, 1997). The latter phase, 1998 to 2002, was an era characterised by low unemployment rates, e.g., 5.7 per cent in 1999 and 4.2 per cent in 2002 (Hill & Halpin, 2008). With the emergence of labour shortages at the end of the 1990s, the need for a large-scale temporary employment programme was reduced (FÁS, 2007). In a visible reorientation of active labour market policy in 1998, of the 95,617 participants, 15 per cent participated in training programmes, 44 per cent received direct subsidies and 41 per cent were in direct employment (Hill & Halpin, 2008; Indecon, 2002).

The changed focus in public policy coincided with the adoption by the Irish government, in September 1998, of the Irish National Employment Action Plan. This was in response to the European Employment Guidelines, which requested EU states to formulate preventative strategies to combat long-term unemployment based on early and systematic intervention to re-integrate unemployed people into the labour market (Layte & O'Connell, 2001, 2005). By 2002, training accounted for 22 per cent of all active labour market participation,

employment subsidies 42 per cent and direct employment 36 per cent (Hill & Halpin, 2008). The „die was clearly cast in favour of subsidised employment schemes with a supporting role for training and an ever-decreasing allocation of places to direct-employment schemes, such as Community Employment' (Hill & Halpin, 2008: 11).

This policy continues to be pursued by the Irish government, a position supported by the OECD (2009), based on an evaluation of 199 active labour market programmes since 1995 (Card, Kluve & Weber, 2009). Targeted and temporary subsidies, combined with classroom and on-the-job training, but with a reduced reliance on direct employment programmes, like Community Employment, is advocated to manage Ireland's currently high level of unemployment (OECD, 2009), 13.75 per cent estimate for 2010 (IMF, 2010). This direction has been reinforced by recent developments, such the provision of 51,000 training places for unemployed people, which is over the 27,000 previously planned by FÁS in 2009 (Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, 2009a) and the extension of the Employment Subsidy scheme to support the retention of at risk jobs due to the financial crisis (Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, 2009b).

3.3 COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT: IRELAND'S PRINCIPAL DIRECT EMPLOYMENT ACTIVE LABOUR MARKET PROGRAMME

3.3.1 Purpose and Participation

The Community Employment scheme is Ireland's principal active labour market programme (Deloitte & Touche, 1998; Denny *et al*., 2000; Layte & O'Connell, 2001, 2005; O'Connell, 2002; O'Connell & McGinnity, 1997; OECD, 2009). It is operated by FÁS, the national training and employment authority (explained in Chapter One), with the aim of enhancing the employability and mobility of disadvantaged individuals, such as long-term unemployed persons and lone parents, by providing opportunities for them to engage in temporary work within their communities. The scheme's purpose is to facilitate participants to re-enter the active workforce by breaking their experience of unemployment through a return-to-work routine (FÁS, 2008). In addition, it assists them to develop both their technical and personal skills, which can then be used in the workplace (FÁS, 2008).

At the end of 2008 (the most recent data available), there were 22,896 people engaged on such schemes in Ireland (FÁS, 2008). Reflecting the previous discussion (Section 3.2.2), participation on Community Employment has mirrored the direction of Irish labour market policy since its inception in 1994 (as did its predecessor, Social Employment, from 1984 to 1994). Table 3.1 denotes the number of people partaking on direct employment schemes from 1983 to 2002, covering participation rates on the Social Employment scheme and the early stages of Community Employment. This indicates that participation on direct

employment schemes peaked in 1997, in absolute and relative terms: 56,090 individuals, comprising 50.5 per cent of all participants engaged on active labour market programmes.

The situation from 2003 to 2008 (the most recent data available) is outlined in Table 3.2 (FÁS, 2003, 2004, 2005a, 2006, 2007, 2008). This signifies a general downward trend of participation on all direct employment schemes, but with Community Employment accounting for a growing share of the declining total (from 89.55 per cent in 2003 to 92.33 per cent in 2008). Unsurprisingly, given the profile of the groups targeted for the programme, the long-term unemployed represent the majority of participants (93 per cent) and women are more likely to engage on a scheme than men (58 per cent versus 42 per cent in 2005). The declining participation rates have to be viewed against a backdrop of the overall labour market between 2003 and 2008: annualised unemployment for the six years was 4.4, 4.4, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5 and 6.4 per cent respectively; and the long-term unemployment rate was 35.7, 34.4, 33.8, 33.7, 30 and 40.9 per cent respectively (CSO, 2010a; Hill & Halpin, 2008).

Table 3.2 Participation on Direct Employment Schemes Including Community Employment (CE) (2003-2008)

Scheme	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
CE - participants at year end	20,000	22,194	22,635	22,281	22,992	22,896
CE - throughput participant numbers*	33,115	28,653	29,385	30,141	29,913	30,632
Other direct employment programmes - throughput participant numbers*	3,863	3,140	2,716	1,985	1,690	2,544
Total direct employment programmes - throughput participant numbers*	36,978	31,793	32,101	32,126	31,603	33,176
CE as % of total direct employment programmes - throughput participant numbers*	89.55%	90.12%	91.54%	93.82%	94.65%	92.33%
% Women**	57	58	58	N/A	N/A	N/A
% Men**	43	42	42	N/A	N/A	N/A
% Long-term unemployed^ **	93	93	93	N/A	N/A	N/A

Source: Developed by author, Sue Mulhall based on information from FÁS Annual Reports, 2003 to 2008 inclusive.

Notes:

* Throughput figures denote the number of participants who finished their programme in the relevant timeframe, including exits from the scheme.
** Combines Community Employment and Jobs Initiative programmes; refers to the percentage that these participants made up of „new starts' during the year; figures not reported in 2006, 2007 and 2008.
^ Long-term unemployed includes all persons who were unemployed for over twelve months, whether on the Live Register or not; figures not reported in 2006, 2007 and 2008.

3.3.2 Structure

Within Community Employment, there are a number of stakeholders: government departments, who devise active labour market policy, in conjunction with the EU; FÁS, who operates and funds the scheme; sponsor organisations, such as community groups, local authorities and not-for-profit companies, who employ the participants; supervisors, who manage the daily work and training schedules of the participants; consultants, who provide training for the participants; and the participants, who work in the sponsor organisations and augment their skills through on-the-job and off-the-job training (Deloitte & Touche, 1998; FÁS, 1998b). A top-down approach is utilised to explain how I (formerly a consultant for the schemes), and the 27 research participants, fit into the overall structure of Community Employment (see Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1 Locating the Community Employment Scheme Participant and the Researcher (Former Consultant) in the Framework of Active Labour Market Policy

Source: Developed by author, Sue Mulhall.

100
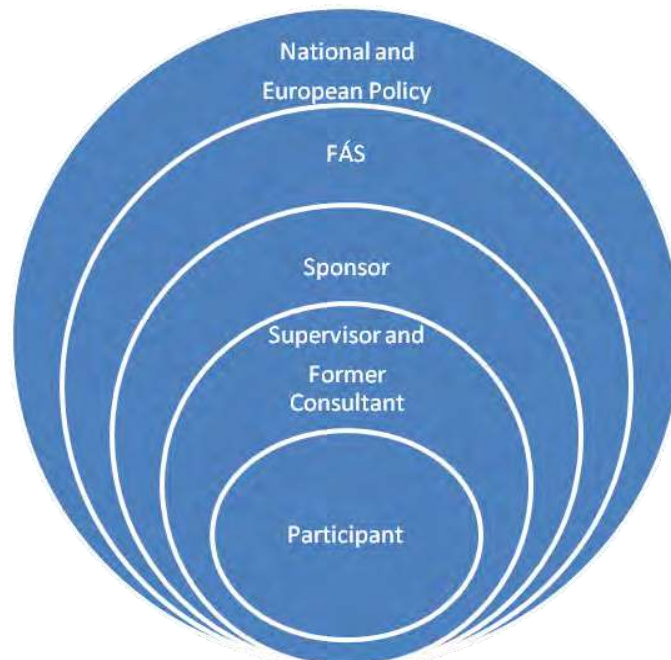
The Community Employment scheme operates under the auspices of the National Development Plan (NDP), which addresses the labour market and human capital needs of the Irish economy during a particular timeframe. Initially, Community Employment was funded under the Human Resources Development Operational Programme of the NDP, as part of the sub-programme „re-integration of the socially excluded' (Department of Finance, 1994). Subsequently, it was part of the Employment and Human Resources Development Operational Programme, under the sub-programme of „action programme for the unemployed' (Department of Finance, 2000). The current plan's pertinent programme is the Human Capital Priority and Community Employment and is covered by the sub-programme „activation and participation of groups outside of the workforce' (Department of Finance, 2007).

The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Innovation is responsible for active labour market programmes, and, in that capacity, channels exchequer funds to Community Employment through FÁS (Deloitte & Touche, 1998). The Department of Finance is accountable for ascertaining that the scheme is an appropriate measure in the prevailing labour market and for ensuring that value-for-money is achieved (Deloitte & Touche, 1998). Expenditure on Community Employment totalled €378m in 2008, with overall funding averaging just over €326m per annum between 2000 and 2008 (FÁS, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005a, 2006, 2007, 2008). Despite Ireland's general expenditure on labour market policy being low by European standards (0.69% of GDP for Ireland versus 0.77% for the EU), it is high when only direct employment schemes, particularly Community Employment, are included (0.24% of GDP versus 0.10%) (OECD, 2009).

3.3.3 Operation

FÁS has overall responsibility for the management and funding of Community Employment. It operates under the remit of three government departments, with the Community Employment scheme coming under the auspices of the Department of Social Protection (Lynch, 2010). The stated mission of FÁS (2005b: 3) is:

> To promote a more competitive and inclusive knowledge-based economy, in collaboration with our stakeholders, by enhancing the skills and capabilities of individuals and enterprises. FÁS puts equal emphasis on achieving national economic and social priorities. It does so by upgrading the skills and capabilities of individuals and enterprises.

The organisation functions on a regional basis, with eight different areas, each with its own staff and budgets, overseeing the delivery and resourcing of the scheme at a local level (prior to 2001, there were ten districts). This narrative inquiry is geographically located in South Dublin and North Wicklow, involving two of the eight sections (Dublin and the South-East). The implementation of Community Employment at regional level is managed through the Community Services Unit at corporate level. At a national level, there is liaison between FÁS and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Innovation on the overall development of the programme (Deloitte & Touche, 1998; FÁS, 2005b).

The sponsor of the programme is the employer. Public bodies and voluntary organisations may support local/community projects that satisfy two conditions: respond to an identified community need; and provide training and development opportunities for participants (FÁS, 2008).

The responsibilities of sponsors have been identified, *inter alia*, as the (Deloitte & Touche, 1998; FÁS, 1998b):

- Recruitment of participants in conjunction with FÁS.

- Compliance with the relevant statutory and legal obligations of an employer.

- Offer of quality work experience and skills that are transferable to the labour market.

- Management and administration of the project.

- Availability of development and training, targeted towards building the readiness of the participants for involvement in the active labour market.

- Engagement as required in the Sponsor Development Programme.

- Establishment of a Project Management Committee, a full sub-committee of the sponsoring organisation to assist in managing the project.

A total of seven Community Employment schemes, represented by 12 different sponsor organisations, took part in this doctoral research: three family resource centres (schemes C, F and G); two community centres (scheme D); two parish centres (schemes D and E); a trade union centre for the unemployed (scheme B); a sheltered community (scheme D); a hospital providing care to elderly patients (scheme A); an advocacy organisation supporting women's development (scheme F); and an advocacy organisation for people with disabilities (scheme F). Table 3.3 provides further information about the schemes, the sponsor organisations, the participants and their positions. The participants' personal profiles are outlined in Table 2.3.

Table 3.3 Schemes, Sponsor Organisations, Participants and Positions in Study

Scheme	Sponsor Organisation	Participant	Position
A	Hospital	Anna	Recreational Assistant
B	Trade Union Centre for Unemployed	Betty	Graphic Designer
		Colm	Public Relations
		Dorothy	Receptionist
C	Family Resource Centre	Elizabeth	Administrator
		Fiona	Youth Project Worker
D	Community Centre	Geraldine	Cleaner/Caretaker
	Parish Centre	Hilda	Cleaner/Caretaker
	Community Centre	Isobel	Administrator
	Sheltered Community	John	Gardener
E	Parish Centre	Katrina	Childcare Worker
		Lara	Childcare Worker
		Maura	Receptionist
		Nora	Receptionist
F	Family Resource Centre	Penelope	Care Worker for Elderly
		Queenie	Childcare Worker
		Rachel	Childcare Worker
	Women's Advocacy Organisation	Sharon	Administrator
	Disabled Advocacy Organisation	Oliver	Administrator
		Yvonne	Administrator
G	Family Resource Centre	Tanya	Information & Welfare
		Ursula	Childcare Worker
		Violet	Receptionist
		Wendy	Childcare Worker
		Xandra	Childcare Worker
		Zach	Caretaker/Security
		Aaron	Caretaker/Security

Source: Developed by author, Sue Mulhall.

A supervisor oversees the administrative, technical and participant development aspects of the project. Each supervisor must attend supervisory workshops organised by FÁS, as part of his or her duties (Deloitte & Touche, 1998; FÁS, 1998b). This can lead to certification, depending on the additional studies that they undertake, such as: FÁS certification; a Diploma in First Line Management (Supervisory); or a Certificate in Community Workplace Management (FÁS, 2000). Supervisors also receive training to address issues of

literacy and substance abuse among participants (FÁS, 2003). The role of the supervisor has been deemed central to the successful operation of a scheme (Deloitte & Touche, 1998; FÁS, 1998b), as they provide direction, support and guidance for participants. Supervisors work in tandem with external consultants, who design and deliver training plans for project participants (Deloitte & Touche, 1998; FÁS, 1998b). My function as an external consultant in the Community Employment system is described in Chapter Two.

The role of the participant is to engage and to progress himself or herself, both on the scheme and through availing of development opportunities outside of the project (Deloitte & Touche, 1998; FÁS, 1998b). The principal factors relating to partaking on a Community Employment programme are: eligibility; terms and conditions of employment; remuneration rates; key duties and responsibilities; and training and development.

To participate on Community Employment a person must register with his or her local FÁS office and meet certain thresholds. The criteria for engaging on the scheme are based on age plus length of time in receipt of various social welfare payments. There are two different categories of Community Employment, each with its own requirements (FÁS, 2010). The Part-time Integration Option allows an individual to work under the programme for a maximum of one year, although extensions are possible depending on the person's circumstances. This scheme is aimed at people over 25, who are in receipt of social welfare payments (jobseekers, one family/lone parent and widow/widower's) for one year or more, in addition to people of 18 years or over receiving disability-related payments. The Part-time Job Option provides participants drawing social welfare payments (similar to the previous category) with part-time work placements of up to six years for people over 55, or

up to three years for individuals under 55. For those with a disability allowance, aged 55 to 65, they can opt for this arrangement for seven years. Participants with a disability allowance, aged 35 to 54, have a four-year timeframe. Travellers and refugees qualify for both formats (FÁS, 2010).

Participants operate under national standardised terms and conditions of employment, determined by FÁS and by contemporary employment legislation. Each person works 39 hours per fortnight (Deloitte & Touche, 1998; FÁS, 1998b), usually performing their duties in a 19-and-a-half hour week. Regardless of the format (Part-time Integration or Part-time Job), a participant is paid weekly by the sponsor, with FÁS offering grants towards the cost of employment. The level of this grant depends on whether participants have child or adult dependants; the more dependants, the higher the pay. The weekly rate of pay for a participant was reduced in Budgets 2010 and 2011, in line with a general decrease in social welfare payments (Department of Finance, 2009b, 2010). Provided that a participant's total income is below €317.43 per week, he or she retains all the secondary benefits that he or she received immediately prior to partaking on the scheme e.g., a fuel allowance (Citizens Information, 2010a). Some participants have a dual entitlement to both social welfare benefits and to Community Employment remuneration, mainly those on the one-parent family allowance and invalidity related payments (Department of Finance, 2009a).

A participant's day-to-day responsibilities are contingent upon the exigencies of the sponsor organisation's business. Using the example of a childcare worker, Lara describes her typical day in a community centre:

> In the morning we go in and they sit down and do the workbook for half an hour. From 9 to 10 they do their work and then we go outdoors from 10 o'clock. We go out for half an hour every day, for half an hour of play and then come in and have lunch time and then they do maybe jigsaws and then they go and have their play.

In terms of training and development, each participant has an individual learner plan, an initiative implemented in 2005. This supports his or her development through personal and project-related skills, in addition to the acquisition of specific progression-related competencies, to advance into employment and/or further training and education (FÁS, 2004, 2005a, 2007). In 1999, a core skills module was introduced, which was rolled-out nationally in 2000. Under this programme, participants, in consultation with their supervisor, can opt for a four-week work placement, or attend a certified course (FÁS, 1999, 2000), comprising material that FÁS designates as fundamental for participants to learn, such as job search techniques and basic computer proficiency. The core skills programme gained FETAC accreditation in 2002 (FÁS, 2002), a system explicated in Chapter Two. FÁS has developed a number of new FETAC awards at levels 3, 4 and 5 on the NFQ (a structure explained in Chapter Two) with specific relevance to Community Employment. Participants with no prior formal certification have the opportunity to return to education through a programme where they can work towards achieving a FETAC award at levels 1 to 3 (FÁS, 2007).

Once again, utilising the childcare worker as the exemplar, he or she will probably be studying for a Childcare Practitioner Certificate at level 5, or possibly a Childcare Supervision Advanced Certificate at level 6 (FETAC, 2010). His or her qualification will be obtained in addition to performing his or her daily duties of catering for the developmental, recreational and personal care needs of the children. The training is funded

by FÁS, and he or she is able to take time off work to attend the lectures. Each participant has an annual allocation of €500 for training, although, in Budget 2010, there was a provision to reduce this allowance by an unstated amount (Department of Finance, 2009b). The importance of training and development for a significant number of participants in this study is illustrated by Ursula's comments:

> I'm three years here and the amount of stuff I've done is unbelievable. Unbelievable, like. And I've just finished my Special Needs Assistant [SNA] course now as well. ... I can aim now going for to be an SNA because now I'm qualified, you know. I have my qualifications, you know. It's on paper.

3.3.4 Evaluation of Community Employment Schemes

Evaluation means to adjudicate on the effectiveness of a scheme in achieving its specified goals, that is, the desired outcomes that are expected to arise from the programme (Hill & Halpin, 2008). Regarding Community Employment, the results of such an assessment depends on what questions are asked, who is asked and how they are asked.

No comprehensive evaluation has been carried out on the Community Employment system in recent years (OECD, 2009), but, in terms of the research that has been conducted, the feedback is mixed. Examining the positive findings first, it has been noted that the scheme has a number of attractions for disadvantaged groups, such as lone parents, including: part-time; flexible; local; strong social dimension; uncomplicated application procedures; service-oriented work; and the payment is secure and pre-determined (CPA, 2002; Walsh, 1997). The retention of secondary welfare benefits has also been extolled (Coakley, 2005; Longford, 1999). The personal gains accruing from participation, such as increased social

interaction and integration, growth in self-confidence and self-esteem and the holistic development of the individual, have been acknowledged (Deloitte & Touche, 1998; Dublin Inner City Partnership, 1999). The scheme also has a positive impact on the subsequent employment rates of participants' vis-à-vis what would have happened if they had not engaged on the programme (Deloitte & Touche, 1998). A preliminary cost-benefit-analysis by Fitzpatrick Associates in 1995 found that the benefits from participation were 90 per cent greater than the net cost of the programme (FÁS, 1995). A follow-up study, carried out by Irish Marketing Surveys, established that 36 per cent of participants who entered the labour market after completing the programme secured employment (FÁS, 1995).

It has been argued that active labour market policies with strong linkages to the labour market, such as specific skills training and subsidised employment, are more likely to enhance the employment prospects of their participants (e.g., Denny *et al.*, 2000; Deloitte & Touche, 1998; Layte & O'Connell, 2001, 2005; O'Connell, 2002; O'Connell & McGinnity, 1997). Some commentators, however, have documented how Community Employment, with its weak linkages to the market, has limited impact on participants' immediate and longer-term employment prospects (Denny *et al.*, 2000; O'Connell, 2002; Sexton & O'Connell, 1996), although the scheme does have a positive effect on women's, but not men's, subsequent employment chances (Denny *et al.*, 2000). Community Employment is also costly in terms of the support provided per worker. It possibly reduces employability in unsheltered jobs by keeping people in basic non-commercial activities and it does not necessarily provide the most effective path back to paid employment in the market sector (OECD, 2009). It has been suggested that the scheme should be reviewed and reformed, as it reduces the limited resources available for labour market activation because it absorbs

almost half of the budget, while catering for only just over 20,000 of the unemployed (NCC, 2010). It has also been recommended that the dual payment (retention of both Social Welfare and FÁS benefits) be eliminated for new entrants to incentivise labour market progression, as well as reducing the operating costs of the scheme, with potential savings of €100m per annum (Department of Finance, 2009a).

There is, however, a dearth of research exploring the understanding of Community Employment scheme participants of their career experiences (Coakley, 2005). This narrative inquiry is a step towards bridging this gap by exploring how 27 participants (re)construct their career identity. The last word regarding evaluating the scheme is summarised by a participant in this inquiry. Nora says:

> Now, having been on it [Community Employment] nearly two years, emm, it's fantastic and I have learned a lot from it. ... I feel I've moved on from previous jobs that I have done, so, therefore, I feel, I suppose I feel I'm doing well.

3.3.5 Progressive Prominence of a Market-Oriented Philosophy

It has been contended that the Community Employment scheme shares many characteristics of a social inclusion programme, rather than a labour market activation programme (NCC, 2010). This is, perhaps, not a surprising assertion because, as mentioned previously (Section 3.2.1), these policies are now perceived as an important tool in combating social exclusion by reducing unemployment and, in particular, long-term unemployment. The idea of social exclusion was developed to refer to people who were not part of the networks of solidarity that others experience (Spicker, 2008). This concept was subsequently extended to cover people who were not involved in any networks, people who are left out, shut out,

or pushed out (Spicker, 2008). Social exclusion has been described as „being deprived of aspects of full social participation in different fields and with different consequences for other fields' (Cremer-Schäfer *et al*., 2001: 3), a concept similar to Bourdieu and Passeron's (1990) notion of interconnected social fields.

Social inclusion is the process of combating exclusion, seeking to ensure that people become integrated in the networks of solidarity and support that apply to others (Hill, 2003; Spicker, 2008). It has become a fundamental policy element of the EU's, and hence Ireland's, employment strategy (Ó Cinnéide & Ryan, 2004; Room, 2004; Spicker, 2008). Preventing social exclusion was the major objective of the Social Employment scheme, the predecessor to Community Employment, from 1984 to 1994 (Duggan, 1999). What is evident in an analysis of the evolution of Community Employment is that the goal of social inclusion has become progressively underpinned by a market-oriented philosophy. This can be observed when the objectives and language espoused by FÁS, from the early stage of the scheme's development through to contemporary times, are examined (see Table 3.4; underlining is researcher's emphasis). The stated objective of the Social Employment scheme was to „help the large number of productive and energetic persons who have been unemployed for an extended period to make their contribution to social and community development' (Duggan, 1999: 3). It was not originally designed to place people in permanent employment, or to progress them into training/education (Duggan, 1999). By 2008, however, Community Employment focused on the integration/re-integration into the labour market of the long-term unemployed and other marginalised people (FÁS, 2008). In less than two decades, the objective of social inclusion in Irish active labour market policy has explicitly become secondary to economic exigencies. This general subordination of

social inclusion objectives to goals of economic growth has been recognised as a feature of

Irish public policy by numerous commentators (e.g., Boyle, 2005; Coakley, 2004; Collins,

Healy & Reynolds, 2010; Fanning, 2004; Kirby, 2002; Kirby *et al*., 2002; Kirby &

Murphy, 2007).

Table 3.4 Progressive Prominence of Market-Oriented Philosophy in Ireland's Community Employment Scheme (1992-2008)

Year*	*Summary of Key Developments in Community Employment*
1992:19	„A pilot Community Employment Development Programme (CEDP) was introduced in twelve regions. It replaced the Social Employment scheme (SES) in these areas and was a community-based, temporary employment programme. The CEDP was targeted at people who were long-term unemployed and lone parents.'
1994:20	„In April 1994, Community Employment was launched and it supplanted the SES and the CEDP. It gave priority to those persons whose chances of finding work were the <u>weakest</u>, such as the long-term unemployed.'
1996:22	„Arising from recommendations in the Government's Task Force on Long-term Unemployment, it was decided to <u>focus on long-term unemployment</u> from 1996.'
1999:14	„The aim of FÁS training and employment measures for the long-term unemployed is to provide participants with a range of coherent <u>progression pathways</u> comprising training/education/employment provision to assist them to gain employment. The changed nature of the Irish labour market meant that FÁS had to adopt an innovative approach to ensuring an <u>adequate supply of labour</u> for the booming Irish economy.'
2001:8	„FÁS' strategic objectives (strategy 2002-2005) specified eight priority goals, including, *inter alia*: • Unemployed people – to stem the flow into long-term unemployment through the provision of a range of programmes and services for unemployed people, with a particular focus on <u>marginalised</u> groups, which are <u>driven by labour market demands and individual customer needs</u>.'
2002:2	„The on-going process of <u>globalisation and increased international competition</u> will increase the need for competitiveness in the Irish economy. Competitiveness is influenced by a range of factors, many outside the remit of FÁS. However, aspects, such as improved skills … are all areas <u>which impact on competitiveness and where FÁS plays an important role</u>.'

Year*	Summary of Key Developments in Community Employment
2003:12	‚A review of Community Employment was conducted by FÁS, which examined the need for, and role of, Community Employment in the context of Ireland's <u>changing labour market</u>. FÁS believed that there was a need to increase the focus on helping individuals progress to ‚<u>normal</u>' employment.'
2004:13	‚An integral part of the individual learner plan is an <u>exit strategy and planned progression</u> for the placement of Community Employment participants.'
2005:7, 12	‚The most recent FÁS strategy (2006-2009) includes eight priority goals, including, *inter alia*: • Entry to the labour market – to provide a range of proactive job-related services, supports and programmes, to assist individuals <u>enter/re-enter the active labour market</u>. • Labour market policy – to inform and influence labour market policy, so that it supports <u>Ireland's economic and social development</u>. • <u>Social inclusion</u>, equality and diversity – to promote the removal of barriers and provide supports which ensure access to programmes, services and employment for individuals and groups experiencing exclusion, discrimination and labour market disadvantage.' ‚FÁS provides a range of employment programmes that focus on the integration/re-integration into the labour market of long-term unemployed and other marginalised people. The aim is on maximising their <u>economic potential</u> and helping to improve their employment opportunities.'
2006:24	‚FÁS' policies must reflect best social inclusion and equality practice to increase <u>participation and progression</u> of disadvantaged groups into the labour market.'
2007:20	‚The aim of Community Employment is to enhance the <u>employability</u> and mobility of disadvantaged and unemployed persons by providing opportunities for them to engage in <u>useful</u> temporary work within their communities.'
2008:19	‚Community Employment ... focuses on the <u>integration/re-integration</u> into the labour market of <u>long-term unemployed</u> and other <u>marginalised</u> people.'

Source: Developed by author, Sue Mulhall based on information from the FÁS Annual Reports, 1992 to 2008 inclusive.

Note:

* Refers to page numbers from respective annual reports.

Following my examination of active labour market policy in Ireland, I agree with commentators (e.g., Fanning, 2003; Lister, 2002) who argue that that the European perspective, which emanates from the EU and has been adopted by Ireland, is a discourse of „active' welfare states, with the purpose of reconnecting the workless to the labour market to prevent poverty and social exclusion. Within this domain, paid work is seen as the key to social inclusion (Coakley, 2004). While such work is elevated to a citizenship obligation, non-paid work, including community, voluntary and caring duties, is devalued (Bauman, 1999; Coakley, 2004; Collins *et al*., 2010; Lewis, 1992, 2001; Lister, 2002; O'Connor, 1993; Orloff, 1993; Taylor-Gooby, 1991).

There are a number of different discourses that mediate and find expression in this realm: a dominant discourse of normality, as represented by the employed; and a discourse of the abnormal, of the excluded, the unemployed who cannot obtain or retain a job (Coakley, 2004). The latter becomes the „other', the dependant, a burden on the rest of society (Coakley, 2004: 114), with the policy response primarily developed to counter the social „problems' associated with people who are represented as „different' (Christie, 2004: 148). My belief is that Ireland's active labour market policy, including the Community Employment scheme, has developed in response to a perceived „problem': those who do not partake in paid employment in the labour market are represented as „different', as individuals who have a problem that needs to be „fixed'. This is further discussed in Chapter Five.

3.4 CONCLUSION

Researching active labour markets in general, and the Community Employment scheme in particular, has made me question the part that I played in perpetuating what I now consider to be the hegemonic objective of participation on such a programme: to transition to mainstream employment or training/education, the criteria of success for those engaging on such programmes. As mentioned in Chapter Two, my worldview has been turned upside down. I always believed that I was assisting the participants to develop their career prospects and enhance their career success. I now feel I was complicit, albeit unknowingly, in an externally imposed, normative orthodoxy of what a participant should do, should strive for and should become: part of the dominant discourse of paid employment by (re)integrating into the „normal' labour market.

This issue is explored in the next chapter, when the definition of career and the construct of career success are placed under the microscope to examine the taken-for-granted assumptions underpinning the conceptualisation and operationalisation of these concepts.

Chapter Four

Career and Career Success

Theory and Research

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews the extant theory and research on career and career success pertinent to the inquiry. While recognising the depth and breadth of the literature in the career field, the chapter explores only concepts relevant to the study, particularly career success. It is, therefore, not an examination of the whole literature.

The chapter follows immediately after the contextualisation of the study and precedes an exploration of the theoretical frameworks that I use to provide an understanding of the sample's interpretation of their experiences to reveal the personal and social resources that enable and constrain their careers. As participants on Community Employment, the informants in this research have experienced a period of transition (non-employment) prior to engaging on the scheme. The previous chapter highlights the dearth of research exploring the appreciation of such participants of their changing career experiences. This study, therefore, attempts to provide a more holistic analysis than previous inquiries by integrating micro and macro positions to comprehend how the participants (re)construct their career identity in an ever-evolving environment.

The research is concerned with career as a conceptual vehicle that links the individual to the wider, changing social world and it seeks to identify the opportunities and boundaries that shape the career of participants on an active labour market programme in Ireland. The concepts and lenses reviewed in this chapter appreciate the role of social institutions in the sample's understanding and enactment of their career, thus situating the study at the intersection between micro and macro perspectives of career research.

The research considers the careers of Community Employment scheme participants through the vehicle of narrative inquiry, as noted in Chapter Two. To build on the philosophical underpinnings associated with career research and narrative inquiry, this literature review is divided into six sections. The first three parts examine the definitions, theory and literature, and lenses and discourses associated with the career concept. This is followed by a discussion on career success, considering its conceptualisation and measurement, predictors and influencers, and empirical research. The chapter concludes with an explanation of how the research fills both a gap in the existing literature and contributes to our understanding of the career concept.

4.2 CAREER DEFINITIONS

Career success research draws on career theory and, therefore, on the ideas included in career theory, that is, its underlying definitions, concepts, relationships and assumptions (Arthur *et al*., 2005). There is, however, no agreement among scholars on a common definition of „career' (see Greenhaus, Callanan & DiRenzo, 2008; Sullivan & Baruch, 2009) and, accordingly, its meaning is surrounded by a „fog of ambiguity' (Gunz & Heslin, 2005: 106).

A range of social science perspectives contribute to our understanding of careers (Arthur *et al*., 1989). For psychologists, career can be perceived as a vocation, a vehicle for self-realisation, or even a component of the individual life structure. In contrast, an economist may envisage career as a response to market forces, whereas a sociologist may view career as the unfolding of social roles, or as social mobility (Arthur *et al*., 1989). Career theory, as

a subfield of social science, will always involve a struggle between varying perspectives, requiring a historical appraisal to comprehend its nuances because to

> come to an orderly understanding of men and societies requires a set of viewpoints that are simple enough to make understanding possible, yet comprehensive enough to permit us to include in our views the range and depth of the human variety. The struggle for such viewpoints is the first and continuing struggle of social science. (Mills, 1959: 148) … To realize the human variety requires that our work be continuously and closely related to the level of historical reality and to the means of this reality for individual men and women. (Mills, 1959: 134)

Examining the „historical reality' (Mills, 1959: 134) of the meaning ascribed to the definition of career unearths the shifting sands of emphasis over the past century. Table 4.1 outlines the key contributors to the career concept in chronological order. Its evolutionary journey can be characterised into four distinct stages:

- Commenced with the roots of career development emanating from Parsons' (1909) three-step formula for choosing a career (see Table 4.1).

- Moved on to the Chicago School of Sociologists, epitomised by Hughes (1937, 1958), who took an expansive life perspective approach.

- Returned to a more restricted occupational and organisational orientation, situating career within the context of stable, employment structures (e.g., Arnold, 1997; Super, 1957, 1980; Wilensky, 1961).

- Followed by broader, experienced focused, post-organisational descriptions, attempting to replicate how individuals enact their career in a changing world (e.g., Arthur *et al*., 1989; Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Sullivan & Baruch, 2009).

Table 4.1 Key Contributors to the Career Concept in Chronological Order

Author(s)	Definition of Career
Parsons (1909)	‚In the wise choice of a vocation, there are three broad factors: (1) a clear understanding of yourself, your aptitudes, abilities, interests, ambitions, resources, limitations, and their causes; (2) a knowledge of the requirements, conditions of success, advantages and disadvantages, compensation, opportunities and prospects in different lines of work; (3) true reasoning on the relations of these two groups of facts.' (Parsons, 1909: 5)
Hughes (1937)	‚In a highly and rigidly structured society, a career consists, objectively, of a series of status and clearly defined offices. In a freer one, the individual has more latitude for creating his own position or choosing from a number of existing ones. … The social order will set limits upon the individual's orientation of his life, both as to direction of effort and as to interpretation of its meaning.' (Hughes, 1937: 409) … ‚Subjectively, a career is the moving perspective in which the person sees his life as a whole and interprets the meaning of his various attributes, actions, and the things which happen to him. … Careers in our society are thought of very much in terms of jobs, for these are the characteristic and crucial connections of the individual with the institutional structure. … The career is by no means exhausted in a series of business and professional achievements. There are other points at which one's life touches the social order, other lines of social accomplishment.' (Hughes, 1937: 410) … ‚It is possible to have a career in an avocation as well as in a vocation.' (Hughes, 1937: 411)
Hughes (1958)	‚In a highly and rigidly structured society, a career consists, objectively, of a series of status and clearly defined offices.' (Hughes, 1958: 63). … ‚Subjectively, a career is the moving perspective in which persons orient themselves with reference to the social order, and of the typical sequences and concatenations of office.' (Hughes, 1958: 67)
Wilensky (1961)	‚A career is a succession of related jobs, arranged in a hierarchy of prestige, through which persons move in an ordered (more-or-less predictable) sequence.' (Wilensky, 1961: 523)
Super (1980)	‚A career is a sequence of positions held during the course of a lifetime, some of them simultaneously (Super, 1957); an occupational career is the sequence or combination of occupational positions held during the course of a lifetime.' (Super, 1980: 286)
Arthur et al. (1989)	‚Our adopted definition of career is the *evolving sequence of a person's work experiences over time*. A central theme in this definition is that of work and all that work can mean for the ways in which we see and experience other people, organizations, and society. However, equally central to this definition is the theme of time, along which the career provides a "moving perspective" (Hughes, 1958: 67) on the unfolding interaction between a person and society. … The notion of a career also links matters internal to the individual with matters external, such as those concerning official position. … The study of careers is the study of both individual and organizational change … as well as of societal change.' (Arthur et al., 1989: 8) [emphasis in the original]
Arthur and Rousseau (1996)	‚CAREER Old meaning: a course of professional advancement; usage is restricted to occupational groups with formal hierarchical progression, such as managers and professionals. New meaning: the unfolding sequence of any person's work experiences over time.' (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996: 372) [emphasis in the original]
Arnold (1997)	‚A career is the sequence of employment-related positions, roles, activities and experiences encountered by a person.' (Arnold, 1997: 16)
Sullivan and Baruch (2009)	‚We define a *career* as an individual's work-related and other relevant experiences, both inside and outside of organizations that form a unique pattern over the individual's lifespan. This definition recognizes both physical movement … as well as the interpretation of the individual, including his or her perceptions of career events … career alternatives … and outcomes. Moreover, careers do not occur in a vacuum. An individual's career is influenced by many contextual factors … as well as by personal factors.' (Sullivan & Baruch, 2009: 1543) [emphasis in the original]

Source: Developed by author, Sue Mulhall.

The definitions illustrate that a career can be described in two different ways (Arthur *et al*., 2005). There are subjective careers, reflecting the individual's own sense of his or her career and what it is becoming (Stebbins, 1970), defined by the personal interpretations and values that identity bestows on a person (Goldschmidt, 1992). There are also objective careers, emulating the more or less publicly observable positions, situations and status that serve as benchmarks for gauging an individual's movement through the social locale (Barley, 1989), comprising predictable stages and an ordered sequence of development. Career theory not only suggests that there are subjective and objective views of careers, but also proposes an inherent two-sidedness of the career concept (Arthur *et al*., 2005; Goffman, 1961). These two sides, the subjective and the objective, are seen to be persistently dependent (Hughes, 1937, 1958), and this interdependence occurs over time (Lawrence, 1984, 1996).

As previously mentioned, although there is no agreement in the literature as to an accepted definition of career, a consensus seems to have emerged that the established description emanates from Arthur *et al*. (1989) and laterally Arthur and Rousseau (1996): the unfolding sequence of any person's work experiences over time (Arnold & Cohen, 2008; Arthur *et al*., 2005; Dries, Pepermans & Carlier, 2008a). Notwithstanding a change in terminology, from jobs to experience, from organisational to post-organisational (Arnold & Cohen, 2008; Arthur *et al*., 2005; Dries, Pepermans & De Kerpel, 2008b), career still remains located in the employment environment, with the notable exception of the definitions proffered by the Chicago School of Sociologists (Hughes, 1937, 1958). Others commentators do, however, suggest including non-work and leisure roles in the conceptualisation of career (McDaniels, 1965; Super, 1957, 1980). It has been argued that the Chicago School of Sociologists treat career as a heuristic applicable to a much wider range of situations than is typical of current usage

and that their representation of career requires jettisoning vestiges of colloquial understanding, that is, common parlance that regards a career as a series of jobs (Barley, 1989). In the hands of the Chicago scholars, argues Barley (1989), career becomes a lens for peering at larger social processes known as institutions, expanding our view of how individuals both construct and are socialised into society, but never providing generalisable theory.

Barley (1989) advocates taking a more limited view of career, similar to the accepted definition offered by Arthur *et al*. (1989), maintaining that the critical question is whether the loss incurred by the definitional restriction involves anything of value. My contention is that we have lost something by moving away from the sentiments encapsulated by the Chicago School of Sociologists' broad definition of career to a narrower conceptualisation of the concept. The established definition (the unfolding sequence of any person's work experiences over time) disregards the inseparability of work and life (Patton & McMahon, 2006a). The dialectic relationship between career and life has been recognised by Wolfe and Kolb (1980: 1-2):

> Career development involves one's whole life, not just occupation. As such, it concerns the whole person … More than that, it concerns him or her in the ever-changing contexts of his or her life. The environmental pressures and constraints, the bonds that tie him or her to significant others, responsibilities to children and ageing parents, the total structure of one's circumstances, are also factors that must be understood and reckoned with. In these terms, career development and personal development converge. Self and circumstances - evolving, changing, unfolding in mutual interaction - constitute the focus and the drama of career development.

This dynamic definition, which encompasses the individual, the environment, interaction and change, places all people as career holders, whether situated in employment or not. It positions career as synonymous with life development. This perspective, I believe, is applicable to exploring the meaning of career success among Community Employment scheme participants, as these informants are people whose

careers have been located in the „ever-changing contexts' of their lives (Wolfe & Kolb, 1980: 1). It is this description of career that I consider in this inquiry, one that strongly resonates with the participants (exemplified in the findings and discussion chapters). It is also the one that Patton and McMahon (1999, 2006a, 2006b) favour in their Systems Theory Framework (outlined in Section 4.4), a lens from which I view the career perceptions of the sample.

4.3 CAREER THEORY AND LITERATURE

In tandem with the changing definition of career, new concepts have emerged, devised to reflect an altered environment, with increased globalisation, rapid technological advancements, growing workforce diversity, and the expanding use of outsourcing and part-time and temporary employees (Sullivan & Baruch, 2009). These events are said to have transformed traditional organisational structures, employer-employee relationships and the work context, creating divergence in how individuals enact their careers (Briscoe & Hall, 2006; Herr, 2008; Sullivan & Baruch, 2009; Weick, 2001).

The demise of the traditional, bureaucratic career has been oft mooted (e.g., Arthur, Inkson & Pringle, 1999; Hall, 2002; Sullivan & Arthur, 2006), being replaced by more embracing notions of career, based on the accumulation of skills and knowledge and the integration of professional and personal life. Various concepts and metaphors have been developed to capture this shifting landscape, including the protean career (Hall, 1976, 1996), boundaryless career (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; DeFillippi & Arthur, 1994), postcorporate career (Peiperl & Baruch, 1997), career profiles (Briscoe & Hall, 2006) and the Kaleidoscope Career Model (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005, 2006; Sullivan *et al*., 2009).

Table 4.2 summarises the major career concepts, moving from the traditional ideas to the modern models. The protean and boundaryless concepts were developed to explain the variety of career patterns exhibited in today's dynamic, globalised work environment (Sullivan & Baruch, 2009). Some of the newer conceptualisations, what have been referred to as integrative frameworks (Sullivan & Baruch, 2009), represent attempts to combine various ideas from the protean and boundaryless metaphors (e.g., career profiles and the postcorporate career). Other concepts, such as the hybrid career, emerged from the interpretations of research findings (e.g., Granrose & Baccili, 2006; O'Neil, Bilimoria & Saatciogle, 2004; Skilton & Bravo, 2008). The KCM is purported to offer conceptualisations that are not an extension of either the protean or boundaryless concepts, but instead provide an alternative lens through which careers can be examined (Sullivan & Baruch, 2009).

Table 4.2 Summary of Major Career Concepts, Models and Ideas

Concept or Model	Author(s)	Definition	Measure
Traditional career redux	Originally detailed by scholars such as Super (1957)	Initially characterised by linear, upward progression across one or two firms with a focus on extrinsic rewards and organisational career management. Today's traditional careerists typically exhibit more mobility between organisations.	Age, tenure in workforce or organisational service often used as a proxy for career stage. Psychological measures such as Super's Adult Career Concerns Inventory have also been used.
Protean career	Hall (1976, 1996)	Based on the metaphor of the Greek god Proteus, who could change his shape at will, the protean careerist is able to rearrange and repackage his or her knowledge, skills and abilities to meet the demands of a changing workplace, as well as his or her need for self-fulfilment. The individual, not the organisation, is in control of his or her career management and development. This requires a high level of self-awareness and personal responsibility to succeed.	Baruch (2008) developed a seven-item scale to measure the protean career.
Reconceptualised protean orientation	Briscoe and Hall (2006)	Revised the concept by defining two dimensions (values driven and self-directed career management) of the protean orientation.	Briscoe, Hall and Frautschy DeMuth (2006) devised a 14-item assessment to measure the two dimensions.
Boundaryless career	Arthur and Rousseau (1996); DeFillippi and Arthur (1994)	Defined as career opportunities beyond the boundary of a single employer, so individuals are independent rather than dependent on traditional organisational career arrangements.	No measures were proposed.
Reconceptualised boundaryless career	Sullivan and Arthur (2006)	Modified by describing varying levels of physical and psychological career mobility between successive employment situations. Illustrated by a 2x2 model with physical movement along the horizontal continuum and psychological progression on the vertical axis, suggesting the concept be viewed and measured by the degree of boundarylessness displayed by the career actor.	Briscoe *et al*. (2006) created a 13-item scale to measure the two dimensions.

Concept or Model	Author(s)	Definition	Measure
Postcorporate career	Peiperl and Baruch (1997)	Referred to careers taking place outside large organisations, whereby individuals enact a multitude of alternative career options, including: employment with smaller, more agile firms; self-employment; working in compact project teams; or other *ad hoc* arrangements. Individuals voluntarily or involuntarily leave large organisations because they are unable or unwilling to pursue corporate careers due to the uncertainty that is inherent in them. Postcorporate careerists have a permanent career, rather than a permanent job.	The authors state that no set of items exists to measure this concept at the individual level because of the fluid nature of the phenomenon. It is not a specific career attitude, but, rather, it relates to a wider industrial and societal level.
Career profiles	Briscoe and Hall (2006)	The combination of the two components of the boundaryless career (psychological and physical mobility), plus the two factors of the protean career (values driven and self-directed career management attitudes), yields 16 potential career profiles (trapped/lost, fortressed, wanderer, idealist, organisation man/woman, solid citizen, hired gun/hired hand, protean career architect) across both the protean and boundaryless metaphors.	Profiles determined by use of the values driven attitude, self-directed career management attitude, boundaryless mindset and organisational mobility preference scales (Briscoe *et al*., 2006). Empirically tested by Segers *et al*. (2008).
Hybrid careers	Emergent concept not specifically associated with any one scholar	Careers that contain aspects of both the traditional and protean or boundaryless career concepts.	Scales used to measure traditional, protean and boundaryless career concepts could be employed to measure hybrid careers.
Kaleidoscope Career Model (KCM)	Mainiero and Sullivan (2005, 2006); Sullivan *et al*. (2009)	Using the metaphor of a kaleidoscope, the KCM describes how individuals focus on three career parameters when making decisions, thus creating the kaleidoscope pattern of their career. These parameters are: authenticity, defined as being true to oneself; balance, described as the equilibrium between work and non-work demands; and challenge, characterised as stimulating work and career advancement.	Sullivan *et al*. (2009) formulated a 15-item measure to assess the three parameters of the KCM.

Source: Adapted from Sullivan and Baruch (2009: 1545-48).

A concern has been expressed that, although the boundaryless and protean concepts have resounded powerfully in career theory and research, there may be a danger that these ideas are too often taken as given, rather than subjected to critical scrutiny (Arnold & Cohen, 2008). Some commentators argue that the boundaryless career concept must be seen as inextricably linked to the political and cultural circumstances in which it emerged: a conservative context dominated by notions of individualism, short-termism and career marketability (e.g., Arnold & Cohen, 2008; Lips-Wiersma & McMorland, 2006; Sennett, 1998). It has been maintained that in an increasingly insecure career world, without clear paths, individuals are left vulnerable to „the sense of aimlessness which constitutes the deepest sense of anxiety' (Sennett, 1998: 120). In addition, because of particular structures of opportunity and access to career capital, some people are more able than others to reap its benefits (Hirsch & Shanley, 1996; Richardson, 2000). Whilst the protean career is less instrumental and market oriented than the boundaryless concept, incorporating an implicit sense of vocation (Arnold & Cohen, 2008; Lips-Wiersma & McMorland, 2006), unease has also been expressed about the model itself, with its normative overtones and apparent reification from useful heuristic to social fact (Arnold & Cohen, 2008; Inkson, 2006). Observers have alluded to the ideology underpinning the protean career concept, as based on unfettered individualism and free choice (e.g., Arnold & Cohen, 2008; Head, 1996; Richardson, 2000).

By focusing almost exclusively on the actor, contemporary thinking about career, and its associated concepts, neglects the role of social institutions in people's understanding and enactment of careers, resulting in a view that is both under-socialised and depoliticised (Arnold & Cohen, 2008). I agree with authors who recognise that careers do not present infinite possibilities for individuals; economic, political, cultural, social and occupational factors serve to structure available opportunity (e.g., Arnold & Cohen,

2008; Duberley, Cohen & Mallon, 2006; El-Sawad, 2005; Gunz, Evans & Jalland, 2000; Iellatchitch, Mayrhofer & Myer, 2003; King, Burke & Pemberton, 2005; Pfeffer, 1989). What are of interest about the concepts described in Table 4.2 is what they elucidate about current career thinking, what they disguise, whose voices they promote and whose they obscure. It is in addressing these issues that we see the conceptual power of the career concept (Arnold & Cohen, 2008). The next section outlines the lens through which I am looking to see how an underrepresented group in career research, Community Employment scheme participants, construct and interpret their career. In addition, this lens facilitates an understanding of what constraints shape their careers and what forces create these boundaries.

4.4 CAREER LENSES AND DISCOURSES

Theoretical propositions and models have proliferated in the careers field since Parsons' (1909) schema for successfully choosing a career, particularly during the previous four decades (Patton & McMahon, 2006a). Conclusions within the literature generally agree that career theory remains inadequate and incomplete and lacking in comprehensiveness and coherence (Brown, 2002a; Brown & Lent, 2005; Savickas, 2002), particularly with regard to its failure to account for diversity within the population. It has also been criticised for focusing on intra-individual issues to the detriment of contextual issues (Brown, 2002b; Collin & Young, 1986; Inkson & Elkin, 2008) and for being hampered by an overlap in conceptualisation of many elements (Borgen, 1991; Osipow, 1990; Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a). Further, career theory has been chastised for being segmented both within the individual theoretical models (Super, 1990) and within the disciplinary field (Arthur *et al*., 1989; Brown & Lent, 2005; Hackett, Lent & Greenhaus, 1991).

Noting the disparate nature of the existing theories, and the need to use more than one theory to describe the complexity of the field, the concept of integration or convergence within the discipline has emerged (Borgen, 1991; Osipow, 1990; Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a; Savickas & Lent, 1994). Some commentators, however, remain skeptical about the likelihood of convergence among theories and the emergence of an integrated theory (e.g., Brown, 2002a; Brown & Brooks, 1996). The segmental nature of the field is reflected in attempts to classify and group career theories into different discourses. Numerous authors have proposed categories of career theories (Crites, 1969; Herr & Cramer, 1992; Minor, 1992; Osipow, 1968, 1990; Osipow & Fitzgerald, 1996; Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a; Savickas, 2001; Young & Collin, 2004). These clusters are outlined in Table 4.3.

The two categorisations that I find useful for my research are: Young and Collin's (2004) discourse typology, based on Savickas' (2001) four levels of career theories (vocational personality, career concerns, career narratives and mechanisms of development); and Patton and McMahon's (1999, 2006a) review towards the integration of career theories, built on Minor's (1992) distinction between process and content theories. Both of these frameworks lay the foundation stones for combining theories into a comprehensive model of careers, a perspective that, I believe, is appropriate to an inquiry concerned with career as a conceptual vehicle that links the individual to the wider, changing social world.

Table 4.3 Categories of Career Theories in Chronological Order

Authors	*Categories*
Osipow (1968)	Trait and factor approaches Sociology and career choice Self-concept theory Vocational choice and personality theories
Crites (1969)	Psychological theories Non-psychological theories
Osipow (1990)	Developmental Trait orientated Reinforcement based Personality focused
Herr and Cramer (1992)	Trait and factor Actuarial or matching Decision Situational or sociological Psychological and developmental
Minor (1992)	Theories of content Theories of process
Osipow and Fitzgerald (1996)	Trait-factor Society and career choice Developmental/self-conceptions Vocational choice and personality Behavioural
Patton and McMahon (1999)	Theories of content Theories of process Theories of content and process Wider explanations such as racial and ethnic groups
Savickas (2001)	Vocational personality types Career concerns Career narratives Mechanisms of development
Young and Collin (2004)	Dispositions discourse Contextualising discourse Discourse of subjectivity and narrative Process discourse
Patton and McMahon (2006a)	Theories of content Theories of process Theories of content and process Wider explanations such as racial and ethnic groups Constructivist approaches

Source: Adapted from Patton and McMahon (2006: 10).

Young and Collin (2004: 379) represent the field through its dominant discourses, which „reflects the way we talk, think, and act about career', capturing how career has been „constructed at this moment in time in Western industrialized societies'. They maintain that currently there are four dominant discourses in the career field (Young & Collin, 2004):

- Dispositions discourse advocates the notion of matching internal traits to occupational traits, e.g., Holland's (1966, 1973, 1997, 1985a, 1985b, 1992, 1997) vocational choices. The power of this approach arises from its claimed cross-situational consistency and stability over time, that is, for adults traits remain relatively the same across different contexts and over periods of time (Swanson, 1999).

- Contextualising discourse locates individuals, their concerns and actions and career, within their social, economic, cultural, historical, temporal and other contexts, e.g., Gottfredson's (1981, 1996, 2002) theory of circumscription and compromise. This discourse addresses issues, such as the relationship between career and institutions and the social order (Barley, 1989; Saxenian, 1996; Weick, 2001), in addition to uncovering issues of power and ideology in career (Cohen *et al.*, 2004; Collin, 2000; Collin & Young, 2000; Gowler & Legge, 1989; Hopfl & Hornby Atkinson, 2000). It is, therefore, a powerful viewpoint from which to examine the careers of the sample participants, a lens that I particularly embrace in this study.

- Subjectivity and narrative discourse concerns the unique interaction of the self and social experiences from the standpoint of the individual, e.g., Clandinin & Connelly's (2000) three-dimensional narrative inquiry space, the approach used to analyse the episodic interviews generated from the sample. This perspective addresses how the individual constructs him or herself over time and in context.

It emphasises the need to attend to the language people use to interpret themselves and their situations, as they provide accounts of themselves.

- Process discourse deals with the means by which a career develops and how that development is facilitated in counselling and other interventions, e.g., Super's (1953, 1957, 1980, 1990, 1992, 1994) life-span, life-space theory. This approach concerns the way construction actually occurs, contending that there is a normative and predictable developmental sequence of ages and stages.

The second approach that I find useful for my research is Patton and McMahon's (1999, 2006a) attempt to classify career theories into a meta-theory and to present an integrative model through their Systems Theory Framework (STF) (McMahon & Patton, 1995; Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a, 2006b). This operates as a vehicle to operationalise constructivist and social constructionist theories of career: it is constructivist because of its emphasis upon the individual; and it represents as social constructionist due to its location of the individual within a myriad of social influences (Patton, 2008).

Some commentators have observed that the STF could become an integrative framework for career theory (e.g., Brown, 2002b; Inkson & Elkin, 2008), with others citing its potential role in the global context of career (e.g., Amundson, 2005). The framework (see Figure 4.1) describes influences in terms of content and process, and positions those influences at and across the level of the individual system and the contextual system, the latter being comprised of a social system and an environmental-societal structure (Patton, 2008).

Figure 4.1 Systems Theory Framework of Career Development
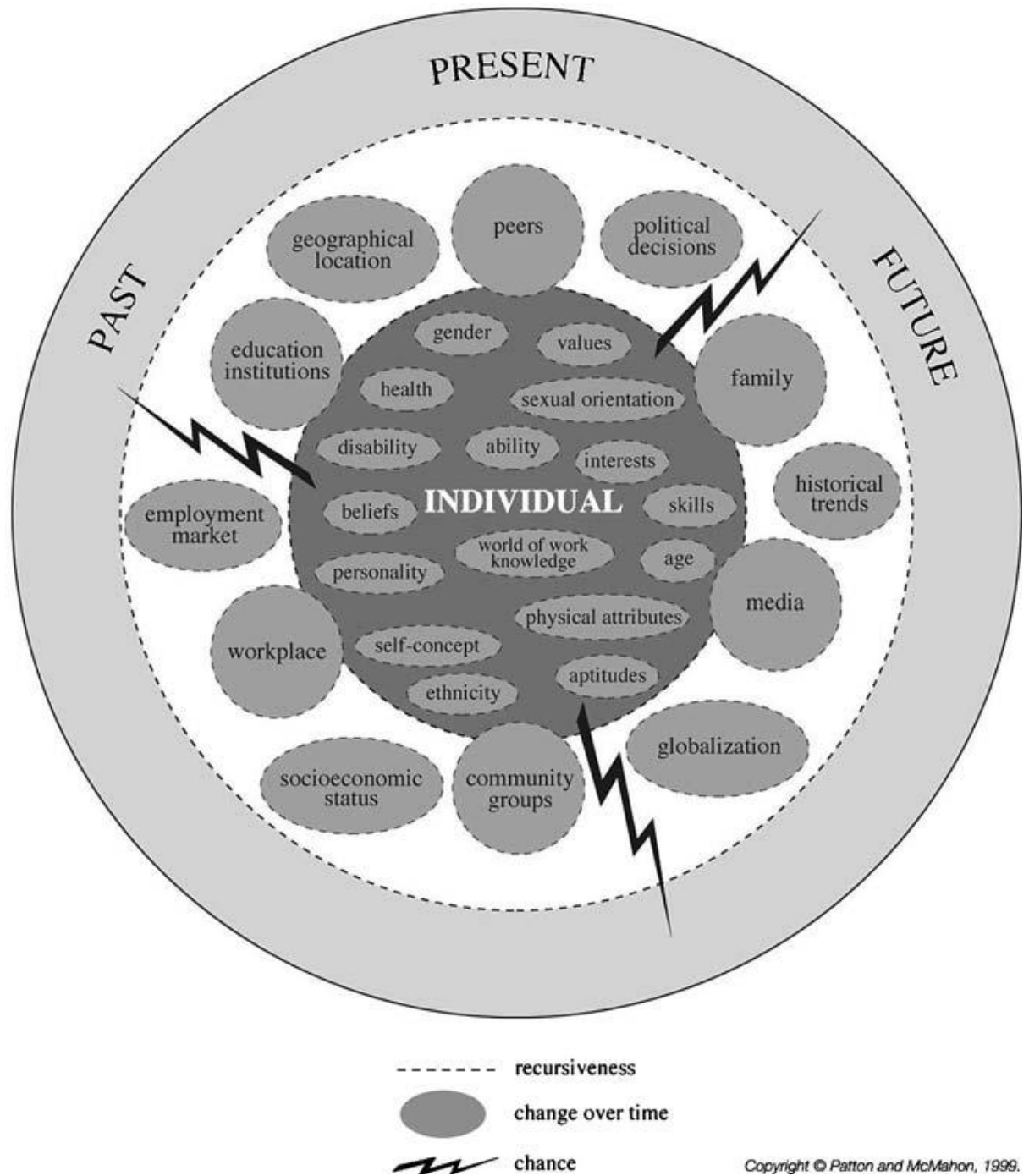
Source: Patton and McMahon (1999: 164).

Central to the STF is the individual system, where the individual is conceived of as an active, participative, unique being. He or she is not defined in terms of reduced and isolated elements (e.g., abilities, traits), but as a whole. The individual system includes gender, values, health, sexual orientation, disability, ability, interests, beliefs, skills, personality, world-of-work knowledge, age, self-concept, physical attributes, ethnicity and aptitudes. The social system refers to the proximal social structure through which the individual interacts with other systems and comprises the family, peers, community groups, educational institutions, media and workplaces. The features in the environmental-societal system consist of political decisions, historical trends, employment market, geographic location, socio-economic status and globalisation. While these stimuli are distal to the individual, they are crucial to the social construction of context. The process elements identified in the STF include recursiveness (non-linear, multi-directional feedback amongst the elements of a structure), change over time and chance. The STF adopts the notion of recursiveness implying a dynamic, fluctuating process within the system, as each element communicates with others in an ongoing manner across the past, present and future. According to this framework, the impact of the constructs changes over time and in interaction with other influences, both in the whole system and the subsystem (McMahon & Patton, 1995; Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a, 2006b).

The openness of the influences to the effects of others, and for them to shape others, is described with reference to the permeability of open systems and graphically portrayed by broken lines. The idea of elements altering over time within a recursive framework is central to the STF. Discontinuous change within an individual's career, the non-linearity of a person's career over time, is represented in the STF's circular depiction of the system. The inclusion of chance, illustrated by random flashes, is a key feature of the

STF, emphasising the unpredictability of stimuli within each of the systems. It has been formulated as a source for naturally occurring chaos within an individual's career and life, reflecting a growing interest around this literature (e.g., Bloch, 2005; Bright, Pryor & Harpham, 2005; Chen, 2005; Mitchell, Levin & Krumboltz, 1999). The systems of influence (individual and contextual) are located within the context of time (past, present and future), which are all inextricably linked: past influences the present, and together, past and present affect the future (McMahon & Patton, 1995; Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a, 2006b).

This systems framework of career development accommodates both the traditional predictive career theories, in addition to the positions of more recent constructivist approaches (Patton & McMahon, 2006b). As such, I believe, it sits comfortably with the model proposed in Chapter Two for analysing each participant's career story, namely Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) three-dimensional narrative inquiry space, as both recognise that all individuals belong to and interrelate with multiple groups. The fusing of the two perspectives assists me to understand the factors relevant to the participant's career story, that is, the unique pattern of social system influences on the informant's career experiences (explicated in Chapter Eight).

A further career theory from the contextualising discourse (Young & Collin, 2004), which is pertinent to the conceptual development of my findings, is Gottfredson's (1981, 1996, 2002) theory of circumscription and compromise. This model integrates a social systems perspective with psychological approaches (Patton, 2008). It conceptualises and measures an individual's vocational inclinations as a range of preferences, not as a single point, and involves the ‚pruning of choice to produce a small set of "good enough" options' (Gottfredson, 1996: 182). The theory argues that forming

career aspirations is a process of comparing one's self-image with impressions of occupations and judging the degree of match between the two. Gottfredson (1981, 1996, 2002) contends that this requires perceiving and understanding properties of self, occupations and the place of both, in the social world. Self-concept refers to one's view of oneself, of who one is both publicly and privately. It has many elements, including appearance, abilities, personality, gender, values and status in society. Self-concept is the object of cognition, the „me', but it also reflects the person as actor, the „I' (Gottfredson, 1996: 184).

People hold images of occupations (often called occupational stereotypes), including the personalities of the people in those occupations, the work they do, the lives they lead, the rewards and conditions of their work and the appropriateness of that work for different types of people. These perceptions are organised into a meaningful, shared cognitive map of occupations. Adolescents and adults distinguish occupations along three major dimensions: masculinity-femininity; occupational prestige level (overall desirability); and field of work. These distinctions can be represented in a two-dimensional map (sextype by prestige level) called the cognitive map of occupations, scored in terms of prestige level (high versus low) and sextype rating (masculine versus feminine) (Gottfredson, 1981, 1996, 2002).

The theory proposes that career choice involves people considering the entire range of careers, a process called circumscription, and then delineating those which they regard as broadly acceptable, making their eventual choices within that subset. When careers are mapped into the two-dimensional cognitive map of occupations space, the process of circumscription involves drawing an area to reflect careers that are acceptable to a person and conforms to their self-concept: being neither too masculine nor too feminine,

nor too high in terms of their prestige and hence effort required, nor too low, and, therefore, insufficiently rewarding. The theory maintains that choices tend to be negative, meaning that careers are rejected because they do not have attributes that are consonant with the person making the selection, rather than positively chosen for their special suitability. Once circumscription has taken place, a number of possible careers still remain. The second stage of choice is compromise, the practice by which people relinquish their most preferred alternatives for less compatible, but more accessible ones in terms of competence, competency, educational qualifications, geographical location, remuneration, and so on. Compromise can occur either in anticipation of external barriers, called anticipatory compromise, or after they are encountered, termed experiential compromise (Gottfredson, 1996). The eventual career chosen is one that is „good enough‟, which „satisfices‟, being realistically good, though not optimal (Gottfredson, 1981, 1996, 2002).

Gottfredson‟s theory of circumscription and compromise is relevant to this inquiry in relation to social class differences, and social class and identity. With regard to social class difference, the social class or status of an individual at the start of his or her career is likely to play a major part in the occupation that he or she gravitates towards, and the final level reached (Inkson & Elkin, 2008). The theory assists this research by describing how children develop individual concepts, what are referred to as „zones of acceptable alternative‟ occupations (Gottfredson, 1996: 187), defined in terms of prestige. In relation to social class and identity, the career of each individual is part of the context of the careers of others. In thinking about their careers, individuals take bearings on other people and determine who they are and where they are in society (Inkson & Elkin, 2008). Gottfredson provides this study with a tool to uncover how the participants potentially eliminate their least favourable occupation alternatives

(circumscription) and how they possibly accommodate external limitations on their occupational choices (compromise). The theory is used in Chapter Seven, when the influence of social class as mediated through the educational system on the participants' career success stories, is considered. I now move on to discuss career success.

4.5 CAREER SUCCESS: CONCEPTUALISATION AND MEASUREMENT

Career success is an outcome of a person's career experiences and involves the individual's evaluation of desirable work-related outcomes at any point during these experiences (Arthur *et al*., 2005; Gattiker & Larwood, 1990; Henneqin, 2007; Judge & Bretz, 1994; Judge, Cable, Boudreau & Bretz, 1995; Lau & Shaffer, 1999; Poon, 2004). There are two broad strands of research in the career success literature: different ways of construing career success and how they are (or are not) related to each other, which are explicated in this section; and what predicts and influences career success, which is outlined in Section 4.6 (Arnold & Cohen, 2008).

With regard to the first strand, conceptualising and measuring career success, as with careers, there are two distinct ways of viewing career success: objective and subjective positions. Objective career success may be characterised as an external perspective that delineates more or less tangible indicators of an individual's career situation (Van Maanen, 1977). It reflects shared social comprehension, rather than distinctive individual understanding (Arthur *et al*., 2005; Nicholson & De Waal-Andrews, 2005). Nicholson and De Waal-Andrews (2005) contend that objective career success has common features, such as status and rank, material success, social reputation, regard, prestige and influence, network connections, and health and well-being. Measures of objective career success may, therefore, involve factors such as occupation, mobility,

task attributes, income and job level (Van Maanen, 1977), salary growth (Hilton & Dill, 1962) and promotions (Thorndike, 1963). It has been contended that objective criteria of career success are liable to be contaminated, in that they are affected by factors that are beyond an individual's control, so they do not capture relevant facets of the focal construct (Campbell *et al.*, 1970). The potential deficiency of traditional objective criteria stems from the belief that these factors are not the only outcomes that people seek from their careers (Heslin, 2005). For instance, receiving high pay and promotions does not necessarily make people feel proud or successful (Hall, 2002; Korman, Wittig-Berman & Lang, 1981; Schein, 1978). Objective success criteria, such as salary increases and promotions, are also partly a product of subjectivity (Arnold & Cohen, 2008; Lau, Shaffer & Au, 2007).

A way of dealing with the possible deficit of objective criteria is to measure subjective career success in conjunction with objective attainments (Heslin, 2005). Subjective career success may be described as the individual's internal apprehension and evaluation of his or her career, across any dimensions that are important to that individual (Van Maanen, 1977). People have diverse career aspirations, and place different values on the same factors, thus subjective career success consists of utilities that are only identifiable by introspection and not by observation or consensual validation (Arthur *et al.*, 2005; Nicholson & De Waal-Andrews, 2005). A list of six subjective career success constructs have been proffered by Nicholson and De Waal-Andrews (2005), elements they consistently found in the literature: pride in achievement; intrinsic job satisfaction; self-worth; commitment to work role or institution; fulfilling relationships; and moral satisfaction. Measures of subjective career success, consequently, may include a person's reactions to actual and anticipated career-related attainments across a wide range of outcomes, such as job and career satisfaction

(Boudreau, Boswell & Judge, 2001a; Judge & Bretz, 1994; Judge *et al.*, 1995; Murrell, Frieze & Olson, 1996), a sense of identity (Law, Meijers & Wijers, 2002), purpose (Cochran, 1990b), contribution to the well-being of others (Juntunen *et al.*, 2001) and work-life balance (Finegold & Mohrman, 2001).

Observing career success through either an objective optic or a subjective spotlight provides a limited picture (Arthur *et al.*, 2005). The depth and breadth of the construct can be harnessed by looking through both lenses simultaneously, epitomising its duality and interdependence (Abele & Spurk, 2009; Arthur *et al.*, 2005; Barley, 1989; Hall & Chandler, 2005; Higgins, 2001; Walton & Mallon, 2004). Contemporary career theory, which attempts to incorporate the effects of globalisation and the resultant changed labour market, suggests that indicators of objective career success may be emerging as less significant to career actors than measures of subjective career success, elevating the overall significance of the subjective career (Arthur, Inkson & Pringle, 1999; Evans, Gunz & Jalland, 1997; Hall, 2002; Hall & Chandler, 2005). The primacy of objective factors, however, is advocated by Nicholson and De Waal-Andrews (2005), who maintain that there is an obfuscation of career realities in current thinking, which presents subjective success as a substitute of equal value to objective success. They caution that many organisational and societal processes determine allocation of scarce resources, such that scholars who argue for the benefits of subjective success risk being the unwitting agents of sustaining the status quo by reassuring less advantaged people about the intrinsic benefits of their objective underachievement (Nicholson & De Waal-Andrews, 2005). Section 4.7 provides an extensive review of the empirical research relating to the construct of career success, referring to studies of both objective and subjective career outcomes.

Whether career attainments lead people to experience career success is likely to depend upon the standards against which they are evaluated. Objective and subjective career outcomes may be assessed relative to personal standards (self-referent criteria) or the achievements and expectations of others (other-referent criteria) (Heslin, 2005). Self-referent success criteria generally reflect an individual's career-related standards and aspirations. By contrast, other-referent criteria involve comparisons with another person/other persons (Goodman, 1974). Such norms can also encompass an individual's internalisation of the anticipated expectations of others (Gattiker & Larwood, 1988). People can, therefore, evaluate their career success using self-referent and other-referent criteria drawn from both the objective and subjective domains, leading to four potential outcomes (Heslin, 2005):

- Objective/self-referent, e.g., my financial and promotional aspirations.

- Objective/other-referent, e.g., my colleague's pay and my social standing.

- Subjective/self-referent, e.g., my goals for work-life balance and fulfillment.

- Subjective/other-referent, e.g., my stimulation and fun relative to my peers.

The standards people use to evaluate their experiences and attainments reflect the reciprocal influence of both contextual and individual factors (Bandura, 1986, 1997). Individuals may differ in the types of criteria they emphasise when evaluating their career outcomes, being impacted by environmental elements, like market type and organisational culture, and personal characteristics, such as work orientation and goal proclivity (Heslin, 2005).

Take work orientation as the example. Research by both sociologists (e.g., Bellah *et al*., 1985) and psychologists (e.g., Schwartz, 1986, 1994; Wrzesniewski *et al*., 1997) indicates that most people have one of three distinct dispositions to their work: seeing it primarily as a job, a career, or a calling:

- People with a job orientation focus mainly on the financial rewards they receive for working, rather than pleasure or fulfillment. Work is viewed as a vehicle for acquiring the resources needed to enjoy time away from the job, as opposed to an end in itself (Wrzesniewski *et al*., 1997).

- People with a career orientation exhibit a deeper personal investment in their work. They mark their achievements not only from monetary gain, but also through upward advancement within the occupational structure where they work. The „overarching goal of those who view their work as a career is to maximize their income, social status, power and prestige within their occupation' (Wrzesniewski, 2002: 232).

- People with a calling orientation have a sense of purpose (Hall & Chandler, 2005). They strive to experience fulfillment and perceive work as an inherent part of life, as an end in itself, rather than merely as a means to income or advancement. Individuals with such a disposition often feel that their work helps to make the world a better place (Dutton, Debebe & Wrzesniewki, 2000).

Heslin (2005) theorised that: those with a job orientation are more likely to utilise objective, other-referent outcomes, such as pay, to measure their career success; people with a career orientation may have a tendency to draw on objective, other-referent outcomes, such as advancement to assess their career outcomes; and individuals with a calling orientation may have a propensity to apply subjective, self-referent outcomes to evaluate their career attainments.

People also differ in the types of goals they pursue and use to evaluate themselves, such as learning goals and performance goals (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). There may also be a gender difference with regard to evaluating career success, in that many women, though not all, tend to choose different and varied paths through life compared to men, reflecting dissimilar preferences in personal styles, values and life goals (Dyke & Murphy, 2006; Hakim, 2000, 2006; Heslin, 2005; Huang *et al*., 2007; Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005, 2006; Sturges, 1999).

4.6 CAREER SUCCESS: PREDICTORS AND INFLUENCERS

Moving away from the first strand of career success research, the different ways of construing the construct, to the second main area, predictors and influencers of career success (Arnold & Cohen, 2008), the meta-analysis conducted by Ng, Eby, Sorensen and Feldman (2005) is a key resource. They classify the predictors of career success into four types: human capital (e.g., work centrality, hours worked, education level attained, international experience, political knowledge and skills); organisational sponsorship (supervisor support and organisational resources as a surrogate for organisational size); socio-demographics (gender, race, marital status and age); and stable individual differences (personality characteristics) (Ng *et al*., 2005). Ng *et al*. (2005) found that a number of indicators are correlated with one or more of the dependent variables of salary, promotions and career satisfaction, with discernible patterns:

- Human capital and socio-demographic variables tend to correlate with salary. The strongest links are with educational level, political knowledge and skills, work experience, age and hours worked.

- Organisational sponsorship and individual difference variables are the better predictors of career satisfaction, especially locus of control, supervisor support, career sponsorship, proactivity, skills development opportunities and stability.

- Promotion has few substantial relationships.

- Statistically significant salary disadvantage emerges for women relative to men and non-whites compared to whites.

With regard to personality predicting career success, a proactive personality [a disposition toward taking action to influence one's environment (Bateman & Crant, 1993)] portends both job search activity and success (Brown *et al*., 2006) and engagement in development activity (Major, Turner & Fletcher, 2006). On analysing measures of personality and general mental ability (GMA) over a 30-year period, GMA performs better than personality as an indicator of objective success (Schmidt & Hunter, 2004). Some research suggests that career success predictors vary across occupations (Holland, 1997; Judge & Cable, 2004) and countries (Brodbeck, Frese & Keating, 2000).

Other people also influence an individual's career success. Two meta-analyses, both assessing studies where mentored and unmentored groups are compared, report that mentoring seems to have a small positive relationship with earnings and a larger one with career satisfaction and job satisfaction (Allen *et al*., 2004; Underhill, 2006). The comparison, although valuable, may be limited, because there could be systematic differences between those who receive formal mentoring and those who do not: mentoring could be a self-fulfilling prophecy, where people who are going to succeed anyway are the ones who acquire mentors (Allen, Lentz & Day, 2006; Allen, Poteet & Russell, 2000; Arnold & Cohen, 2008).

One possible reason for the effects of mentoring being apparently restricted is that attention to a single mentor ignores other developmental relationships that an individual may have (Molloy, 2005), thus disregarding the cumulative benefit of support provided by a person's constellation of networks (Higgins & Kram, 2001; Higgins & Thomas, 2001). People can also obtain career assistance informally from their career communities, described as a self-organised, member-defined social structure through which individuals draw support and sensemaking (Weick, 1995). Research highlights the operation of career communities as an important factor in shaping how individuals make sense of their career, including how they construe their success (Parker & Arthur, 2000; Parker, Arthur & Inkson, 2004).

Studies have also considered the nature and significance of the social aspects of the construct of career success, indicating the following:

- Among managers, time spent on social networking is associated with occupational success (Luthans, Hodgetts & Rosenkrantz, 1988).

- In western economies, women and minorities tend to have more restricted social networks than white men and this constrains their prospects of achieving some forms of career success (Ibarra, 1993).

- Male graduates engage in socialising more than their female counterparts, but no differences are found with other types of networking practices, such as maintaining contacts, engaging in professional activities and increasing internal workplace visibility (Forret & Dougherty, 2001, 2004).

- Women and minorities frequently have to reach out beyond their immediate workplace to find similar others. Consequently, their networks are less integrated and not as powerful as is the case for white men (Friedman, Kane & Cornfield, 1998).

- Weak ties (relationships with people in social groups other than one's own) and structural holes (if two individuals known to a person are not acquainted with each other) predict contacts at higher organisational levels and in other functional areas. These subsequently proclaim the extent to which the focal person enjoys career sponsorship and has access to information and resources. In turn, these variables are said to purport objective and subjective success (Seibert, Kraimer & Liden, 2001b).

Career success is something that is at the core of lives as they are lived (Gunz & Heslin, 2005). How, for example, do people, looking back on their lives, evaluate what has happened to them? How do they think about and plan for their future? How is success defined in different social settings? As careers are at the nexus between people and the social institutions in which they make their careers, so a proper understanding of career success involves an understanding of the structures of societies and of how they are changing and evolving (Arnold & Cohen, 2008; Cohen *et al*., 2004; Dries *et al*., 2008a; Gunz & Heslin, 2005; Herr, 2008; Hughes, 1937; Young & Collin, 2004). To coincide with the transformation witnessed in career theory as a result of an altered employment environment (see Sections 4.2 and 4.3), it has been suggested that researchers pay greater attention to how people in diverse contexts conceptualise their career success, particularly those who have experienced change (Arthur *et al*., 2005; Dries *et al*., 2008b; Hall & Harrington, 2004; Hennequin, 2007; Heslin, 2005; Johns, 2006; Sullivan & Baruch, 2009). According to Frank and Cook (1995), a thorough examination of career success goes to the heart of how our societies work. The next section investigates the empirical research into the construct of career success, revealing how our world functions, particularly with regard to individuals with similar backgrounds to this study's sample, the former non-employed.

4.7 CAREER SUCCESS: EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

4.7.1 Introduction

Numerous commentators contend that contemporary careers are synonymous with change and that change is a constant feature of the career experience (e.g., Arnold, 1997; Arnold & Cohen, 2008; Cohen *et al*., 2004; Evetts, 1992; Hall, 1996, 2002; Hall & Harrington, 2004; Herr, 2008; Mirvis & Hall, 1994; Sullivan & Baruch, 2009). Individuals experience many transitions during their career, living through events that may be planned or unplanned, embracing them enthusiastically or treating them with trepidation. In a person's career, he or she may encounter developments such as: organisational restructuring (Boje, 1995; Walton & Mallon, 2004); job change (Nicholson & West, 1988, 1989; West & Nicholson, 1989); redundancy (Ezzy, 2000; Zikic & Richardson, 2007); expatriate elements (Crowley-Henry & Weir, 2007; Eby, 2001); and increased importance on family responsibilities (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005, 2006; Super, 1953, 1957, 1980, 1990, 1992, 1994). These occurrences may also be simultaneously associated with a period of non-employment (e.g., unemployment, caring, homemaking and/or volunteerism).

How are people who experience such change, particularly the non-employed, dealt with by empirical career success studies? What does the research reveal about an individual's evaluation of his or her achievements at any point during these events? How do people assess the outcome of these experiences? In other words, how do individuals interpret their career success during times of transformation? To answer these questions, I review a range of established journals for articles concerned with the construct of career success over the period 1992 to 2009.

A total of 89 articles are examined in a continuous timeframe (1992 to 2009). Summary data, listed chronologically, are provided in Tables 4.4 and 4.5, referring to the time intervals of 1992 to 2002 and 2003 to 2009, respectively. The review is tabulated sequentially to reflect the evolution of the career concept, similar to the approach adopted to describe the key contributors to the career concept (Table 4.1) and to classify the main categories of career theories (Table 4.3). The first period (1992 to 2002) is based on the work of Arthur *et al*. (2005) and covers 68 articles. The second period (2003 to 2009) is founded on my own analysis and comprises 21 articles. The initial timeline is selected to coincide with a comprehensive examination of articles on career success by Arthur *et al*. (2005). The latter period expands upon the earlier review, encompassing recent research, on a full year basis, since the original inquiry.

Following the recommendation of Arthur *et al*. (2005), additional terms relating to career success, such as career outcomes (e.g., Campion, Cheraskin & Stevens, 1994), career advancement (e.g., Burlew & Johnson, 1992), career satisfaction (e.g., Nicholson, 1993) and managerial advancement (e.g., Tharenou, 2001), are incorporated to provide a fuller picture of the research undertaken. Given the chosen timescale of the review (1992 to 2009), studies such as Gattiker and Larwood's (1986, 1988, 1989, 1990) conceptualisation of career success (job success, interpersonal success, financial success, hierarchical success and life success), are necessarily precluded. Articles concerned with various sub-dimensions of career effects (such as work-family conflict, career patterns and career development), but not with career success as an outcome per se, are not considered. In addition, the meta-analysis by Ng *et al*. (2005) is not incorporated for two reasons. Firstly, some of the research would inevitably be duplicated because this review covers similar studies to Ng *et al*. (2005). Secondly, it is difficult to ascertain the detail contained in the studies alluded to in the meta-analysis.

4.7.2 Review of Empirical Research on Career Success (1992-2002)

The first investigation of the empirical research on career success is based on an assessment of 68 articles by Arthur *et al.* (2005) from 1992 to 2002. Table 4.4 details the articles relating to objective and subjective career success in chronological order. It excludes studies pertaining to the predictors of career success, thus focusing on inquiries involving outcomes. The majority of the articles use the following definition of career success: „the accomplishment of desirable work-related outcomes at any point in a person's work experiences over time' (Arthur *et al.*, 2005: 179).

As illustrated in Table 4.4, out of 68 studies, a total of 66 (97 per cent) concern employees in paid employment. The two remaining studies survey students. Regardless of the theoretical paradigm, research strategy or research method utilised, not one analysis considers those outside either employment or education. Focusing on the 66 studies directly oriented to the world of work: 36 inquiries (55 per cent) survey managers, professionals and executives only; 27 studies (41 per cent) refer to mixed hierarchical levels including managerial, administrative, front-line and operative grades across a variety of occupations; two studies (3 per cent) concentrate on non-managerial employees only and one (1 per cent) on faculty members. Taking all of the research together, the participants work in a range of industries (academic, financial services, information and communication technologies, insurance, pharmaceutical and healthcare, professional services, public administration and retail), and are employed in diverse organisational settings (private and public sector, large, medium sized and small organisations, indigenous and foreign owned).

Table 4.4 Empirical Research on Career Success (1992-2002) in Chronological Order

No.	Year	Authors	Criteria	Participants
1.	1992	Burlew and Johnson	Career advancement - subjective career factors only	Professionals
2.	1992	Chi-Ching	Career success - objective and subjective career factors	Managers
3.	1992	Stroh, Brett and Reilly	Career advancement - objective career factors only	Managers
4.	1993	Aryee and Debrah	Career planning - subjective career factors only	Mixed hierarchical levels in a range of occupations
5.	1993	Nicholson	Career satisfaction - objective and subjective career factors	Managers
6.	1993	Peluchette	Subjective career success - subjective career factors only	Faculty members of university
7.	1993	Poole, Langan-Fox and Omodei	Perceived career success - objective and subjective career factors	Mixed hierarchical levels in a range of occupations
8.	1993	Schneer and Reitman	Career path - objective and subjective career factors	Managers
9.	1993	Whitely and Coetsier	Early career outcomes - objective and subjective career factors	Managers and professionals
10.	1994	Aryee, Chay and Tan	Subjective career success - subjective career factors only	Managers
11.	1994	Campion *et al*.	Career outcomes - objective and subjective career factors	Mixed hierarchical levels in a range of occupations
12.	1994	Chao *et al*.	Career effectiveness - objective and subjective career factors	Professionals
13.	1994	Judge and Bretz	Career success - objective and subjective career factors	Mixed hierarchical levels in a range of occupations
14.	1994	O'Reilly III and Chatman	Early career success - objective career factors only	Mixed hierarchical levels in a range of occupations
15.	1994	Schneer and Reitman	Career path - objective and subjective career factors	Mixed hierarchical levels in a range of occupations
16.	1994	Tharenou, Latimer and Conroy	Managerial advancement - objective career factors only	Managers
17.	1994	Turban and Dougherty	Career success - objective and subjective career factors	Managers and professionals

No.	Year	Authors	Criteria	Participants
18.	1995	Gianakos	Perceived importance of job outcomes - subjective career factors only	Students
19.	1995	Judge *et al.*	Career success - objective and subjective career factors	Executives
20.	1995	Melamed	Career success - objective career factors only	Mixed hierarchical levels in a range of occupations
21.	1995	Orpen	Career success - objective career factors only	Mixed hierarchical levels
22.	1995	Schneer and Reitman	Career path - objective and subjective career factors	Managers
23.	1995	Tremblay, Roger and Toulouse	Career plateau - objective and subjective career factors	Managers
24.	1996	Aryee and Luk	Career satisfaction - objective and subjective career factors	Mixed hierarchical levels in a range of occupations
25.	1996	Aryee, Wyatt and Stone	Career success - objective and subjective career factors	Managers
26.	1996	Dreher and Cox	Career outcomes - objective career factors only	Mixed hierarchical levels and self-employed in a range of occupations
27.	1996	Melamed	Career success - objective career factors only	Mixed hierarchical levels in a range of occupations
28.	1996	Murrell *et al.*	Career outcomes - objective and subjective career factors	Managers
29.	1996	Taylor, Audia and Gupta	Past career success - objective career factors only	Managers
30.	1997	Chao	Career outcomes - objective and subjective career factors	Mixed hierarchical levels in a range of occupations
31.	1997	Konrad and Cannings	Managerial advancement - objective career factors only	Middle level managers
32.	1997	Lyness and Thompson	Work outcomes - objective and subjective career factors	Executives
33.	1997	Schneer and Reitman	Career success - objective and subjective career factors	Managers
34.	1998	Dreher and Chargois	Career outcome - objective career factors only	Mixed hierarchical levels in a range of occupations
35.	1998	Friedman *et al.*	Career optimism - subjective career factors only	Managers and non-managerial

No.	Year	Authors	Criteria	Participants
36.	1998	Hurley and Sonnenfeld	Managerial career attainment - objective career factors only	Managers
37.	1998	Kirchmeyer	Career success - objective and subjective career factors	Managers
38.	1998	Lee and Nolan	Career advancement - objective and subjective career factors	Administrators
39.	1998	Orpen	Career success - objective career factors only	Employees in financial services - mixed hierarchical levels
40.	1999	Blake-Beard	Career success - objective and subjective career factors	Mixed hierarchical levels in a range of occupations
41.	1999a	Judge *et al.*	Career success - objective and subjective career factors	Mixed hierarchical levels in a range of occupations
42.	1999b	Judge *et al.*	Career outcomes - objective and subjective career factors	Managers
43.	1999	Judiesch and Lyness	Career success - objective career factors only	Managers
44.	1999	Ragins and Cotton	Career outcomes - objective career factors only	Professionals
45.	1999	Seibert, Crant and Kraimer	Career success - objective and subjective career factors	Mixed hierarchical levels in a range of occupations
46.	1999	Tharenou	Managerial career advancement - objective career factors only	Managers
47.	1999	Wayne *et al.*	Career success - objective and subjective career factors	Mixed hierarchical levels
48.	2000	Brown, Glastetter-Fender and Shelton	Career decision-making self-efficacy - objective and subjective career factors	Students athletics
49.	2000	Lyness and Thompson	Career success - objective career factors only	Executives
50.	2000	Peluchette and Jeanquart	Career success - objective and subjective career factors	Professionals
51.	2000	Spell and Blum	Career advancement - subjective career factors only	Mixed hierarchical levels in a range of occupations
52.	2000	Van Scotter, Motowidlo and Cross	Career outcomes - objective career factors only	Air force mechanics
53.	2001a	Boudreau *et al.*	Career success - objective and subjective career factors	Managers
54.	2001b	Boudreau *et al.*	Career outcomes - objective and subjective career factors	Managers

No.	Year	Authors	Criteria	Participants
55.	2001	Harris *et al*.	Career outcomes - objective and subjective career factors	Mixed hierarchical levels in a range of occupations
56.	2001	Higgins and Thomas	Career outcomes - objective and subjective career factors	Lawyers
57.	2001	Jansen and Stoop	Career success - objective career factors only	Managers
58.	2001	Murphy and Ensher	Perceived career success - subjective career factors only	Mixed hierarchical levels in a range of occupations
59.	2001	Seibert and Kraimer	Career success - objective and subjective career factors	Mixed hierarchical levels in a range of occupations
60.	2001a	Seibert, Kraimer and Crant	Career success - objective and subjective career factors	Mixed hierarchical levels in a range of occupations
61.	2001b	Seibert *et al*.	Career success - objective and subjective career factors	Engineers
62.	2001	Tharenou	Managerial advancement - objective career factors only	Managers
63.	2001	Wallace	Career and emotional outcomes - objective and subjective career factors	Lawyers
64.	2002	Cable and DeRue	Career outcomes - objective and subjective career factors	Managers
65.	2002	De Fruyt	Intrinsic career outcomes - subjective career factors only	Mixed hierarchical levels in a range of occupations
66.	2002	Johnson and Stokes	Career outcomes - objective and subjective career factors	Mixed hierarchical levels in a range of occupations
67.	2002	Martins, Eddleston and Veiga	Career outcomes, career satisfaction - objective and subjective career factors	Managers and professionals
68.	2002	Wiese, Freund and Baltes	Subjective career success - subjective career factors only	Professionals

Source: Adapted from Arthur *et al*. (2005: 184-90).

When researchers have to make a choice about who to include and who to exclude from their research, for example, with participants in longitudinal studies or non-identifiable respondents, those who fall outside the scope of an employee, that is, the non-employed, are precluded. Six such situations are identified in the review (Blake-Beard, 1999; De Fruyt, 2002; Judge *et al*., 1999a; O'Reilly III & Chatman, 1994; Schneer & Reitman, 1994; Seibert *et al*., 2001a). Of these studies, only Blake-Beard (1999) can justifiably claim that the exclusion is pertinent to the study: as the research concerns mentoring, it is believed by the researchers that the non-employed are not in a position to participate in such a relationship. With regard to the other studies, only Schneer and Reitman (1994) and Seibert *et al*. (2001) attempt to explain the omission of the non-employed: to ensure consistency of comparison in their longitudinal research. The non-employed, people who potentially have experienced significant career change are largely excluded from the empirical research into career success in this review period (1992 to 2002).

4.7.3 Review of Empirical Research on Career Success (2003-2009)

After conducting a parallel analysis on journal articles over the period 2003 to 2009, similar findings are uncovered to the prior investigation: in the operationalisation of the career success construct, there is a concentration on the domains of paid employment and education, and a virtual exclusion of the non-employed. Table 4.5 details the 21 articles, listed chronologically, that I sourced and examined. To ensure consistency with the previous review, the focus of the assessment relates to objective and subjective career success, but precludes studies associated with the predictors of career success. As with the preceding perusal, the preponderance of articles use the following definition of career success: 'the accomplishment of desirable work-related outcomes at any point in a person's work experiences over time' (Arthur *et al*., 2005: 179).

Table 4.5 Empirical Research on Career Success (2003-2009) in Chronological Order

No.	*Year*	*Authors*	*Criteria*	*Participants*
1.	2003	Eby, Butts and Lockwood	Career satisfaction, internal and external marketability - subjective career factors only	Mixed hierarchical levels in a range of occupations
2.	2003	Heslin	Career success - subjective career factors only	Mixed hierarchical levels in a range of occupations
3.	2003	Nabi	Job success - objective and subjective career factors	Support personnel
4.	2004	Bozionelos	Career success - objective and subjective career factors	Blue-collar workers
5.	2004	Judge, Kammeyer-Mueller and Bretz	Career success and sponsorship - objective and subjective career factors	Organisational psychologists
6.	2004	Poon	Career commitment and career success - objective and subjective career factors	Managerial, professional and technical
7.	2004	Walton and Mallon	Career development - objective and subjective factors	Mixed hierarchical levels in a range of occupations
8.	2005	Reitman and Schneer	Career satisfaction - objective and subjective career factors	Managers
9.	2006	Dyke and Murphy	Career outcomes - objective and subjective career factors	Mixed hierarchical levels in a range of occupations
10.	2006	Gelissen and de Graaf	Career success and personality - objective and subjective career factors	Mixed hierarchical levels in a range of occupations
11.	2006	Harris and Ogbonna	Career success strategies - objective and subjective career factors	Mixed hierarchical levels in a range of occupations
12.	2006	Kirchmeyer	Career success - objective career factors only	Faculty members
13.	2006	Lee *et al*.	Personal outcomes - objective and subjective career factors	Professionals (part-time)
14.	2007	Hennequin	Career and emotional outcomes - objective and subjective career factors	Blue-collar workers

No.	Year	Authors	Criteria	Participants
15.	2007	Lau *et al*.	Entrepreneurial career success - objective and subjective career factors	Entrepreneurs and their employees
16.	2008a	Dries *et al*.	Interpersonal and intrapersonal career outcomes - objective and subjective career factors	Managers
17.	2008b	Dries *et al*.	Perception of other's career success - objective and subjective career factors	Mixed hierarchical levels in a range of occupations in a university plus students
18.	2009	Abele and Spurk	Career success - objective and subjective career (other- and self-referent) factors	Professionally qualified graduates in a range of managerial positions
19.	2009	Blickle, Witzki and Schneider	Career outcomes - objective and subjective career factors	Recently qualified business graduates in a range of managerial positions
20.	2009	De Vos, De Clippeleer and Dewilde	Career outcomes - objective and subjective career factors	Recent graduates from diverse disciplines in managerial positions
21.	2009	Dries *et al*.	Career success - objective and subjective career factors	Managers

Source: Developed by author, Sue Mulhall.

The 2003 to 2009 investigation, depicted in Table 4.5, indicates that managerial, professional and technical staff participate in 43 per cent of the studies (9 out of 21 articles), whereas employees from mixed hierarchical levels, embracing managerial, administrative, front-line and operative roles, comprise 38 per cent of the respondents (8 out of 21). One of the mixed hierarchical level studies (Dries *et al*., 2008b) also includes students, but it is not possible to glean the percentage breakdown of employees and

students participating in the research. Of the remaining four (19 per cent), three concentrate on non-managerial grades only and one on faculty members.

Comparing the 1992 to 2002 review with the 2003 to 2009 analysis, there has been a general broadening of the construct of career success by incorporating wider issues into the research. For example, Kirchmeyer (2006) explores the impact of the family on objective career success and Lee *et al*. (2006) report research findings based on studies focusing on the experiences of professionals and managers in reduced-load work arrangements. Research has also been conducted on periods of employment, unemployment and acting as a carer, but it has been carried out in the career development, not career success field (Huang *et al*., 2007), thus this inquiry is not integrated into the review. This study still, however, refers to people making choices to leave paid employment for a period of time, and then return to that domain, rather than researching people experiencing non-employment.

Similar to the initial examination, however, when career researchers in the 2003 to 2009 review period have a choice to make about whether those outside of paid employment are to be included or excluded, they opt to omit the non-employed (Abele & Spurk, 2009; Eby *et al*., 2003). Participants with interrupted career paths, for reasons of parental leave, are excluded in Abele and Spurk's (2009) research because, it is argued, the respondents cannot provide career success data for the timeframe of the inquiry. No reason is proffered for excluding those who are unemployed in the Eby *et al*. (2003) study. Two other inquiries exclude part-time work, focusing only on full-time employment: Reitman and Schneer (2005) maintain that the respondents need be fully engaged in their careers to compare the effects of the gaps on later career success measures; and De Vos *et al*. (2009) offer no explanation for their decision.

4.7.4 Comments on Review of Empirical Research on Career Success (1992-2009)

This review reinforces the comment by Arthur *et al*. (2005: 193) that ‚career theory and career success research are considerably out of step with one another'. Scholars have called on those researching the construct of career success to conduct studies with underrepresented groups and to inquire into a variety of work experiences. Despite such requests, an examination of empirical studies over an 18-year period illustrates that the operationalisation of the construct is situated within the paid employment environment, particularly focused on managers, professionals and administrators, to the effective exclusion of those outside that milieu. Of the 89 articles considered between 1992 and 2009, 45 (51 per cent) focus on managers, professionals and executives and 35 (39 per cent) survey mixed hierarchical levels, including managers and administrators. The remaining nine articles (ten per cent) concentrate on non-managerial grades (5 articles), university faculty members (2 articles) and students (2 articles).

Appeals to encourage a diversification of research sites and subjects in the career success field appear to have gone unheeded. Researchers have largely focused on those inhabiting the realm of paid employment, to the virtual exclusion of the non-employed; people who potentially have experienced significant career change. I question the omission of those who have had multiple movements in and out of the workforce from the empirical studies of career success, an absence, which, I believe, highlights a gap in the research. This dissertation attempts to address this limitation by interpreting the career success narratives of the former non-employed, participants on Community Employment schemes.

In particular, even with repeated calls for more qualitative empirical studies on the construct of career success (e.g., Arnold & Cohen, 2008; Arthur *et al*., 2005; Sullivan & Baruch, 2009) there is still a dearth of such research. None of the articles from the 1992 to 2002 period ,involved listening directly to the research subjects, or even allowing them to elaborate on their own criteria for career success' (Arthur *et al*., 2005: 196). The participants were requested to complete either pre-designed questionnaires (e.g., the career satisfaction scale developed by Greenhaus, Parasuraman & Wormley, 1990), or, where questions were actually asked, the query was narrowly formulated, thus generating a restricted response (e.g., salary data). Of the 21 articles in the later timeframe, eight studies involved participant interviews (three as part of mixed research methodologies and five as dedicated qualitative studies).

How can ,subjective careers be adequately researched when the subjective interpretations of the career actors themselves – apart from their non-verbal responses to a limited set of questionnaire items – are not allowed expression?' (Arthur *et al*., 2005: 196). My study addresses this drawback. Adopting a ,subjectivist approach leads the researcher naturally into the way the subjects' perspective on success is affected by their life situation' (Gunz & Heslin, 2005: 107). This life perspective theme resonates with those who have undergone career change, exemplified by this study's sample.

4.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter presents key concepts from the extant theory and research on career and career success relevant to the dissertation. Given the abductive nature of the research, the themes emanating from the analysis of the career stories narrated by the participants are addressed in the literature review in this chapter, rather than providing a compendium of the extensive writing in the careers field. In particular, the (re)construction of the respondents' career identity, in tandem with the economic, political, cultural, social and occupational factors that serve to structure available opportunities for people are focused on; topics that are considered in the findings and discussions chapters.

This concentration highlights the contextualising lens (Young & Collin, 2004) through which I primarily view the careers of the sample, augmenting the critical focus of this interpretive inquiry. The Systems Theory Framework, advocated by Patton and McMahon (1999, 2006a, 2006b), is a tool utilised in this study, demonstrating the complex nature of a person's career, as situated in an ever changing context. How the participants develop their individual career concepts, and accommodate external constraints on their career choices, is advised by Gottfredson's (1981, 1996, 2002) theory of circumscription and compromise. The subjective and narrative discourse is also relevant for this inquiry (Young & Collin, 2004), as the study explores how the participants construct their careers, lives and identities. To a lesser extent, the dispositions and process discourses (Young & Collin, 2004) are also pertinent, given that the research uses narratives and career stories from the participants in conceptualising a careers framework for the former non-employed, participants on an active labour market programme, Community Employment.

This review of the extant theory and research on career and career success, in addition to the investigation of active labour market programmes (Chapter Three), underlines some gaps in contemporary career theory and research, which this research endeavours to bridge:

- Despite career scholars stating that contemporary careers are synonymous with change, an analysis of empirical career success research over a continuous 18-year period draws a different picture. Those who have encountered transformation in their careers, experiencing a period of non-employment, are largely excluded from such research. This omission occurs because of how the definition of the career concept, and its associated construct of career success, is conceptualised. As the established definition of career (Arthur *et al*., 1989; Arthur & Rousseau, 1996) is situated in the world of paid work, the operationalisation of career success must also be located in that domain.

- Combining these observations with the examination of active labour market programmes in Chapter Three reinforces the prevalence of the dominant discourse of employment. The primary means of securing a livelihood is by employment in the formal labour market (Bauman, 1999; Gough, 2004), creating a belief that the world of work is the „norm' and the world of non-work is identified as „different' (Christie, 2004: 149). Inherent in this view is the assumption that only certain people can have a career and, consequently, career success (that is, people in employment), whilst others are not permitted to have a career and, hence, do not possess career success (that is, people in non-employment, or those with the nebulous status of simultaneously occupying a dual role of apprentice and employee, such as individuals participating on Community Employment).

My review indicates that career success researchers concentrate on those inhabiting the realm of paid employment, to the effective exclusion of the non-employed; people who potentially have experienced significant career change. I question the omission of those who have had on and off ramps in their careers from the empirical studies of career success, an absence, which, I believe, highlights a gap in the research. This dissertation attempts to address this limitation by interpreting the career success narratives of the former non-employed, participants on Community Employment schemes.

The contribution of this inquiry is to study an underexplored group in career research to understand how participants on Community Employment, the former non-employed, (re)construct their career identity in a continually changing context, with a view to reconceptualising the definition of career to include a life development perspective (Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a, 2006b; Wolfe & Kolb, 1980). This reorientation would allow people similar to the sample, individuals who were formerly non-employed, to be included in the operationalisation of career success. This is an argument that is explored in depth in the conceptual contributions chapter (Chapter Eight).

Before this can be achieved, the five theoretical frameworks that I use to question the taken-for-granted assumptions grounding the careers discourse are outlined in the next chapter: power, knowledge and language; ideology and hegemony; agency and structure; real time and retrospective sensemaking; and identity, identification and narrative. These provide the conceptual tools to dig deeper into the careers field with the aim of cultivating a reorientation of the career perspective, that is, to revisit Wolfe and Kolb's (1980) broad conceptualisation of the definition of career (p.122).

Chapter Five

Theoretical Frameworks

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to delineate the concepts that facilitate me in interpreting and conceptualising the identity and career (re)construction of participants on Community Employment schemes. As described in Chapters One and Two, this study adopts a pragmatic, paradigmatic approach (Patton, 2002; Rorty, 1990; Watson, 1997, 2001), whereby I draw upon elements from various disciplines to produce my personal paradigm to stand as the conceptual foundation for this reflexive research.

The theoretical frameworks outlined in this chapter complement and supplement the previous chapters: the contextualisation information, which locates the participant on a programme infused with a market-orientated philosophy (Chapter Three); and the discussion of the conceptualisation and operationalisation of career and the construct of career success, as situated in the domain of paid employment (Chapter Four). This chapter provides a lens to view the findings and discussion, expounded in the ensuing three chapters. The aim of this chapter is to construct a theoretical platform from which to build a research process that allows me to alternate between previous theory and empirical data, whereby both are successively reinterpreted in the light of each other, highlighting the abductive nature of the inquiry.

The particular frameworks that are relevant to this research, and discussed in the following sections of this chapter, are:

- Power, knowledge and language (Derrida, 1976, 1978a, 1978b, 1982, 1989; Foucault, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1982).
- Ideology and hegemony (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1992; Forgacs, 1988; Gramsci, 1971; Van Dijk, 2001).

- Agency and structure (Archer, 1995; Barley, 1989; Giddens, 1977, 1979, 1981, 1982, 1984, 1985, 1990, 1992, 1993; Weick, 2001).

- Real time and retrospective sensemaking (Archer, 2003, 2007; Weick, 1995, 2001, 2009).

- Identity, identification and narrative (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Bauman, 2001; Deetz, 1992; Foucault, 1988; Giddens, 1991; Holland & Thomson, 2009; Thomas, 2009; Thomson *et al.*, 2002, 2004; Plumridge & Thomson, 2003).

The concepts are reviewed in light of the intersection between the participants' identity and career (re)construction, and the interpretation of their experience to reveal the personal and social resources that enable and constrain their careers. It is recognised that this dissertation does not, and could not, explore the frameworks in minute detail. The objective of the chapter, therefore, is to emphasise the key elements from each of the constructs to facilitate the conceptualisation process, with regard to the sample.

The participants in this study are partaking on a programme to (re)integrate them into the mainstream labour market and/or training/education, the inference being that by doing so, their previous status of social exclusion can be changed to one of social inclusion through engagement with, and readjustment on, the programme (Chapter Three refers). The five frameworks previously mentioned assist me to illuminate the taken-for-granted assumptions underpinning this supposition; a theme explicated in the conceptual contributions chapter (Chapter Eight).

5.2 POWER, KNOWLEDGE AND LANGUAGE

The critical researcher's role is one of facilitating more open discourse, which, Alvesson and Deetz (2000) contend, is best achieved if critical studies offer counter-pictures to prevailing ideals and understandings, thus initiating discussion of images widely spread by dominant groups through drawing attention to hidden aspects and offering alternative readings. As a criticalist concerned with critiquing the dialectics of enlightenment (Alvesson & Wilmott, 1996) in the careers discourse, I am influenced by the critical edge of the post-modern tradition, which challenges the status quo and supports silenced or marginalised voices (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000). In particular, I am motivated by Foucault's (1978, 1979, 1980, 1982) understanding of power and Derrida's (1976, 1978a, 1978b, 1982, 1989) means for deconstructing objective truth.

Foucault invites researchers to explore the ways in which discourses are implicated in relations of power and how power and knowledge serve as dialectically reinitiating practices that both assist and limit a range of social practices (Ainsworth & Hardy, 2004; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2003, 2005; Knights, 2009). For Foucault (1978, 1979, 1980, 1982), power exists only in relationships and when it is expressed in action. Power relationships can be best understood from the techniques and forms in which they are expressed. The exercise of power is the central issue, that is, the practices, techniques and procedures that render power effective. Power is expressed in various micro contexts, such as the prison and the psychiatric institution, and the practices in and through which power exists are potentially everywhere (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009; Knights, 2009; Smart, 2002).

For Foucault, phenomena like reason, madness and criminality do not figure as natural objects that have an independent existence as part of the functioning of human beings, but are regarded as non-natural objects that have been constituted in such a way that they are objects of particular forms of knowing and targets for historically specific reform and regulation projects. For example, madness is not merely something that exists in the heads of a certain group of people; rather, it is through various techniques and procedures that madness is identified as a special object for knowledge, resulting in action such as incarceration and treatment (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009).

Different forms of knowledge are in the service of power and they function in a disciplinary way by creating normality and deviation. Established conceptions of what is normal and reasonable thus contribute to regulating the self-consciousness and actions of individuals. According to Foucault, knowledge cannot be extricated from power, as power and knowledge are parallel concepts. Foucault has „focused attention on the power *in*, rather than the power *of* knowledge' (Deetz, 1992: 77, emphasis in original). The exercise of power, and the application and development of knowledge, have an intimate relationship with each other. Knowledge is at the base of the exercise of power, while the exercise of power also produces knowledge. Power becomes a crucial dimension in knowledge supported by institutional practices, as well as institutional practices based on knowledge. Knowledge is, therefore, linked to power and functions in a disciplinary way (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009).

Foucault provides examples of the disciplinary techniques of power within the institution of the prison, which have as their aim the normalisation of delinquent, dangerous and undisciplined individuals (Foucault, 1979). He describes the series of institutions and organisations employing disciplinary techniques of normalisation as

carceral networks (Foucault, 1979). It is Foucault's contention that society is not maintained by the army, police and a centralised visible state apparatus, but by techniques of discipline and diffused power in these carceral institutions (Sheridan, 1980). With the diffusion of disciplinary technologies and methods, and the formation of a carceral network, a normalising power spreads throughout the entire social body. Within institutions and organisations, and on the part of individuals themselves, judgments, assessments and diagnoses begin to be made of normality and abnormality, in addition to the appropriate procedures to achieve rehabilitation, or a restoration of, and to, the norm (Smart, 2002).

Intrinsic to the growth of a normalising power are particular relations of knowledge, notably judgment and examination, which effect an objectification of human behaviour (Smart, 2002), where subjects are transformed into objects within structures (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009). This is an example of what Foucault (1988) calls governmentality (the conduct of conduct), which involves structuring the possible field of conduct, or action of others. It is a question of power; where power is exercised over free subjects, subjects are able to refuse to submit to guidance, to being led, to influence being exercised over their conduct. According to Foucault (1988), power relations are embedded in social life and governmentality is an inevitable element of social life. Life in society inexorably involves action(s) being exercised over other(s) (Smart, 2002).

It has been suggested that researchers using Foucault should treat all empirical material „as expressions of culturally standardized discourses that are associated with particular social settings' (Miller, 1997: 34). For Foucault, discourses are systems of knowledge (e.g., medicine, economics, linguistics) that inform the social and governmental technologies that constitute power in modern society (Fairclough, 2001). Foucault's interest in discourse is more in how it constitutes objects and subjects, than in the details of language use in social interaction (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009; Smart, 2002).

Critical researchers, however, have come to understand that language is not a mirror of society (e.g., Alvesson & Deetz, 2000; Billig, 2001; Hall, 2001; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2003, 2005). Linguistic descriptions are not simply about the world, but serve to construct it. Language operates through how the author/speaker and reader/listener construct meaning based on the local context, on how discursive logic forms associations, and through appealing to a pre-structured understanding associated with culture and tradition (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000; Silverman & Jones, 1973) Criticalists study the way language, in the form of discourses, serves as a mode of regulation and domination, that is, the tacit rules that regulate what can and cannot be said, who can speak with the blessings of authority and who must listen, whose social constructions are valid and whose are unimportant (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2003, 2005). Breaking up established ways of using language is a vital task for critical research (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000), as it challenges the prevailing social conditions that appear naturalised, objectively given, being outside of human control, and thus beyond change (Scherer, 2009).

For Derrida (1976, 1978a, 1978b, 1982, 1989), the meaning of a word is constantly deferred because the word can have significance only in relation to its difference from other words within a given system of language. People who are different from the majority, „them' (e.g., non-employed), rather than 'us' (e.g., employed), are frequently exposed to a binary form of representation of sharply opposed extremes (Bauman & May, 2001; Christie, 2004; Hall, 2001; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2003, 2005). Derrida (1976) argues that there are limited neutral binary oppositions: one pole is usually dominant, the one that includes the other within its field of operations. There is always a relation of power between the extremes of a binary opposition. We should really write: *white*/black, *men*/women, *masculine*/feminine, and *upper class*/lower class to capture this power dimension in discourse (Hall, 2001; emphasis in original). I include *career success*/career failure and *employed*/non-employed in this representation.

Derrida (1976, 1978a, 1978b, 1982, 1989) provides me with an approach for deconstructing objective truth within the careers discourse. Deconstruction is what happens to meaning when language is understood as writing. For Derrida (1976), when language is comprehended as writing, it becomes apparent that designations do not originate in the thought of the language user. Individual language users are understood to be utilising an external system of signs, a classification that exists separately to them. They operate within a structure of connotation that is given to them from outside. Meaning is, therefore, not fully under the control of the individual user and involves some degree of interpretation, negotiation or translation. This necessity for the active construal of meaning by readers when language is understood as writing is why deconstruction takes place.

According to Alvesson & Sköldberg (2009: 185), there are two stages in „de-con-struction'. The first step involves a destruction of the previously dominating picture, in favour of what was hidden (dominated). The second comprises a destruction of both of these poles, but at the same time a displacement of them, and thus a construction of something new and wider.

Both Foucault and Derrida's work offer me ways to view the careers discourse through a critical lens. In my opinion, the career experience can be considered in the same light as Foucault envisioned phenomena such as reason, madness, criminality and sexuality. For example, non-employment, which is being outside the domain of paid employment, is not merely something that exists in the lives of the non-employed. It is through various techniques and procedures that non-employment is identified as a special object for knowledge, resulting in action such as the Community Employment programme whose objective is to (re)integrate the non-employed into the labour market. (This is similar to how Willis (1977) conceptualises the role of schools in society.) It is my contention that the Community Employment scheme is a carceral network (Foucault, 1979), established with the aim of normalising the „delinquent' mindset of the non-employed, whose behaviour is „undisciplined' and potentially „dangerous' to „normal' society, so engagement on such a programme „rehabilitates' the participant. As I seek critical enlightenment (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2003, 2005) in the careers discourse, Derrida offers me a lens from which to critically peer at the career concept and to „de-con-struct' its meaning (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009), thus offering a wider definition of the career experience and the outcome of that experience. These themes are returned to in Chapter Eight.

5.3 IDEOLOGY AND HEGEMONY

Power discourses undermine the multiple meanings of language, establishing one correct understanding that implants a particular message into the consciousness of people (Hall, 2001; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2003, 2005). Individuals, when they speak, do not create their own language, rather, they use terms that are culturally, historically and ideologically available. Each utterance, whilst in itself novel, carries an ideological history (Billig, 2001). Ideology refers to a highly articulated worldview, master narrative, discursive regime, or organising scheme for collective symbolic production (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2003, 2005). An ideology comprises the ways of thinking and behaving within a given society, which make the traditions of that society seem natural or unquestioned to its members. It is the „common sense' of the society (Eagleton, 1991: 58). The prevailing ideology is the expression of the dominant social group (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2003, 2005).

Through ideology, inequalities in society appear natural and inevitable. These ideological habits can be deeply rooted into language, and, thereby, into consciousness (Billig, 2001; Hall, 2001; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2003, 2005). As part of a person's identity development, and how the world is to be interpreted, he or she participates in the various discursive practices through which meanings are allocated to particular classifications, e.g., male/female, and positions him or herself in terms of the accepted taxonomy (Davies & Harré, 2001). It engenders beliefs that, for example, in a former era made it appear normal that women should not be full citizens, or that, in present times, make it seem obvious that a cleaner be paid a fraction of a managing director's remuneration (Billig, 2001).

Power can be understood not only in terms of economic exploitation and physical coercion, but also in broader cultural or symbolic terms, including the power to represent someone or something in a certain way, within a certain regime of representation (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000; Billig, 2001; Foucault, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1982; Hall, 2001; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2003, 2005). In the context of oppressive power and its ability to produce inequalities, Gramsci's (1971) notion of hegemony is central to critical research (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2003, 2005). Gramsci perceives the capitalism of his time (just after the First World War) in terms of a combination of political society and civil society. The former is the domain of coercion and the latter is the realm of what he calls hegemony, forms of power that depend upon consent, rather than compulsion.

Hegemony exists when the minds of the dominated can be influenced in such a way that they accept dominance and act in the interest of the powerful out of their own free will (Fairclough, 2001; Gramsci, 1971; Hall, Lumley & McLennan, 1977; Van Dijk, 2001). The hegemony of the dominant social class depends upon winning the consent, or at least acquiescence, of the majority to existing social arrangements (Fairclough, 2001). Hegemony works both through silences and through repetition in naturalising the dominant worldview. One major function of dominant discourse is to manufacture such consensus, acceptance and legitimacy of dominance (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). Dominance may be enacted and reproduced by subtle, routine, everyday forms of text and talk that appear natural and acceptable (Christie, 2004; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2003, 2005; Van Dijk, 2001). Hegemonies are sustained ideologically in the common sense assumptions of everyday life (Forgacs, 1988). They constitute

> that order of signs and practices, relations and distinctions, images and epistemologies - drawn from a historically situated cultural field - that come to be taken-for-granted as the natural and received shape of the world and everything that inhabits it. (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1992: 23)

If hegemony is the larger effort of the powerful to win the consent of their subordinates, then hegemonic ideology involves the cultural forms, meanings, rituals and representations that produce consent to the status quo and individuals' particular places within it (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2003, 2005). Both dominant and subordinate cultures deploy differing systems of meaning based on the forms of knowledge produced in their cultural domain. Cultural production can be thought of as a form of education, as it generates knowledge, shapes values and constructs identity. This has been referred to as cultural pedagogy, that is, the ways cultural agents produce particular hegemonic ways of seeing (Kincheloe & McLarnen, 2005). Oppositional ideologies may exist, however, among subordinate or subaltern groups, whether well formed or loosely articulated, that break free of hegemony. Hegemony is, therefore, never total or complete, it is always porous (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2003, 2005).

The similarities between Foucault and Gramsci have been highlighted by Said (1978) in that both theorists envisage power as: operating in conditions of unequal relations; involving knowledge, representation, ideas, cultural leadership and authority, as well as economic constraint and physical coercion; enabling and constraining; including the dominant and the dominated within its circuits; producing new discourses, new kinds of knowledge, new objects of knowledge and shaping new practices and institutions; and being all-pervasive. The argument is that everyone, the powerful and the powerless, is caught up, though not on equal terms, in power's circulation; no-one can stand wholly outside of its field of operation (Said, 1978). All of us are hegemonised, as our realm of knowledge and understanding is structured by a limited exposure to competing definitions of the socio-political world. Researchers operating with an awareness of this hegemonic ideology, and I include myself in this category, understand that dominant ideological practices and discourses shape our vision of reality (Lemke, 1995, 1998).

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The hegemonic field, with its bounded socio-psychological horizons, garners consent to an inequitable power matrix, a set of social relations that are legitimated by their depiction as natural and inevitable (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2003, 2005). There is no perspective unspoiled by ideology, from which to study social life in an objective way (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2003, 2005).

I recognise that I was previously immersed in the dominant discourse of employment, particularly during the eight years that I ran my own business (Chapter Two refers). This discourse strongly influenced the initial formulation and design of my doctoral studies. The reconceptualised research, evident in the examination of the omission of the non-employed in the operationalisation of the construct of career success (Chapter Four), emanates from my revised ideological imperatives and epistemological presuppositions, as well as my changed subjective, intersubjective and normative reference claims (see Chapter Two). As a criticalist, I now question the dominant discourse of employment. This, I believe, is part of Ireland's „enthusiastic embrace of globalisation' (Kirby, 2002: 31), espousing the primacy of a market-oriented philosophy, manifest in Ireland's active labour market policy measures for the former non-employed (Chapter Three refers). This is a hegemonic ideology that I formerly incontrovertibly accepted as the taken-for-granted reality of everyday life, but which I now challenge. While accepting that the imperatives of remaining competitive in an evolving labour market may require frequent adaptations to new developments, I agree with Spilerman (2009), who maintains that it is people's responses to work arrangements that restrain and mould institutional change. This is an example of the duality of structure, whereby „social structure is both constituted by human agency and yet is at the same time the very medium of this constitution' (Giddens, 1993: 128). This concept, and how it is relevant to the present inquiry, is discussed in the next section.

5.4 AGENCY AND STRUCTURE

It is my contention that structuration theory (Giddens, 1977, 1979, 1981, 1982, 1984, 1985, 1990, 1992, 1993), the dialectical relationship between individuals and social structure, provides a useful framework for synthesising the micro and macro issues involved in this careers research. On the micro side, this inquiry explores the participants' identity and career (re)construction, and the interpretation of their career experience to illuminate the personal and social resources that enable and constrain their careers. These micro-level concerns cannot be explained only by looking at the individual level, as the participants do not live their lives totally unfettered, but neither are they forced to do so by social institutions. A fuller explanation of the participants' careers lies somewhere within the network of interaction between the micro and macro forces, each having influence upon the other.

Giddens' theory of structuration investigates the question of whether it is individuals or social forces that shape our social reality. It aims to avoid extremes of structural or agential determinism, arguing that although people are not entirely free to choose their own actions, and their knowledge is limited, they nonetheless possess the agency that reproduces the social structure and leads to social change. The dialectic relationship between agency, which is „the stream of actual or contemplated causal interventions of corporeal beings in the ongoing process of events-in-the-world' (Giddens, 1993: 81), and structure, which is „the systems of generative rules and resources' (Giddens, 1993: 134), is referred to as the duality of structure. In this duality, structure appears as „both condition and consequence of the production of interaction' (Giddens, 1993: 165) and it is the most „integral feature of processes of social reproduction, which, in turn, can

always be analysed in principle as a dynamic process of structuration' (Giddens, 1993:

133).

> Structure must not be conceptualized as simply placing constraints upon human agency, but as enabling (the duality of structure). Structure can always in principle be examined in terms of its structuration. To enquire into the structuration of social practices is to seek to explain how it comes about that structure is constituted through action, and reciprocally how action is constituted structurally. (Giddens, 1993: 169)

The duality of structure in social interaction has been represented graphically (see Figure 5.1), where modalities refer to the mediation of interaction and structure in processes of social reproduction, that is, the means whereby structures are reconstituted (Giddens, 1993: 129). The concepts on the first line represent the properties of interaction consisting of communication, operation of power and moral relations. Those on the third line characterise structure and are comprised of signification, domination and legitimation. The process of structuration, the modalities, refers to the mediation of interaction and structure in matters of social reproduction, embodying interpretive schemes, facilities and norms (Giddens, 1993).

Figure 5.1 Duality of Structure

INTERACTION		Communication	Power	Morality
(MODALITY)		Interpretive scheme	Facility	Norm
STRUCTURE		Signification	Domination	Legitimation
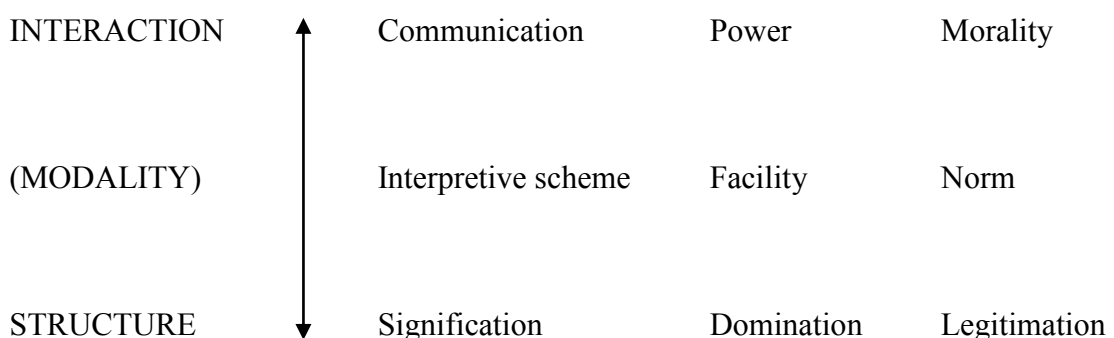
Source: Giddens (1993: 129).

With regard to the concepts on the first line, according to Giddens (1993), the communicative meaning that is part of human interaction involves the use of interpretative schemes through which sense is made by participants of what each says and does. The application of such cognitive schemes, within a framework of mutual knowledge, depends upon and derives from a cognitive order, which is shared by a community, while drawing upon such an order, the application of interpretative schemes also reconstitutes that order. The exercise of power in interaction involves the use of facilities whereby participants are able to generate outcomes through affecting the conduct of others. The facilities both originate from an order of domination and simultaneously reproduce that order. Finally, the moral constitution of interaction involves the application of norms, which stem from a legitimate order and, yet, by that very utilisation, reconstitute it.

Just as communication, power and morality are integral elements of interaction, so signification, domination and legitimation are analytically separable properties of structure. Structures of signification can be analysed as systems of semantic rules (or conventions), those of domination as systems of resources, and those of legitimation as systems of moral rules. In any situation of interaction, members of society draw upon these as an integrated set of modalities of production and reproduction. The production of society, according to Giddens (1993: 133), is „always and everywhere a skilled accomplishment of its members'. Echoing Mills (1959), this „realm of human agency is bounded [because] human beings produce society, but they do so as historically located actors, and not under conditions of their own choosing' (Giddens, 1993: 168).

While recognising the interdependence of structure and agency, Archer (1995) argues that they operate on different timescales. At any particular moment, antecedently existing structures help and hinder agents, whose interactions produce intended and unintended consequences, which lead to structural elaboration and the transformation of the initial structure. The ensuing structure then provides a similar context of action for future agents. Likewise, the initial existing structure is itself the outcome of structural elaboration resulting from the action of prior agents. Archer (1995) contends that by isolating the structural and/or cultural features that provide a context of action for agents, it is possible to investigate how those factors shape the subsequent interactions of agents, and how those interactions, in turn, reproduce the initial context. Archer (1995) calls this a morphogenetic sequence, where social processes are constituted through an endless array of such cycles. As a consequence of their temporal ordering, Archer (1995) maintains that it is possible to disengage any such sequence in order to investigate its internal causal dynamics, thus generating empirical accounts of how structural and agential phenomena interlink over time, rather than merely stating their theoretical interdependence.

An example of the interconnection of structural and agential phenomena over time in careers research has been provided by Barley (1989) and Weick (2001). Barley (1989) considers whether careers studies can address the question of how social order is possible, postulating how careers might be situated within Giddens' framework. He maintains that „modalities' can be constructed as a set of scripts, which „encode contextually appropriate behaviours and perceptions' (Barley, 1989: 53). Careers, according to Barley (1989: 53), can be conceived as „temporally extended scripts that mediate between institutions and interactions', and should, therefore, „offer actors

interpretive schemes, resources and norms for fashioning a course through some social world'.

Building on Barley's (1989) suggestion that career scripts mediate this structuring, Weick (2001: 211) contends that „significant structuring originates in more micro levels and modifies more macro levels' in the move from bounded to boundaryless careers (expanded upon in Chapter Four). When boundaries begin to dissolve, traditions become less prescriptive and institutions become less structured. Established career scripts (e.g., internal labour markets) become less suitable as guides for action and interaction. Concurrently, interactions become more patterned, as people collectively pursue learning to cope with ambiguity (e.g., by forming local alliances, or obtaining work using regional networks). These practices then exert more influence over career scripts and institutions, such that „enactment shapes both career scripts and institutions' (Weick, 2001: 212). In the face of discontinuity, people increasingly enact their social constraints, including their career systems. These newly influential processes come to dominate and define the weak situations, thereby strengthening them, producing a situation whereby people live careers partly in response to their own constructions (Weick, 2001).

Two of the research questions posed in Chapter One (sub-questions four and five) centre on the structural properties of institutions that act as constraints upon the participant's career enactment, but also are enabling. This is particularly relevant in times of change, such as moving from non-employment to participation on an active labour market programme. Generating the descriptions of the participant's social conduct depends upon the „hermeneutic task of penetrating their frames of meaning, which actors themselves draw upon in constituting and reconstituting the social world'

(Giddens, 1993: 163). How I understand and makes sense of the participant's frames of meaning is discussed in the next section, which examines the process of sensemaking.

5.5 REAL TIME AND RETROSPECTIVE SENSEMAKING

Two different perspectives on sensemaking afford a platform from which to explore a participant's construction of meaning: real time sensemaking through the individual's capacity for reflexivity, which the internal conversation embodies (Archer, 2003, 2007); and retrospective sensemaking, where an active agent constructs sensible, sensable events and structures the unknown (Weick, 1995, 2001, 2009).

According to Archer (2007: 4), reflexivity is „the regular exercise of the mental ability, shared by all normal people, to consider themselves in relation to their (social) contexts and vice versa'. (Reflexivity is also discussed in relation to identity and identification in Section 5.6.) It is exercised through people holding „internal conversations', the discussions a person has with his or herself, silently and internally, rather than with external others, that is, what Archer also calls „self talk', „intra-communication', „inner dialogue' and „rumination' (Archer, 2007: 2). In the „private life of the mind', we continuously converse with ourselves to „define what we do believe, do deserve and do intend to do' (Archer, 2003: 34). The key feature of reflexive inner dialogue is „silently to pose questions to ourselves and to answer them, to speculate about ourselves, any aspect of our environment and, above all, about the relationship between them' (Archer, 2007: 63). Reflexive internal conversation is responsible for mediating the impact of structure and agency because it is „the subjects' objectives and internal deliberations about their external feasibility that determine how they confront the structural and cultural circumstances whose presence they cannot avoid' (Archer, 2007: 65).

Internal conversations account for individuals being „active agents', people who make things happen, not „passive agents' to whom things happen (Archer, 2007: 65). Through internal conversation, a person subjectively determines his or her projects in relation to his or her objective circumstances. During such inner deliberations, an individual takes stock of the situation that he or she confronts, as well as his or her own desires and concerns, before deciding on a course of action. Real time sensemaking, through our „human reflexive deliberations' (Archer, 2003: 14), facilitates us to make our way through the world. This reflexive task of navigation is pared down to the „two tasks of prioritising our concerns and decision-making about their realisation in practice' (Archer, 2007: 87).

Retrospective sensemaking is also utilised in this research because the research strategy (narrative episodic interviews) allows the participants' unique career stories to emerge. Stories, „like a workable cause map, show patterns that may already exist in the puzzles an actor now faces, or patterns that could be created anew in the interest of more order and sense in the future' (Weick, 1995: 61). What is „necessary in sensemaking is a good story', permitting people to make „retrospective sense of whatever happens' (Weick, 1995: 61). Stories aid comprehension because they integrate that which is known about an event with that which is conjectural (see Chapter Two). Sensemaking is about the ways people generate what they interpret. To engage in sensemaking is to „construct, filter, frame, create facticity and render the subjective into something more tangible' (Weick, 1995: 14). To talk about sensemaking is to refer to reality as an ongoing accomplishment that takes form when people make retrospective sense of the situations in which they find themselves and their creations. Consequently, there is a strong reflective quality to this practice: „people make sense of things by seeing a world on which they already imposed what they believe' (Weick, 1995: 15).

According to Weick (1995), sensemaking contains seven properties: grounded in identity construction; retrospective; enactive of sensible environments; social; ongoing; focused on and by extracted cues; and driven by plausibility rather than accuracy. In later conceptualisations, Weick (2001, 2009) represented these same characteristics by the acronym SIRCOPE: *s*ocial context, personal *i*dentity, *r*etrospective, salient *c*ues, *o*ngoing projects, *p*lausibility and *e*nactment. Weick (2001: 463) maintains that these features can be arrayed into a sensemaking process in at least two ways:

- In one format, sensemaking seems to follow a sequence in which people concerned with identity in the social context of other actors, engage ongoing events from which they recognise cues and make plausible sense retrospectively, while enacting some order into those ongoing events. This sequence breaks down when identity, and the social context and cues, become more ambiguous, thus retrospection becomes more difficult, so ongoing events become more resistant to bounding, and plausibility becomes more tenuous and action more constrained.

- A second way to arrange these seven properties into a process is by means of the recipe: „How can I know what I think or feel until I see what I say and do?' (Weick, 2001: 463). When people effect this formula, they are influenced by the following: social context (what I say and do is affected by the audience that I anticipate will audit the conclusions I reach); identity (this is focused on the question of who I am, the answer to which, lies partly in what my words and deeds reveal about what I think and feel); retrospect (to learn what I think and feel, I look back over what I said and did); cues (what I single out from what I say and do is only a small portion of all of the possible things that I might notice); ongoing flows (my talk and action are spread across time, which means that my interests in the initial examination may change by the time the process

concludes); plausibility (I need to know only enough about what I think to keep my project going); and enactment (the whole procedure works only if I produce some subject in the first place that can be scrutinised for possible thoughts and feelings).

Both Archer's (2003, 2007) and Weicks' (1995, 2001, 2009) perspectives on sensemaking provide a useful discussion of the dynamics that lead to the creation of situational understanding and direction, particularly in times of ambiguity and uncertainty. This is relevant for participants on Community Employment, whose engagement on such a programme was preceded by a period of non-employment. According to Weick (2001: 107), „interrupted career paths can be opportunities. When people make sense of these interruptions and use them as occasions for improvisation and learning, "triumphs of adaptation" occur'. The next section explores how interrupted career paths can impact on a person's identity.

5.6 IDENTITY, IDENTIFICATION AND NARRATIVE

As mentioned in Chapter Four, individuals experience many transitions during their career (Arnold & Cohen, 2008; Johnstone, 2004; Schein, 1993; Super, Savickas & Super, 1996; Zikic & Richardson, 2007). By understanding how change affects career structures and career actions, individuals can devise strategies that will be appropriate for altered career structures (Evetts, 1992). Chapter Two discusses the impact of people telling stories about these experiences (Langellier, 1998; Webster & Mertova, 2007), enabling them to make sense of their revised realities and to determine its significance for their identity construction (Gabriel, 2004; Gergen, 2001; Reissman, 2008).

In the context of a person's career, change can be within the control of the individual, as when someone voluntarily alters career direction, but can also arise from the intervention of events beyond his or her sphere of influence, such as involuntary redundancy. These different categories of transition can be characterised in terms of: the extent to which events themselves are within a person's control; and the degree to which he or she is subsequently able to respond to them (Thomson *et al*., 2002). A critical moment (Goodwin & O'Connor, 2009; Holland & Thomson, 2009; Plumridge & Thomson, 2003; Thomson *et al*., 2002, 2004) is a particular category of change event, one that involves unplanned and unanticipated experiences around which pivotal decisions revolve (Measor, 1985; Webster & Mertova, 2007). It has also been referred to as a critical event or a critical incident (Woods, 1993), an epiphany (Denzin, 1989) and a turning point (Mandlebaum, 1973). Critical moments are most likely to occur at particular times in an individual's life, what Strauss (1959) terms a critical phase. Three critical phases have been identified by Measor (1985) as: phases produced by historic events, such as war; phases that occur within the natural progression of a career, for instance, pre-retirement; and phases of a personal nature, for example, bereavement. Critical moments within these critical phases provoke the person into selecting courses of action, which, in turn, lead the individual in a particular direction or directions (Measor, 1985).

Critical moments are critical because of their impact and profound effect on whoever experiences them, altering a person's fundamental meaning structure, thus having implications for identity (re)construction (Denzin, 1989; Measor, 1985; Thomson *et al*., 2002, 2004; Webster & Mertova, 2007). Numerous scholars observe how critical moments or transitions in people's lives may be decisive in triggering and facilitating processes of self-reflection and transformation (e.g., Giddens, 1991; Bagnoli &

Ketokivi, 2009; Erāranta, Moisander & Pesonen, 2009; Goodwin & O'Connor, 2009; Holland & Thomson, 2009; Thomson *et al.*, 2002, 2004; Plumridge & Thomson, 2003). Research also indicates that these critical moments have material consequences for an individual's career identity, including, for example, how people deal with significant interpersonal encounters in the workplace (Measor, 1985; Sikes, Measor & Woods, 2001), role transitions (Ashforth, 2001; Ibarra, 1999; Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010), changes in the regulatory system that the organisation operates within (Troman & Woods, 2000; Woods & Jeffrey, 2002), organisational restructuring (Walton & Mallon, 2004) and undergoing frequent job changes (Lindgren & Wåhlin, 2001). Critical moments are particularly relevant to career research, as they are coupled with change, and, as mentioned in Chapter Four, change is a constant feature of the career experience (Cohen *et al.*, 2004; Sullivan & Baruch, 2009).

Telling stories of these experiences facilitates identity (re)construction because narrating the self changes the self: „just as people construct work identities by telling their story they also reinvent themselves by telling new stories' (Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010: 151). A critical moment, as told in a story, frequently reveals a change of understanding by the storyteller. It is identified through the impact on the storyteller, the level of criticality becoming evident as the story unfolds (Webster & Mertova, 2007), thus revealing the major choice and change times in a person's life (Measor, 1985). It has been suggested that the empirical materials emanating from episodic interviews (the stories of experience utilised in this study) can be analysed through highlighting and capturing the critical moments contained in the respondents' narratives (Czarniawska-Joerges, 2004; Webster & Mertova, 2007).

My approach to the identification and understanding of change in a person's life has been informed by Giddens' (1991) fateful moment. A fateful moment constitutes a theoretical construct (Thomson *et al.*, 2002), describing „times when events come together in such a way that an individual stands at a crossroads in their existence or where a person learns of information with fateful consequences' (Giddens, 1991: 113). During these fateful moments the routines of everyday life are disrupted, thus provoking the person to consider the consequences of particular choices and actions, and so conduct an assessment of risk (Giddens, 1991). In doing this, he or she is likely to engage in identity work, utilise expert systems, seek advice, carry out research and develop new skills. Expert systems deploy the technical knowledge of those whose „lengthy training and specialisation' (Giddens, 1991: 16) certify their expertise, equipping them to prescribe risk and behaviour for all aspects of life. Consequently, Giddens (1991) suggests that experts tend to be brought in as a fateful moment approaches, or as a fateful decision has to be taken. The „information derived from abstract systems may help in risk assessment, but it is the individual concerned who has to run the risk in question' (Giddens, 1991: 114). Giddens (1991) allows a role for fortuna, luck, chance and opportunity in shaping fateful circumstances, but it is the taking of control and the exercising of agency that are crucial in the conceptualisation of the fateful moment (Holland & Thomson, 2009). Giddens' (1991) view is that the empowerment and skills gained through a fateful moment have important effects for self-identity:

> Fateful moments are transition points which have major implications not just for the circumstances of an individual's future conduct, but for self-identity. For consequential decisions once taken will reshape the reflexive project of identity through the lifestyle consequences which ensue. (Giddens, 1991: 143)

It is, therefore, paramount that the person recognises the significance of such an event. In my opinion, Archer's (2003, 2007) internal conversation and Weick's (1995, 2001, 2009) sensemaking (see Section 5.5) assist in drawing out this self-exploration during the analysis of the Community Employment scheme participants' talk.

The attraction for critical scholars, such as me, to the concept of identity is its ability to offer powerful ways to interrogate the exclusionary practices by which subjects are constituted (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Deetz, 1992; Thomas, 2009). Critical management studies seek to understand the dynamics of identity regulation and resistance in contexts of power and knowledge, thus working with a conceptualisation of identity that is fluid, fractured and reflexive. Identity can be understood, therefore, as a reflexively ordered narrative (Giddens, 1991), its construction being stimulated by social interaction and ordered by institutionalised patterns of being and knowing. Viewing identity in this manner facilitates a focus on the operation of power relations in context, as well as opportunities for micro-political resistance (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Deetz, 1992; Thomas, 2009).

Micro-political resistance takes place at the point of critical reflection, those moments of difficulty that arise from clashes between an individual's notion of self, itself derived from discourse, and the subject position offered in the dominant discourse (Davies & Harré, 2001; Thomas, 2009). Moments of micro-political resistance are both contingent and processual, occurring as individuals confront and reflect on their role identity, recognising contradictions and tensions, and, in so doing, unsettle and subtly shift meanings and understandings. The effects of such resistance are low levels of disturbance, weakening the hegemonic grip of prevailing discourses, presenting opportunities to exploit spaces that enable the construction of alternative identities and

meanings within forms of domination (Thomas, 2009). In the final phase of Foucault's (1988) thinking about the self, the subject actually functions as a pocket of resistance to established forms of power/knowledge. It is an ongoing process, a new, dynamic creation, waging a micro guerrilla war in favour of „difference, variation, and metamorphosis' (Deleuze, 1999: 87) against the powers that be. In this late Foucaultian version of subjectivation, the subject is not primarily a social construction, but a construction of the self reflecting on the self, albeit a creation that established forms of power/knowledge continually try to imprint with their own crystallised patterns (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009).

Identity, therefore, is not stable, but is a process that evolves over time and circumstance. Bauman (2001) uses the term identification to highlight the processual nature of identity: the „never-ending, always incomplete, unfinished and open-ended activity in which we all … are engaged' (Bauman, 2001: 129). My contention is that the focus on self and career (re)construction as an ongoing set of continuous actions involves issues of power/knowledge production. In my opinion, power tacitly shapes the identification process by influencing what an individual knows, and how he or she comes to know it, thereby impacting on how a person makes his or her way through the world, the positions an individual assumes in society, and the particular trajectory of social mobility that a person describes over his or her life course (Archer, 2007; Davies & Harré, 2001). My study is orientated towards documenting and challenging, rather than obfuscating the excluded, that is, those with an absence of identity in careers research, such as the non-employed and participants on active labour market programmes.

5.7 CONCLUSION

The pragmatic, paradigmatic perspective (Patton, 2002; Rorty, 1990; Watson, 1997, 2001) of this study is evident from the five theoretical frameworks I use to inform my findings and discussion: power, knowledge and language; ideology and hegemony; agency and structure; real time and retrospective sensemaking; and identity, identification and narrative. This paradigmatic oscillation (Weick, 1995), I believe, is necessary because people possess multiple identities, and deal with manifold realities, so to understand the actions of people in everyday life, such an approach is required. Figure 5.2 depicts how I link these five frameworks with the various realities an individual encounters in his or her everyday existence. It is similar to how I locate the Community Employment scheme participant and myself, the researcher/former consultant, in the framework of active labour market policy in Ireland (Figure 3.1, p.100).

Figure 5.2 Using Five Theoretical Frameworks to Understand Community Employment Scheme Participants' Career Actions
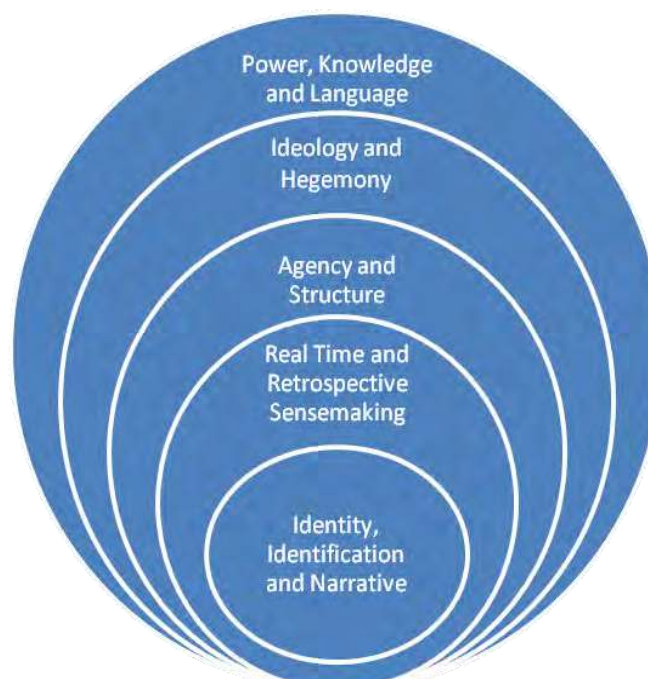
Source: Developed by author, Sue Mulhall

A top-down approach is utilised to explain how these theoretical frameworks assist me to understand the career experiences of the participants (described in the findings and discussions chapters). It considers the actors' activities, but situates these within the structural influences that facilitate and mitigate their career actions:

- Power, knowledge and language represent the phenomena of non-employment, identified as a special object for knowledge, to which various techniques are applied to normalise the delinquent mindset of the non-employed.

- Ideology and hegemony correspond to the dominant discourse of employment, where the principal means of securing a livelihood is via employment in the formal labour market, thus influencing discourses, such as the discursive practices found in career theory.

- Agency and structure denote the expert system of the Community Employment scheme, where deviant participants engage in a carceral network to be re-socialised into the formal labour market.

- Real time and retrospective sensemaking signify how the (former) non-employed make sense of their lives and careers, particularly following critical moments of change.

- Identity, identification and narrative epitomise the stories that the participants tell about their career experiences, including the personal and social resources that enable and constrain these career stories.

These frameworks offer me a platform to interrogate how the current careers discourse has been constituted in ways that seem natural and indisputable, but are only the effects of historical, social, cultural, political and economic configurations. If things have been made, they can be unmade, as long as we know how it was that they were originally made. This contention is explored in the conceptual contributions chapter (Chapter Eight).

Chapter Six

Findings and Discussion:

Micro Perspective – Critical

Moments, Fateful Moments and

Career Strategies

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This is the first of two findings and discussion chapters. The dyad builds on the preceding five chapters to address the central research question (how Community Employment scheme participants construct, interpret and make sense of their career experiences) and the five sub-questions (delineated in Chapter One).

The findings and discussions are divided into two distinct, but inter-related perspectives. This chapter focuses on the micro picture, narrating stories of career success from an individual context. The next chapter concentrates on the macro scene, articulating accounts of the participants' perception of career success from a structural angle. The theoretical frameworks (Chapter Five) that advise this chapter, the micro-individual perspective are identity, identification and narrative (Bauman, 2001; Giddens, 1991; Holland & Thomson, 2009; Thomson *et al*., 2002, 2004; Plumridge & Thomson, 2003) and real time and retrospective sensemaking (Archer, 2003, 2007; Weick, 1995, 2001, 2009).

During the restorying of the field texts using the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 2006), rich details about the participants' career experiences emerged. In particular, a consistent theme surfaced in each of the stories: a critical moment in the participants' lives, a moment that appears to have had life changing implications.

This chapter commences by chronicling the critical moments from the respondents' career success stories. Six categories of critical moment have been identified and a continuum has been developed to depict these experiences, at one end representing the

possibility of „choice' (altering family responsibilities, engaging with expert systems prior to involvement with the Community Employment scheme structure, becoming a parent and changing relationship dynamics), and at the other end, epitomising events outside the control of the individual, characterised as „fate' (bereavement and illness).

The micro-level stories of career success that illuminate the critical moments in the lives and careers of the Community Employment scheme participants are constructed around the cornerstones of the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space. Each tale works through the relationship between the individual and his or her evaluation of the outcome of his or her career experiences, that is, his or her career success before, during and after these critical moments. This is achieved by integrating the theoretical construct of the fateful moment (Giddens, 1991) into the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 2006). It recounts the 27 stories using the framework of this narrative inquiry space: reporting on the critical moment, as located in the temporality of the participant's life; explaining the critical places that influence the person following this critical moment; and describing the critical coping mechanisms (personal and social resources) that the participant uses to deal with the critical moment. The stories also reveal the respondent's evaluation of the outcome of his or her career experiences and the interpretation of his or her agency, before, during and after the critical moment.

A description of the different strategies of career (re)construction employed by the respondents following the critical moments of change in their lives is then proffered. The chapter concludes by exploring whether the distinction between critical moments along the choice/fate continuum has consequences for how the participants' (re)construct their career identity.

6.2 CAREER SUCCESS STORIES: CRITICAL MOMENTS AND FATEFUL MOMENTS

The episodic interviews (Chapter Two) were designed to allow critical moments to arise in the career narratives of the respondents (as evidenced by the questions outlined in the interview guide in Appendix A). Adopting the terminology used in the longitudinal research of Thomson *et al*. (2002), Plumridge and Thomson (2003) and Holland and Thomson (2009), I define a critical moment as an event described in the interview that either myself and/or the participant viewed as having important consequences for the informant's life and identity. As this inquiry explores how the participants (re)construct their career experiences, I also include the impact of the critical moment on the respondents' career identity in this description (Measor, 1985; Sikes, Measor & Woods, 2001; Troman & Woods, 2000; Woods & Jeffrey, 2002).

All of the informants experienced critical moments in their lives, each one occurring during a personal critical phase (Measor, 1985). Appendix E briefly relates a crucial critical moment in the lives and careers of 27 Community Employment scheme participants: nine narratives coincide with a significant stage in the cycle of family responsibilities; five stories focus on family bereavement; four accounts illustrate the impact of illness; four chronicles exemplify the effect of engagement with an expert system (prior to involvement with the Community Employment scheme structure); three tales portray the poignancy of parenthood (differentiated in this analysis from the first category – family responsibilities – as starting a family is recognised as an important transitional stage in the life course (Goodwin & O'Connor, 2009)); and two descriptions detail the results of changing dynamics in interpersonal relationships. (Each participant's story is comprehensively recounted in Sections 6.3 and 6.4.)

Appendix E illustrates that a critical moment can be perceived as positive or negative and that its impact can be interpreted optimistically or pessimistically. Such events are key determinants in how we recall our life experiences. Our memory of them often leads us to reflect critically, making sense of the experiences retrospectively and in real time, with the potential of adapting strategies and practices applicable to the new situation (Archer, 2003, 2007; Goodwin & O'Connor, 2009; Webster & Mertova, 2007; Weick, 1995, 2001, 2009).

As mentioned in Chapter Five, to facilitate a deeper understanding of the prospective impact of these critical moments on the participants' lives and careers, this analysis is informed by Giddens' (1991) fateful moment. According to Plumridge and Thomson (2003), the fateful moment is a useful device for exploring the components of particular instances of identity work, but it does not offer an explanation of why particular identities are possible and endure, while others are not. In order to explain the trajectory of the participants' careers, I believe that it is necessary to examine the wider framework of their identities, their relationships, the structures of opportunity that they operate within and the options and choices that they face. To do this, my analysis integrates the concept of the fateful moment into the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 2006), summarised in Appendix F and related in Sections 6.3 and 6.4. Adopting this format, I believe, allows me to address the study's core research question and its five sub-questions (see Chapter One). It also facilitates an exploration of whether a participant's ability to detect and define an experience as a critical moment has significant consequences for his or her career, that is, to comprehend whether the critical moment is fateful in Giddens' (1991) terms. This permits me to examine the relationship between the participant's agency, a crucial component of the contemporary career (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Briscoe &

Hall, 2006; Hall, 1976, 1996; Sullivan & Arthur, 2006), and how he or she interprets the outcome of his or her career experience. In identifying critical moments in the participant's narrative, I capture a sense of how he or she experiences the world. By comparing these critical moments across the sample, and noting the relative presence of agency, insight is gained into the ways in which social and economic environments frame individual career narratives, in addition to what personal and social resources the participant draws upon during times of change (Thomson *et al*., 2002).

Appendix F provides an overview of how the interviews are worked through interpretivistically (restoried) in a two-phase mapping procedure that I devised, reflecting the multi-stage process involved in analysing data from episodic interviews (Section 2.6.3 refers) (Flick, 2009):

1. Step one entails restorying the participants' career experiences by charting the critical moment in their lives onto the cornerstones of the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space (temporality, place and sociality) (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007):

   o Temporality explains the timeline of experiences involved in the participants' career path, including the critical moment. Similar to research by Thomson *et al*. (2002), Plumridge and Thomson (2003) and Holland and Thomson (2009), the transitions are characterised in terms of the extent to which the events were within a person's control, with bereaved individuals exhibiting the least influence. These events can be mapped onto a continuum (Figure 6.1), defined by degrees of agency, with one end representing „choice' (the presence of agency) and the other „fate' (the absence of agency). (Figure 6.1 is further explained on page 199.)

- Place outlines the significant settings of the career experiences, including geographical, topological, physical and psychological spaces.

- Sociality details the coping mechanisms (personal resources, such as education, skills and abilities, and social resources, including support from others, private and work networks and access to information) employed to deal with the change (Feldmann *et al*., 2007).

2. Step two plots the participants' reactions to the critical moments: firstly, by describing their evaluation of the outcome of their career experiences (their career success); and, secondly, by recounting their perception of their agency, or otherwise, over these experiences. Adopting the approach used by Thomson *et al*. (2002), Plumridge and Thomson (2003) and Holland and Thomson (2009), the responses are represented in terms of the degree to which the participants were subsequently able to respond to the critical moment. Fateful responses, reactions embodying the presence of agency, can be located at the choice end, whereas fatalistic responses, reactions typified by the absence of agency, can be situated at the fate end of the continuum.

Figure 6.1 Mapping Critical Moments from the Participants' Narratives onto a Choice/Fate Continuum

Expert System   Bereavement

Choice ⟵――――――――――――――――⟶ **Fate**

Source: Adapted from Thomson *et al*. (2002: 342).

Referring to the six categories of critical moment distinguished in Appendix E, some classifications, such as those relating to liaising with an expert system, can be characterised by the presence of choice, and, as such, are located towards the agency end of the continuum (Figure 6.1 refers). Areas, such as death, are more likely to be outside the control of individuals, and, so, can be situated towards the fate end of the continuum.

Other divisions of critical moments can be mapped at various points in between. Inevitably, the relatively arbitrary selection of descriptive categories has implications for their positioning along the continuum. For example, changing relationship dynamics, which include the formation and dissolution of romantic relationships, will incorporate experiences both within and outside individual control. Phenomena at either end of the spectrum can be understood as being socially structured, yet depending on the location of the critical moment along the continuum (Thomson *et al*., 2002), the participants may have relatively more or less influence over the events taking place.

Appendix F represents the participants' individual stories of career success in tabular format, classified according to the critical moment that they experienced. A full narrative account of the stories detailing the critical moments outside of a person's control (bereavement and illness) is rendered in Section 6.3. The stories where the participants had potentially more agency over the critical moments (family responsibilities, expert systems, parenthood and relationship dynamics) are described in Section 6.4.

6.3 CAREER SUCCESS STORIES: LOCATED AT 'FATE' END OF CONTINUUM CHRONICLING CRITICAL AND FATEFUL MOMENTS IN THE NARRATIVES OF THE PARTICIPANTS

6.3.1 Introduction

Where a participant relates more than one critical moment, I concentrate on the event that appears to have most relevance to his or her career story, having a significant outcome for his or her life and identity, as derived from the narratives. The stories of those who experienced critical moments that were outside of their control are recounted in this section, with five focusing on family bereavement and four illustrating the impact of illness. All of the accounts are constructed around the cornerstones of the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space, of temporality, place and sociality.

6.3.2 Five Stories of Bereavement

6.3.2.1 Wendy's Story

Temporality (critical moment): Wendy is a 35-year-old lone parent, with three teenage children. Wendy's lack of educational qualifications (left school at 14) set her on a path of basic jobs: factory work, shop work and childcare. Four years ago, following the death of her brother, Wendy reassessed her life and made a decision to improve her situation and advance her career through obtaining educational qualifications. She recognises that she would have continued down the road of menial jobs were it not for the untimely death of her brother, who, in Wendy's estimation „wasted his life'. This triggered a re-assessment of her own life and career, feeling that a

personal and professional change could only be accomplished by returning to education to become a professional childcare worker. To achieve this, she commenced employment on Community Employment as a childcare worker in a family resource centre.

Place (critical location): Wendy's experience of her place within her family tree significantly influenced the trajectory of her career. Leaving school at 14 was not Wendy's choice, because, as the fifth child in a family of 10 children, remaining within the educational system was not an option for her:

> At 14 I had to go out to work because there was 10 in my family and we all had to go out and work. We didn't have a choice; we were told like, end of story.

Wendy's family background initially hindered her job choices, but, for the past four years, her career has been advanced by her family situation, albeit her motivation stemming from a tragic event, the death of her brother.

Sociality (critical coping mechanism): When talking about her personal resources, Wendy is hesitant and uncertain in her comments, coming across as someone who has not previously taken time out to reflect on her skills and abilities. She is, however, able to highlight her recent childcare qualifications, her training courses, the application of previous knowledge from her prior roles to her present position and her aptitude for working with children.

Evaluation of career outcomes (career success) and career control (agency): The bulk of Wendy's career was spent working in occupations that she did not enjoy and did not want to do. Previously, she interpreted her career as successful because she never received negative feedback from others regarding her job performance (subjective, other-referent factor). Her current definition of career success involves engaging on training courses to gain knowledge and qualifications (subjective, self-referent factors).

Wendy believes that she had no choices in her early career because she had limited educational attainments. She now considers that she has opportunities available to her because of the qualifications she has obtained through Community Employment. Wendy now feels in control of her career:

> I have my choices [now]. ... I wouldn't have been able to get one [a career] if I hadn't done the CE scheme here, that's the truth, like, because I left school when I was 14.

6.3.2.2 Katrina's Story

Temporality (critical moment): Katrina is a widow in her late 50s, with six grown-up children. Following the death of her husband from a long-term illness, she returned to the workplace after a 35-year absence to work on Community Employment as a childcare worker in a parish centre. This is only Katrina's second position in paid employment. Her first job, after leaving school, was as a factory operative, a position she was told to get by her parents to supplement the family income. Katrina stayed in the factory until she married; thereupon, she became a homemaker. She considered the possibility of returning to the workplace part-time, but, when her husband was diagnosed with a brain tumour, he had to be continually cared for during the 14-year period before he died. Following his passing, her daughter sourced the Community Employment job unbeknownst to her to 'get her out of the house'.

Place (critical location): The location of significance in Katrina's career is her current workplace. For Katrina, her involvement with this institution has instilled a sense of confidence in her. She refers to her supportive colleagues, the collegiate work atmosphere and the training she has undertaken:

> [The] people I work with are very, very good, very good, very helpful. ... They were just more like friends, so you didn't mind doing your own thing. You didn't feel uncomfortable, or shy, or stupid, doing your own thing.

Sociality (critical coping mechanism): Until recently, Katrina did not take the initiative in her career: it was her parents who told her what job to get when she was a teenager and it was her daughter who secured her present role following her husband's bereavement. Katrina is proud of her achievements on the scheme and readily lists the qualifications that she has attained (sign language, speech and language, assertiveness, computers and first aid).

Evaluation of career outcomes (career success) and career control (agency): Katrina recognises her career transformation: from a person who perceived her career success in terms of what her weekly wage would purchase (objective, self-referent factor), to someone who now wants a satisfying and fulfilling career in childcare (subjective, self-referent factors); from a woman lacking in confidence, who would not submit an application for a job herself, to a self-assured person, who now takes the initiative in her job search. In Katrina's eyes, her future career is a positive vista, as she believes that she has both the skills and confidence to source, secure and carry out a childcare role, and be successful in that setting. After five years of participating on the scheme and partaking in relevant training, Katrina feels in a position to control her career direction and career choices:

> I'm at it [CE] five years now and I've lost an awful lot of shyness, got a lot of confidence ‚cos I always worked just within the home.

6.3.2.3 Lara's Story

Temporality (critical moment): Lara is a widow in her early 40s, who has four children, one young child and three grown-up adults. Her career story centres on her regret of not remaining in education, of what she could have been; that door is now open to her and she is willingly walking through it and embracing the educational environment. Lara's early career was in shop work, whereupon she voluntarily took time out to be a homemaker for the next 19 years. In the latter years of her homemaking role, she achieved educational qualifications with a view to setting up her own childcare business, as she believed that her domestic duties provided her with the foundation on which to build a solid career in childcare. Her situation changed when her husband died suddenly, ending her entrepreneurial endeavours. As she still wanted to care for children, she participated on Community Employment as a childcare worker in a parish centre.

Place (critical location): The essential environments in Lara's career are educational establishments. She narrates a dichotomous story, painting a pessimistic picture of her school days, but portraying an illuminating image of her further education. School for Lara was an unhappy place; she talks of the terror she lived with, in fear of making noise and being physically abused:

> Our school wouldn't have been happy. … You just sat there. If you moved that pen [pushes pen] you were clattered and clattered.

Looking back, Lara rues that she did not achieve more in her education. This frustration, in addition to her changed personal circumstances, has motivated her to resume her schooling. She now talks about educational establishments in glowing terms.

Sociality (critical coping mechanism): Lara readily describes the qualifications she has obtained (childcare, first aid, arts and crafts) and the personal resources required to perform her job well (patience and calmness). Participation on the scheme, in addition to attaining appropriate certification, has helped to engender this confidence in her.

Evaluation of career outcomes (career success) and career control (agency): At all times, Lara has viewed her career outcomes in terms of her acquisition of knowledge, qualifications and enjoyment (subjective, self-referent factors). She feels that she always had choices over what career decisions she made. Engaging on Community Employment has provided Lara with a platform from which to launch her childcare career, enhancing her existing knowledge and know-how and endowing her with the preparation and practice to achieve her ambition:

> I actually didn't realise there was such a place [CE] and they exist. There's so much help there, for everyone, so much courses going on.

6.3.2.4 Ursula's Story

Temporality (critical moment): As a 58-year-old widow, with four grown-up children, Ursula worked all of her life, predominantly in the informal labour market. Ursula left school before she completed her final state examination, as a result of a disagreement between her father and the school over how she was treated. She soon married and became a homemaker, combining her family responsibilities with cleaning other people's homes and caring for their children. Following the death of her husband, Ursula started work on Community Employment as a childcare worker in a crèche in a family resource centre.

Place (critical location): The location that anchors Ursula's career is her moral compass, guiding her decisions based on her principles of justice and fairness, believing

that those who employ her should treat her with dignity and respect. An example of when Ursula's moral compass was activated was when a former employer asked her to do additional work. As she was unable to oblige, Ursula suggested that the person could possibly perform the tasks herself and was told by her supervisor „my motto is why have a dog and bark yourself". Her response was to leave the position, stating:

> My father always told us to hold our heads high and never, ever to let anybody speak to us like that.

This sense of equality has advised her throughout her career, as she constantly strives for fairness in her employment relationships.

Sociality (critical coping mechanism): When discussing her personal resources, Ursula easily describes the skills and qualities required to perform all of her roles in both paid and non-paid positions: communication and interpersonal skills, honesty, hard-working, politeness, well presented, positive disposition, organised, reliable and diligent.

Evaluation of career outcomes (career success) and career control (agency): A consistent thread wove through the chronicle of Ursula's career story until recently: the requirement to earn money to supplement her husband's income (objective, self-referent factor), a role she willingly accepted whilst acknowledging her lack of agency in the situation. When her children became financially independent, Ursula returned to education, fulfilling a long held desire. After her husband passed away, she participated on Community Employment to continue her tuition. This role affords her with the opportunity to avail of training, thus satisfying her current career success criteria of knowledge, qualifications and enjoyment (subjective, self-referent factors). The scheme also gives her the freedom to choose her next career move, in childcare, by furnishing her with the requisite qualifications:

Even when my husband worked we never had much money. … I just got up and I did it because it was needs must. ... I have the choice for whatever I want to do now. … I have my qualifications, you know. It's on paper.

6.3.2.5 Queenie's Story

Temporality (critical moment): This story is about Quennie, a married woman in her 60th year, whose life and career changed forever following the deaths of two of her five adult children. Her career centred predominantly on caring roles, such as a student nurse, helper for people with disabilities and a support worker in a women's refuge. Life and career were good for Quennie until one of her sons became sick and died after a protracted illness (colonic cancer), and, 11 months later, this heartbreak was compounded by another tragedy, the sudden death of her daughter. At this point, Quennie believed that she would have entered a mental health institution without appropriate state support; thereupon, commencing her current role on Community Employment as an after-school childcare worker.

Place (critical location): To encapsulate the sadness of Quennie's situation, I am using an idiomatic expression to describe the place that her career (and life) inhabits, her broken heart. The struggle that Quennie faces on a day-to-day basis is eloquently elucidated by her:

> When you are where I am there's no place, there's nowhere to go. Your back is up against that wall.

Musing about what life would have been like without the death of her two children, Quennie claims that she and her family would be totally different people to who they are today. By inference, she is claiming that these tragic, uncontrollable occurrences have profoundly changed her life, her identity and her career. Quennie recognises her previous, satisfied existence, as a taken-for-granted reality, one which she now labels as

„smug'. Notwithstanding the personal battle that Quennie fights every day, she regards herself as fortunate to be where she is, on Community Employment, a system she wholeheartedly praises for helping to heal her broken heart.

Sociality (critical coping mechanism): This woman recounts her story in an open, cogent style, continuously demonstrating an optimistic outlook. Despite her bereavements, she is still able to sight a beacon of light in her otherwise dark situation, her happiness. Queenie also exhibits significant self-understanding. This is evident when remembering her feelings on returning to work in the women's refuge after her son's death, recognising that she was not the same person as before, and appreciating that this could negatively impact on her ability to do her job due to her own emotional baggage. Her period of soul-searching did not last long, however, because, within six weeks of recommencing her job in the refuge, Queenie's 18-year-old daughter died.

Evaluation of career outcomes (career success) and career control (agency): For Quennie, career (and life) has a huge element of fate attached to it, regardless of the decisions and choices that a person makes. Quennie views her career outcomes in terms of the good or bad hands that Lady Luck deals and the concomitant satisfaction and happiness that a person feels as a result (subjective, self-referent factors). Navigating the twists and turns of fate is how Quennie represents her career. She accepts that she has agency in her career choices, but acknowledges that events happen beyond an individual's control, which can dramatically alter the trajectory of one's career (and life), both positively and negatively:

> A lot of it is luck and a lot of it is just, as I said it, the life planned out for us. ... It [luck] influences you, how you, how there are different roads for different people and how many different roads there are, and by God, I had different roads.

6.3.3 Four Stories of Illness

6.3.3.1 Tanya's Story

Temporality (critical moment): Tanya is a single woman in her late 40s, a mother of five grown-up children, co-habiting with her partner. In Tanya's teenage years, she was a long-distance champion runner and also worked as a skating instructor for five years. Tanya commenced employment in her first period of tenure with a family resource centre over two decades ago. She held a position as a youth team worker there for three years, but, upon being diagnosed with breast cancer, Tanya left her job to convalesce. Following her recuperation two-and-a-half years ago, she approached the centre to continue working within her community, now as an information and welfare officer on Community Employment.

Place (critical location): One location impacts powerfully on Tanya's career: Nicaragua. During her initial service with the resource centre, she went to that country to promote the predicament of the indigenous people. Tanya now uses her part-time career, as a poet, to highlight the poverty there, writing verse for Irish school children:

> I introduce the poem and say I was in Nicaragua. It's like they all listen. It's like someone that's not the teacher is after ... telling them what it is really like.

Sociality (critical coping mechanism): The language Tanya utilises is achievement orientated: she puts „100%' into her activities; „conquers' computers and the Internet; „reaches' for things; and she successfully managed to 'pull' herself up from breast cancer. She claims she is a confident person, who inculcates confidence in others. Tanya presents as a person with a positive perspective, who believes that her upbeat persona will always triumph.

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Evaluation of career outcomes (career success) and career control (agency): Tanya considers the feedback she receives from others regarding her actions and behaviour when assessing her career outcomes. She continuously searches for recognition from euphemistic external comparators as her benchmark of success (subjective, other-referent factor):

> Confidence means to me that I'm as good as the next guy. That I don't have to feel intimidated by nobody. ... I've never had anyone come to me and say: „here's the thing, you're not doing that job right, or do it that way.

Tanya is supremely satisfied with the career choices that she has made and feels that her decisions have always been within her control.

6.3.3.2 Anna's Story

Temporality (critical moment): As a 57-year-old, unmarried woman, Anna has worked for over 40 years: sewing in a clothing factory; skilled operative in an electronics facility; checking bank notes in a printers; cleaning; and bar work in a football club. She is now employed as a recreational assistant on Community Employment in a hospital providing care to elderly patients. The fun and happiness Anna derives from her life was tested by a nervous breakdown, but her optimistic and resilient disposition has helped her to deal with the situation, resulting in her re-evaluating her priorities and deciding to participate on the scheme.

Place (critical location): The location in Anna's life that she believes gave her the confidence to reassess her life and career is the training centre where she took a course, which aided her recovery from a nervous breakdown. It was, in Anna's words, „fantastic', as it taught her not to be fearful about things:

I went to the course and it was the best [emphasise] thing I ever did. It was fantastic [low whisper]. ... It mostly showed me not to be fearful. ... I think it gave me confidence in knowing that if everything is gone tomorrow, so what, big deal.

Sociality (critical coping mechanism): Referring to the place and the course mitigates Anna's own efforts in her convalescence; her recuperation is presented almost as a gift from someone else, her own involvement is denied. Anna downplays the strength of character she required in her rehabilitation, a quality that typifies her life and her career. She perceives it as good fortune that a leaflet came through her door advertising a particular course. Anna underplays the willpower needed to take the first step when at such a low point. She appears to place serendipity at the centre of her career experiences, claiming that she „fell' into jobs. This focus on fate underestimates her agency in proactively searching for jobs. Her emphasis on chance is contradicted by her own behaviour in three ways: the vignette she voices when explaining how she used her initiative to source her Community Employment position, approaching her then future employer, who was also present at an event that Anna was attending; her comments about her skills set, stating that she has „loads of skills'; and the language she uses, predominantly utilising „I' statements, indicating responsibility for her own actions.

Evaluation of career outcomes (career success) and career control (agency): Anna believes that she had choices in her career, always making her decisions freely. The one exception, however, was leaving school at age 14. In a career spanning over 40 years, Anna has always wanted to have fun. She uses the phrases „enjoy/enjoyment' 21 times in our discussion and the word „fun' 10 times. When asked about what career success means for her, Anna cites her own happiness, contentment and enjoyment (subjective, self-referent factors):

I'd be much more concerned with: „am I happy [raised intonation] in the job I am doing?'

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6.3.3.3 Oliver's Story

Temporality (critical moment): Oliver is a single man in his late 20s, who graduated with an engineering degree, but disliked the mechanics of the discipline. He decided to commence his career in non-engineering roles in the USA. There he became ill (unspecified nature, but possibly a nervous breakdown) and returned to Ireland. After participating on a number of short-term courses, Oliver started in his present position, on Community Employment, to assist with his recuperation, as an administrator with an advocacy organisation for people with disabilities. Oliver metaphorically describes a career as a river and depicts the stones situated in that river as a person's jobs. He explains that he has fallen off a stone (his job in America), plunged into the water without a life jacket (his illness) and that his current role is a stepping stone (to becoming a self-employed, property maintenance consultant):

> I'd say a career is a series of rocks in a river and there're spaces between the rocks. I'd say the job is, is a rock. ... I was in the water with no life jacket.

Place (critical location): The crucial location in Oliver's career is America. In 1998, Oliver fled a family feud instigated by his decision not to enter the engineering profession. On arriving in the USA, he soon recognised that an inexperienced novice could progress through effort, endeavour and enterprise, and thrived there. Oliver worked in the hospitality sector and the property industry, and in both scenarios considered himself successful, explaining that he managed a bar with 22 staff, and, subsequently, held a financial investment in a property development company. In the USA, work for Oliver was all-consuming, comprising ‚99% or 99.9%' of his life. By 2008, he returned to Ireland having become ill, possibly as a result of fatigue and burnout, although this was never stated.

Sociality (critical coping mechanism): Oliver is candid about both the positive aspects and the negative facets of his personal resources. He points to his organisational skills, methodical approach to work, commitment and dedication, work ethic, respectful and courteous nature and his listening ability. He also appreciates that his perfectionist trait results in him pursuing the safe option, rather than opting for approaches that may potentially fail. Confidence has become reified in Oliver's mind as an object that he once had, which disappeared following his illness, and he is now seeking to rekindle:

> I believe I had confidence all my life up until about a year-and-a-half ago. ... I became unwell and suddenly it literally vanished overnight. I don't know where it went. ... I'm still searching for that and it will come back.

Evaluation of career outcomes (career success) and career control (agency): Oliver feels that he has always been instrumental in orchestrating his career outcomes. For him, career success revolves around his ability to contribute to the bottom line of the business and to obtain external recognition from others for his involvement in a thriving enterprise (objective, other-referent factors). Oliver believes that he was successful in his roles in America, producing a financial return for his employers. He does not, however, consider that he is successful in his current position, principally because he lacks confidence. Oliver hopes that this situation will change by participating on Community Employment, because, for him, a job is integral to his identity:

> Job is everything. Job is pride ... it's confidence ... it's absolutely, for me.

6.3.3.4 Isobel's Story

Temporality (critical moment): Isobel is a single woman in her late 30s whose life and career has been defined by a debilitating disease acquired in her early 20s. She held various administrative jobs after she graduated, but, upon being diagnosed with an illness at the age of 23, she continued to work in whatever capacity her body allowed her. Following a recent three-year break from paid employment, Isobel was strongly advised by the medical profession to take a relatively flexible position on Community Employment, so she is working as an administrator in a community centre.

Place (critical location): For Isobel, the place of significance in her career is a physical place, her body. The disease she has is a stress-related illness, never named, labeled nor identified by Isobel. It has an escalating, negative effect on her body: the more stressed Isobel becomes, the sicker she feels; the more the illness develops, the further her body deteriorates, adding to the pain she already endures. Isobel recognises that the disease impacted on her past career, is affecting her present career and will influence her future choices. She represents her career as „hard and a struggle', but, despite this, always aspires to be self-supporting. Isobel recently qualified as a beauty therapist, a position she believes will provide her with the career flexibility she requires, working wherever and whenever she requires:

> When I was 23 I got very sick, so I ended up I can only work part-time. … I need to be having a career that's going to be flexible. That if I'm going to be sick, if I'm at home, I can actually work from at home.

Sociality (critical coping mechanism): Isobel is confident in her own abilities and acknowledges that she has made prodigious progress in her career given her medical condition. She employs achievement orientated terminology to describe her career („striving' and „determined'), and, when recounting her job search strategy, portrays

herself as an adept applicant, proactively using all of the available channels. Isobel's resourcefulness and strong work ethic probably originate from her supportive upbringing. Her mother is self-employed, eternally encouraging a sense of enterprise and endeavour in her daughter. Isobel is an independent individual, wanting to be self-sufficient and self-reliant. In the past, she continued working whilst ill, causing irreparable damage to her body, possibly due to her pride in not wanting to capitulate to her illness.

Evaluation of career outcomes (career success) and career control (agency): Isobel's interpretation of career success is her ability to buy a house, pay her bills and to have security of tenure to allow her to achieve this (objective, self-referent factors). These are criteria that she feels she has not yet satisfied. Isobel utilises obligation orientated language to illustrate her circumstances. She represents her career following her illness as a situation lacking in freedom, continuously using words such as 'must', „have to' and „need to'. Isobel does, however, recognise that Community Employment provides her with the training (beauty therapy) to allow her to be an agentic actor in her future career:

> I have to pay rent, I have to pay bills, I have, you know, a car to run. ... There's no choice on the matter. ... They [CE] also help me out with training if I want and that's a huge, massive benefit.

6.4 CAREER SUCCESS STORIES: LOCATED AT 'CHOICE' END OF CONTINUUM CHRONICLING CRITICAL AND FATEFUL MOMENTS IN THE NARRATIVES OF THE PARTICIPANTS

6.4.1 Nine Stories of Different Stages in the Cycle of Family Responsibilities

6.4.1.1 Hilda's Story

Temporality (critical moment): As a separated woman in her late 40s, with two grown-up children, Hilda recently returned to the workplace after a 20-year break. In the early part of her career, she was employed in retail and production positions. During her hiatus from paid employment, she occasionally worked in the informal labour market as a cleaner in other people's homes. Hilda is now a cleaner on Community Employment in a local parish centre. The critical moment in Hilda's story is when her youngest son reached adulthood. At this juncture she wanted to earn her own money rather than depend on social welfare, so she returned to working in an organisational setting.

Place (critical location): The place that holds meaning for Hilda is a previous employer, a retail company for which she did not enjoy working. Hilda only remained there for a short period of time, as she disliked the work that she was doing (shop assistant in a pressurised environment) and the culture of the company (hierarchical) was anathema to her. Knowing what she does not want assists her to identify what she does want, that is, a job that offers her enjoyment:

> With the likes of [name of shop] I definitely wouldn't work there. ... That's why I left [name of shop] when I was a young one „œs I'd have a heart attack at Christmas and them all coming at you. ... Too many chiefs and not enough Indians and then people younger than me, telling me what to do. ... I couldn't see myself staying in a job if I didn't enjoy it.

Sociality (critical coping mechanism): Hilda is continually self-deprecating about her jobs and her skills. Whatever competence she recognises is downplayed and occasionally dismissed, referring to herself as a ‚skivvy' because she is a cleaner. She does, however, exhibit self-awareness regarding her attitude to the educational possibilities available to her whilst engaging on Community Employment. For example, Hilda accepts that her training can assist her to plan her future job search, stating that she should be ‚at least trying to get something out of it'.

Evaluation of career outcomes (career success) and career control (agency): Hilda looks for enjoyment in her interaction with others**,** pursuing pleasure in her interpersonal working relationships regardless of the nature of her duties. Her criterion of career success is the fun and happiness that she generates with her colleagues (subjective, self-referent factors):

> [Career success is] being happy in what you do and having a reason to get up in
> the morning. ... It's having a bit of craic [colloquial term for enjoyment] and a
> bit of fun.

Hilda considers that she always had, and still has, choices in whatever endeavour she decides to do. It is her doubt about her future career direction that makes the decision difficult for her, not any perceived lack of opportunity.

6.4.1.2 Nora's Story

Temporality (critical moment): Nora is a single woman in her early 40s, with two children, one grown-up and one adolescent. Despite her relatively young age, she has worked for nearly thirty years, starting her career at the age of 13 as a nanny, and subsequently holding numerous jobs in factories, housecleaning, office cleaning, home help and childminding. Now, as her two children are reasonably independent, she

considers it an apt time to do something for herself, so has joined a Community Employment scheme, working as a receptionist in a parish centre.

Place (critical location): The site of significance in Nora's career is her place within her family when growing up. Nora feels that she was not encouraged by her parents, and recognises the limited career options available to her as a child, because coming from a large family she had to be independent and commence employment as soon as possible. Her early career was influenced by five domestic factors: the number of children in her family (15); the chronological order of her sequence within that family (ninth); the gender breakdown of her older siblings (boys); parental beliefs (with eight older brothers she was treated like a boy, with the expectation that she would go to work at a young age); and her mother's untimely demise (it was her duty as the eldest girl to mind her younger siblings).

Sociality (critical coping mechanism): When talking about her personal qualities and skills, Nora points to her exemplary timekeeping, dedication, reliability, interpersonal skills and computer proficiency. This self-assurance was not something that Nora always exhibited, describing herself as someone who previously lacked confidence, a shy and retiring person, accepting her fate without questioning it. Nora recognises that her new-found self-belief is internally generated, resulting from the training obtained on Community Employment:

> Sometimes you don't realise that you're capable, you are capable of it until you do it. ... It's just all about, emm, training up for it and being, allowing yourself to go for it.

Evaluation of career outcomes (career success) and career control (agency): Nora characterises her previous jobs as vehicles to obtain money for her family (objective, self-referent factor). The jobs were chosen to suit her domestic circumstances and the salary was used to pay bills and to put food on the table. Nora feels that she did not have

choices regarding what jobs she applied for in the past because she did not possess the requisite education and training. Having spent two years on Community Employment, gaining appropriate certification, Nora believes that she now has choices about her future career direction, as a receptionist. She currently measures her career success by the training courses she participates on and the concomitant learning she achieves (subjective, self-referent factors):

> I didn't [have choices] because I had no education. I had no training. ... I've always taken any kind of a job that was either offered to me, or given to me. ... They were just survival. ... [Now] once I do the training for it and I'm able for the training, I should be able then to succeed into whatever it leads me to.

6.4.1.3 Aaron's Story

Temporality (critical moment): As a 53-year-old married man, with three grown-up children, Aaron has spent the majority of his career working as a qualified carpenter interspersed with periods of unemployment. He also held a maintenance position on a health farm for two-and-a-half years and is now on Community Employment for the second time, employed as a caretaker/security officer in a resource centre. Aaron is on the scheme because he feels less pressure to earn money due to his changed family circumstances, as his children are self-sufficient and his wife is working part-time.

Place (critical location): The environment that impacts on Aaron's career is the type of location where he worked for 35 years, a building site. Here he learned the technical knowledge of his trade, becoming practiced and proficient in his profession, a skilled craftsman. As a young apprentice, he was socialised into the norms and behaviours of working on a construction site by a seasoned colleague. Aaron acknowledges the importance of acquiring both occupational skills and behavioural standards at this early stage of his life, recognising that it influenced him for the rest of his career:

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> He showed me how, how to behave, how to work and how to behave when I'm working … and he would have been probably an influence that kind of stayed with you for the rest of my life.

Sociality (critical coping mechanism): Aaron predominantly narrates his career story in the first person, constantly demonstrating a strong feeling of responsibility for both himself and his family. His sense of obligation to financially support his family is evident in a tale that he tells about earning extra money during the recession of the 1980s, chopping logs and selling the sticks house-to-house one Christmas.

Evaluation of career outcomes (career success) and career control (agency): Aaron works for money to support himself and his family (objective, self-referent factors) and considers that his time on the building sites was the most successful part of his career, as it was when he earned the greatest income. Reflecting on his jobs, Aaron does not believe that he has had career choices, either now or in the past. He was told by his father to leave school at the age of 15 to become a tradesperson and when working as a carpenter he regards that the uncertain nature of the building industry, combined with his family responsibilities, resulted in him taking whatever position was on offer. Aaron still feels that he has no career choices, believing that there are a limited number of jobs available to him because of his age and the current economic recession:

> I think anyone over 50 now is going to, going to have a problem getting, getting any kind of work. ... There's no jobs out there. ... It's just very, very few. What, there's 400,000 people unemployed.

6.4.1.4 Penelope's Story

Temporality (critical moment): As a single woman in her late 50s, with a grown-up son, Penelope's life has been rejuvenated. In her early career she worked as a shop assistant in well-established retail outlets. Penelope took time out to raise her son and

subsequently acted as a carer for both of her parents (her mother had multiple sclerosis and then her father was diagnosed with alzheimer's). When her mother died, she had sole caring responsibility for her father, but had to place him in a nursing home, as she could no longer cater for his needs. Penelope assisted with tending her father in that setting until he died. Her activities in the nursing home prompted her to apply for a Community Employment role as a care worker for the elderly in a resource centre. She acknowledges that, after all of her years attending to family members, it is now time for her to pursue her own ambitions.

Place (critical location): Her father's nursing home has had a major impact on Penelope's current career choice. She had no plans to pursue a career as a carer until she felt compelled to leave her father in a nursing home. In that locale, Penelope became conscious that she could utilise the nurturing expertise that she had honed through caring for her son and her elderly parents, a taken-for-granted skill that she did not appreciate she had until she started to help her father and his associates in the nursing home. She is delighted that she has found her true vocation, as a carer for the elderly, but is disappointed it took so long to discover:

> I loved looking after, helping to look after the other people that had nobody with them. ... I found out too late in life that's what I really wanted.

Sociality (critical coping mechanism): Penelope presents as a self-assured person who predominantly learns through experience, rather than in a classroom setting. Despite her current confidence, Penelope refers to periods of self-doubt when raising her son and nursing her parents. In both situations, she contends that her natural instinct and innate abilities guided her (with some assistance from expert systems, such as the hospital).

Evaluation of career outcomes (career success) and career control (agency): For Penelope, her career is centred on enjoyment, using the word „love' 13 times while

describing her jobs. Career success, for Penelope, is the sense of satisfaction she derives from doing her job (subjective, self-referent factor). This satisfaction is the reward she feels for working in what she perceives as an enjoyable job and performing a worthwhile activity:

> Satisfaction in doing what you're doing and knowing that you've made somebody happy, to me that's a success. ... I think it's worthwhile. I look after old people and I love it.

Throughout her career, Penelope considers that she has made her own decisions without influence from others and that they were the correct choices. Penelope, however, refers to age as a perceived barrier to her future career progression, reflecting that, at 57, she only has „three good years left'. She believes that, despite legislation, age discrimination still exists.

6.4.1.5 Rachel's Story

Temporality (critical moment): Rachel is in her early 40s and is both a mother (of three children) and a grandmother (one grandchild). Upon leaving school at 15, Rachel worked as an assistant hairdresser on a part-time basis, where she stayed for less than a year. Then Rachel became a mother and she took time out, approximately a decade, to raise her children. When her children were older, she returned to paid employment, taking short-term contracts in the hospitality sector. Subsequently, Rachel became a home help for the elderly, working in that role for less than a year. She then looked after her grandchild, while her daughter went to work. When Rachel's grandchild was old enough to attend playschool, she felt it was time to re-enter the formal labour market, thus commenced on Community Employment as an after-school childcare worker.

Place (critical location): The resource centre where Rachel works is a central place in her career story for three reasons. Firstly, she has remained in that environment for longer than any other role: two years and nine months, compared to less than one year in her other jobs. Secondly, the structure of Community Employment allows Rachel to partake in additional training and education, instilling heightened self-confidence. Thirdly, her role has facilitated her to discover the type of job that she gains the most pleasure from: caring.

Sociality (critical coping mechanism): Rachel believes that participating on the scheme has enhanced her confidence, particularly her ability to assert herself, a quality she feels she previously lacked. Rachel points to her former supervisor in the resource centre as having a significant impact on her career decisions, maintaining that she encouraged and supported her with positive comments:

> She [supervisor] was great like that ... and she even said to me: „you can see the difference in you even when you are working with the kids'.

Evaluation of career outcomes (career success) and career control (agency): Her career story has two distinct chapters: working in jobs to earn a living, but feeling a lack of control and choice over the outcome; and performing caring roles that she both enjoys doing and chooses to do. For most of her career, Rachel's criterion of career success was her ability to earn money to support her children (objective, self-referent factor). Recently, her career orientation changed, facilitated by her participation on Community Employment, now only undertaking roles that she loves. She currently measures her career success by the extent of the pleasure she gains from her job (subjective, self-referent factor):

> To see the faces on the little kids. ... They are happy and they're, that's what makes me [happy] in this job, seeing their little faces and they do be delighted.

6.4.1.6 Yvonne's Story

Temporality (critical moment): Yvonne is a lone parent in her late 50s, with a grown-up daughter. Working in paid employment for the majority of her life (nearly four decades), Yvonne was employed by a variety of organisations, predominantly in administrative roles. Following a three-year hiatus from the labour market to mind her grandson, Yvonne now works as an administrative assistant on Community Employment with an advocacy organisation for people with disabilities. This return was prompted by both her own desire to do „something for herself‟ and by others' opinions that it was an opportune time for her to re-enter the labour market.

Place (critical location): The location that has had the greatest impact on Yvonne's career is the American Embassy in Dublin, where she spent 19 years working in an administrative capacity. This environment seems to be integral to her identity and how she perceives herself: it allowed Yvonne to be regarded by others as expert in her job. In this role, she received prolific praise for being the best in her occupation:

> I was told, a long, long time ago that I was one of the best at that particular time, which was lovely to hear. ... We all like praise.

Sociality (critical coping mechanism): When asked to describe her personal resources, she highlights a skill she is deficient in (computers), rather than one she is proficient in. This lack of confidence is only evident in the past three years of Yvonne's life, while she was out of paid employment. When talking about her previous roles, particularly at the embassy, she describes her professional competence and competencies without hesitation, recognising her organisational skills and her flexibility.

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Evaluation of career outcomes (career success) and career control (agency): For Yvonne, enjoyment in her job is a state that she constantly strives for, actually using the words „enjoy/enjoyment' 25 times in our discussion. Enjoyment is not an intrinsic feeling of satisfaction for her, as it results from receiving positive feedback from others (subjective, other-referent factors):

> How other people view you [is important]. ... You're a receptionist, are you a good receptionist? ... I would like to think that, that I am.

As an early school leaver and a lone parent, Yvonne felt that she had no choices in her early career. She now considers that she has options available to her, partially due to her changed family circumstances and partly attributable to acquiring additional skills on Community Employment to equip her with contemporary office skills.

6.4.1.7 Dorothy's Story

Temporality (critical moment): Dorothy is a divorcee in her late 40s, with two teenage children. She recently started working on Community Employment as a receptionist in a trade union centre for the unemployed. Dorothy left school at the age of 15 and trained for four years to be a hairdresser. As a result of an economic recession (early 1980s), her working hours were reduced, so she decided to leave the profession. Dorothy then held various roles in supermarkets, dry cleaners and cafes in both Ireland and the UK. She left the labour market to raise her two children and only went back to that domain six years ago, taking a catering job in a local school. Dorothy is using the scheme to gain the educational qualifications that she yearned for all of her life, a return prompted by her desire to assist her son with his final state examination.

Place (critical location): Place for Dorothy is a symbolic space that can only be accessed by obtaining educational qualifications. Her motivation for getting to this emblematical environment is self-improvement, which seems to stem from her ruing departing school at a young age and then not remaining in the hairdressing profession. Dorothy believes that she is now in a position to re-gain entry to the education system, as she can avail of the training opportunities offered by the scheme to advance and enhance her career:

> I feel like I'm doing something with my life. Before I just felt that I was in this rut, this dead-end that was never going anywhere. ... They [CE] give you the extra training that you would need, you know, for whatever position.

Sociality (critical coping mechanism): Describing her skills, qualities and personal resources, Dorothy continually refers to her lack of confidence before participating on the scheme and her improving self-belief since engaging on the programme. For Dorothy, this self-assurance is inextricably intertwined with education, learning and doing courses:

> Doing the courses … will give me the confidence, you know, that hopefully, I will be able to go and apply for these jobs without saying: „I can't do that'.

Evaluation of career outcomes (career success) and career control (agency): Prior to partaking on the scheme, Dorothy felt a lack of career agency and considered that she was working to subsist (objective, self-referent factor): „needing the money, you know, to survive and pay your bills'. Since joining the scheme and taking training courses, she feels that she has control over her career outcomes and views career success as learning through participating on programmes to progress herself (subjective, self-referent factors). Dorothy believes that her future career, as a receptionist, will be successful, but only if she does additional courses.

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6.4.1.8 Geraldine's Story

Temporality (critical moment): Geraldine is a 36-year-old lone parent, with two children. Leaving school at 16, with no educational qualifications, due to a difficult family situation, led Geraldine down a path of unskilled labour. She worked in paid employment for the majority of her adult life, with her only breaks being two periods of maternity leave and a recent two-year stretch to mind her youngest son before he started school. Following this hiatus, Geraldine commenced work on Community Employment as a cleaner/caretaker in a local community centre. Her decision was motivated by her son going to school, in tandem with the perceived tedium of being a homemaker.

Place (critical location): For Geraldine, the physical place of where she grew up (in her home) and the psychological place of how she grew up (in her mind), influenced her early career choices. Geraldine had a difficult childhood: her parents were constantly arguing; her father disappeared for prolonged periods of time; and her mother, a woman who behaved erratically, frequently threw her out of the house:

> She's [mother] a bit unhinged. ... She used to be on the floor, letting on she had heart attacks. ... It was like living in a soap opera.

These actions precipitated Geraldine's decision to leave home and school at the age of 16, supporting herself both emotionally and financially, as her mother had severed all ties. By the age of 18, she became pregnant. Geraldine always provided for her children by working in menial jobs.

Sociality (critical coping mechanism): Geraldine presents as a self-reliant person, who utilises her own resources and contacts to acquire jobs. She maintains that the testing times in her life have actually made her a stronger person. Two decades after departing her family home, Geraldine now believes that she can fulfil her ambition to obtain

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educational qualifications to become a fitness instructor, as she can avail of educational opportunities on the scheme.

Evaluation of career outcomes (career success) and career control (agency): Until she participated on Community Employment, Geraldine remained in jobs that she did not like, living a subsistence existence, working to put food on the table and to pay her bills. She evaluated her career success in terms of her ability to cater for the financial needs of her family (objective, self-referent factor). The scheme has afforded her with the chance to go back to education, and, consequently she has changed her career goal to seeking knowledge and training to progress herself (subjective, self-referent factors). Returning to education has been a long held aspiration for Geraldine, but, due to her prior personal circumstances (lone parent) and financial situation (surviving), she was not in a position to do so until now:

> I could never justify spending two grand on myself like ... not with a young family. ... It's just really good the training they [CE] give here. ... I have more of a choice now than when I had when I was younger.

6.4.1.9 Violet's Story

Temporality (critical moment): Being a 45-year-old mother of five children, cohabiting with her partner, Violet spent the majority of her adult life as a homemaker. She held two positions in paid employment, as a cleaner for six years, and in her present role as a receptionist on Community Employment in a family resource centre for the past 18 months. Her return to paid employment was prompted by her youngest daughter starting school.

Place (critical location): Violet's house is a significant site in her career. For her, it represents a place where she became stuck in a rut, mired in the day-to-day routine of her household responsibilities and putting other people's needs ahead of her own. The

house, and the role Violet played in that locale as a homemaker, became a taken-for-granted reality, where she lacked confidence. In an illuminating example of insight, she recognises that she did not realise that she lacked confidence until she actually left that milieu for the labour market. For Violet, a job is linked to self-esteem: working in paid employment improves her overall opinion of herself and the value she places on her own self-worth:

> I feel a better person when I'm working. ... I feel good about myself when I'm working „œs it gives you that boost, that self-esteem.

Sociality (critical coping mechanism): Confidence is an integral part of Violet's career story and she actually raises the issue, unprompted, six times in our discussion. For Violet, confidence is the ability to make choices and decisions and to feel comfortable with the outcome. In the past, Violet did not feel that she had the capacity or capability to make decisions about her career because of what she perceives as a lack of education. By participating on courses on the scheme, she has experienced a greater sense of control. Upon reflection, Violet recognises that her new-found self-assurance is internally generated, with her inner voice constantly championing her cause, endorsing her abilities and reinforcing her decision-making to be a receptionist.

Evaluation of career outcomes (career success) and career control (agency): Through all of the different roles that Violet has occupied (paid and non-paid), she has always sought pleasure and enjoyment in whatever activity she carried out (subjective, self-referent factor). Although Violet derived enjoyment throughout her whole career, she differentiates between what she achieved in the past and what she is doing now. She considers that she has more choice and control over her career now than in the past, partially as a result of her altered circumstances (children growing up), but mainly due to a transformation within herself, as a consequence of engaging on training

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programmes on Community Employment. Violet now perceives herself as a confident person with a sense of self-belief and self-esteem, feelings that she did not previously possess:

> Working here, I think, on a scheme, gives you that, gives you that bit of confidence.

6.4.2 Four Stories of Engagement with an Expert System

6.4.2.1 John's Story

Temporality (critical moment): John is a single man in his early 30s, who has an intellectual disability. He has lived all of his adult life in a sheltered environment, in a community setting offering those in need of special care a secure surrounding to meet their educational, therapeutic and social needs. John participates on Community Employment as a gardener, which is his first formal position outside of working in a protected situation. He secured this role after a colleague in his community recommended he apply; a decision, which, he now believes, was a critical moment for his career. In conjunction with an external mentor, John grows plants and vegetables in an allotment, carries out basic gardening duties and sells the fruit of his labour to local residents, thus cultivating his entrepreneurial ambitions.

Place (critical location): For John, the crucial place in terms of his career is the garden, whether it is in the community setting where he lives, or in his current employment environment. The garden for him is a space where he can do the things that he enjoys (pruning), learn new tasks (operating gardening machinery) and plan for his future career (self-employed gardener).

Sociality (critical coping mechanism): John constantly speaks in the first person, using „I' statements to narrate his career story, indicating a sense of responsibility for his actions. He is a self-aware person, who recognises that he lacked confidence prior to partaking on the scheme. He maintains that participation on the programme's training courses has created a greater sense of confidence within him by allowing him to learn more about his trade:

> I didn't feel I had, obviously I had, I had as much [confidence], but now since I'm on the CE scheme, I've really obviously learned a lot and to meet the people as well on the CE scheme.

Evaluation of career outcomes (career success) and career control (agency): John describes his career as „growing' (an unintentional gardening metaphor) and craves learning, both on-the-job and in the structured setting of the classroom. He perceives career success as a two-fold activity: generating enjoyment for him and others; and encompassing his love of learning (subjective, self-referent factors):

> Career success would obviously be ... to make people happy, like, doing the gardening and kind of doing the things that I sort of, kind of, really enjoy myself. ... I would obviously love to learn, obviously a bit more about plants.

Regarding the past, John believes that he did not have career choices because it was difficult for him to make the right decision. Now he considers that he is in control of his employment options, in tandem with being supported by his community colleagues and his family.

6.4.2.2 Sharon's Story

Temporality (critical moment): Sharon is a single woman in her late 20s, who is profoundly deaf and has completely changed her career direction. Sharon's early training and experience was as a beautician, but she did not enjoy it. Discussing the possibilities available to her with an expert system (an employment service) opened up a new vista for Sharon: office work. She is now employed on Community Employment in an administrative capacity by an organisation that supports women's development, a role she loves. Regarding her future, Sharon intends working in a similar role, a job she feels equipped to perform because of her experience on the scheme.

Place (critical location): The most influential location in Sharon's career is where she is currently working. Sharon points to the type of work she performs, the environment in which she does it and the people she works with, as to why this setting is shaping her future career choices. Her day-to-day duties reinforce the legitimacy of her recent decision to move from a role that she did not like (beautician) to a position that she is delighted with (administrator):

> My time here has been fantastic. ... [My future job is doing] what I'm doing at the moment.

Sociality (critical coping mechanism): Sharon effortlessly describes the personal qualities required to perform her previous and current roles: patience, confidentiality, interpersonal skills and her technical abilities, such as computer proficiency. In her opinion, her deafness has not impacted on her ability to get a job, mentioning that she has received positive feedback on her interview technique from companies that she has applied to, although was not successful in their selection processes.

Evaluation of career outcomes (career success) and career control (agency): Sharon seeks pleasure from her work, perceiving her career success in terms of whether she loves her job, is happy in it and enjoys it (subjective, self-referent factors):

> I love it. ... I'm also happy in it. ... I know I'm enjoying it. ... I also know that I've made the right decision.

Prior to participating on the scheme, Sharon did not feel an active actor in her career. She believed that beautician work was her only area of competence, so she felt compelled to search for such a role whilst disliking it. When Sharon initiated contact with her local employment service, it altered both her career direction (from beautician to administrator) and her perception of her control over her career choices (from lack of agency to agency).

6.4.2.3 Colm's Story

Temporality (critical moment): Colm is a 40-year-old man, who has been unemployed for a significant segment of his adult life. He had a difficult childhood, living with alcoholic, abusive parents, and was expelled from school at 13. As a teenager, he went on state sponsored training programmes and then held a number of positions in snooker halls. Colm's life of unemployment started subsequent to complications from a major surgical procedure when he was 23, which left him permanently relying on crutches to walk. This ultimately led to extended periods of unemployment, interspersed with participation on training courses. Looking back on that era, Colm realises that he had no intention of seeking a job because of the ,embarrassment' he felt about his legs. After undergoing counselling to deal with childhood issues, he decided to contact a number of government agencies, which

facilitated him securing his first job in over a decade. Colm is now working on Community Employment in a public relations role in a trade union centre for the unemployed.

Place (critical location): The place of importance for Colm's career is where he spent the bulk of his adult life, on his sofa playing computer games. Spending time in this space helped him to appreciate that he was „letting the world pass him by'. The boredom of this pursuit eventually triggered his decision to attend counselling:

> I sat on the sofa, sitting there all day, doing nothing. ... Sitting at home, playing PlayStation. ... I was just in my own little cocoon. There is a whole world going on around me and I was just sitting there and letting it pass me by. ... Didn't like going out, I was embarrassed about walking. ... About a year and a half ago, decided, well, you need to get up and start, you know, activate the head.

Sociality (critical coping mechanism): Colm exhibits an exceptionally developed sense of self-awareness, possibly attributable to participating on Al-Anon programmes and counselling sessions. His previous persona was diametrically opposed to his present personality: a negative, self-pitying person, who blamed others versus a positive, responsible person, accountable for his own thoughts, feelings and actions. The language Colm uses is replete with „I' statements, indicating his sense of responsibility for his situation.

Evaluation of career outcomes (career success) and career control (agency): Colm's view of career success always included life happiness, being „nice' and having a „nice life' (subjective, self-referent factors). Following counselling, which he perceives as the genesis of his transformation (quote in Table 6.1), Colm now incorporates having „a job' in his interpretation of career success:

> Success to me is being happy, whether I am working or not. ... Success to me is ... having a nice life. ... Career success to me, would be a job ... just slot into a position where I could just get used to it.

Colm holds himself accountable for what has happened in his life, believing that he always had control, although not exercising it in the past. He recognises that his former self blamed others for his situation, but his rejuvenated self assumes responsibility for both his life and his career.

6.4.2.4 Xandra's Story

Temporality (critical moment): Xandra is a 20-year-old single woman, who left school at 16 and was unemployed for two years. During this time, she aspired to be a hairdresser, but did not fulfil her ambition, stating that she was „lazy'. When unemployed, she did not feel a productive member of society, claiming that she did „nothing'. Xandra then decided that she wanted a childcare position, so she approached her local family resource centre, where she is now employed as a childcare worker on Community Employment.

Place (critical location): The place of significance in Xandra's career is her current employer. Xandra lives in the neighbourhood in which the resource centre is located. For her, it was an integral feature of her childhood, and, now, it is a key component in the early phase of her career. She is unable to explain the reason why she was unemployed for two years without approaching her local centre for assistance, although she did discuss the establishment's remit with her grandmother, who worked there. The only rationale Xandra can point to is that she loves children, probably because she is part of a large family. It is possible that, as the centre is an essential element of her community, a part of her taken-for-granted reality, it did not occur to her to utilise its services during her period of unemployment. Eventually, she made contact, finding its personnel supportive, the services comprehensive and the location particularly

convenient. While working in the centre, Xandra is acquiring training and qualifications, facilitating her to pursue a career in childcare.

Sociality (critical coping mechanism): Xandra presents as a poor oral communicator, who has never taken time out to reflect on her jobs, career, skills, or abilities. Notwithstanding this, Xandra predominantly speaks in the first person, using „I' statements, signifying a sense of self-responsibility for her actions and behaviour. Xandra has the self-awareness to realise that, in the past, she was easily swayed from her objectives, but that this time will be different, as she intends to devote her energy to engaging in her studies to further her childcare career:

> I change my mind an awful lot. ... I just kind of want to stick to this now. I really love this.

Evaluation of career outcomes (career success) and career control (agency): For Xandra, career success entails learning, training, qualifications and deriving enjoyment from her job (subjective, self-referent factors). In her opinion, she has achieved three out of the four criteria (learning, training and enjoyment) and believes that she will soon realise the fourth (qualifications):

> I kind of need a lot of courses, but I don't know as much about it as I think I do. ... I have to do a lot of them [courses]. ... I'm not quite there yet.

Xandra contends that she has made her own career choices, without influence from other people or institutions and is satisfied with the outcome.

6.4.3 Three Stories of Parenthood

6.4.3.1 Betty's Story

Temporality (critical moment): Betty, a lone parent in her mid-thirties, who has one child, works on Community Employment as a graphic designer in a trade union centre for the unemployed. In her early adult years, she was unemployed, which was followed by basic operative roles in factories, bakeries, newsagents and delicatessens. Betty's career story is the proverbial game of two halves, with her believing that she had a negative life preceding re-entry to education as an adult student and a positive period, post-tuition. Describing her early career, Betty uses phrases like „dead-end jobs' and „degrading'. Subsequent to her return to learning, her career focus has changed, from basic service orientated positions, to more rewarding work in graphic design. Having her own child motivated her to transform her life by returning to school, as she did not want her son to see her unemployed in the same way as she had seen her out-of-work father, describing it as a „miserable existence'. She did a graphic design course in college, and then commenced employment in that discipline, and is now gaining experience on Community Employment as a graphic designer.

Place (critical location): For Betty, place is connoted by the institutions she has encountered that have positively impacted on her career, including educational establishments. The most significant institution in Betty's life is the symbolic place that the scheme represents and she recognises how its training programme has helped create confidence in her:

> The scheme, it has built up my confidence, which I was lacking in, even in college. ... It's changed my life for the better.

Sociality (critical coping mechanism): Betty comes across as a self-aware person, who acknowledges that she previously lacked confidence, but now feels that she has gained that self-assurance. Confidence is central to Betty's identity and she is cognisant of how it is internally generated by believing in oneself. In her opinion, the ‚pre-qualification Betty' was short on self-belief, deficient in skills and stuck in a rut. The ‚post-qualification Betty' is more confident, which for her means interacting with others and being more independent. This rejuvenation is evident in her use of „I' statements when discussing her present and future, in comparison to utilising second-party language when referring to her past.

Evaluation of career outcomes (career success) and career control (agency): Prior to returning to education, Betty's primary motivation for working was for money (objective, self-referent factor), regardless of the conditions of employment. After attaining her qualifications, this emphasis changed to self-advancement, aspiring to knowledge and learning (subjective, self-referent factors). In her eyes, education engenders confidence, which in turn presents her with choices. This is a situation that she did not feel she previously possessed, but does now:

> I wasn't looking for anything that I enjoyed. It was whatever was the highest money and whoever would take me on because I felt like I had no qualifications. ... [Success] would be knowledge.

6.4.3.2 Elizabeth's Story

Temporality (critical moment): Elizabeth is a separated woman in her early 40s, with a young daughter. She depicts herself as a reluctant mother, who views parenthood as having interrupted the trajectory of her career (administrative roles in the public service). Prior to having a baby, she was employed by the Inland Revenue in the UK, but, following her marital break-up, went to work in a Dublin hospital on a contract

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basis. Unexpectedly, Elizabeth became pregnant. On her maternity leave, unbeknownst to her, her position was advertised, so she did not have an opportunity to apply for her own job, and consequently, her contract was not renewed. As an out-of-work, lone parent, she felt financially pressurised to continue earning, so she participated on a programme where she received a training allowance. When this course ended, she applied for her current role, as an administrator with a resource centre on Community Employment. Elizabeth espouses contradictory views about the scheme, seemingly embarrassed by what she perceives to be a retrograde career step, but acknowledging that she enjoys advising other on financial issues.

Place (critical location): Motherhood occupies a crucial place in Elizabeth's career, as it represents an unplanned stop in what was an otherwise orderly and free-flowing path. She continually describes how having a child derailed her career journey, resulting in what was a taken-for-granted aspect of her life now being something she consciously has to put effort into:

> My career was going okay until I had the child and then, emm, after that, my contract wasn't renewed when I came back from maternity leave. ... It's [career] something I have to work at, whereas before it was just there.

Her lack of enthusiasm for motherhood is apparent in how she speaks about her daughter. Elizabeth uses the definite article to refer to her child ('the child') on six occasions, only in the last 10 minutes of our discussion actually alluding to the gender of the child (female) and in the final five minutes, calling her daughter by name. Having a baby, and the resultant changed career, led Elizabeth down a road that she would probably not have previously considered: working in the not-for-profit sector assisting her local community.

Sociality (critical coping mechanism): Elizabeth presents as an independent individual, who does not want to rely on others, although she realises that 'no man is an

island'. Her time management and organisational skills are manifest in her ability to balance being a lone parent, working part-time, whilst participating on a journalism course.

Evaluation of career outcomes (career success) and career control (agency): Elizabeth utilises objective, self-referent factors in her interpretation of her career outcomes. Prior to becoming a mother, her criterion of career success was her ability to obtain discretionary assets, whereas now it revolves around maintaining a basic standard of living through sourcing the euphemistic permanent, pensionable job. In the past, Elizabeth considers that she had control over her career outcomes, but, now, since becoming a parent, she no longer feels that sense of agency, believing she has limited options and opportunities:

> [In the past] I probably have got Botox ... Now I would be just concentrating on saving money or more practical things. ... I am trying to aim towards things where there might be some kind of security ... longevity of the contract.

6.4.3.3 Fiona's Story

Temporality (critical moment): Fiona is a lone parent in her late 30s, who is in a long-term relationship. She worked all of her life, predominantly in licensed premises and restaurants, but is currently a youth project worker on Community Employment in a resource centre. Prior to having a child 11 years ago, she worked full-time, but the birth of her daughter encouraged her to reassess her priorities, now only wanting to work part-time. Fiona is using the scheme to gain additional experience before emigrating to Scotland with her partner and daughter.

Place (critical location): Scotland is the chosen destination because her partner works on an oil rig in the North Sea. He also owns a house there that requires extensive renovation. Fiona intends to spend time decorating this residence, with the possibility of

turning it into a B&B. According to Fiona, her ideal life would be situated in that house, as a homemaker, with her partner, daughter and dog. She is hoping to have a baby within the next three years, but, if this does not transpire, she will work part-time. Fiona's life is focused on her domestic duties in Scotland. Everything else, including Community Employment, is a temporary measure until this outcome is obtained:

> I'm literally going to use this year to get as much as I can under my belt before I move. ... I'm just waiting to be, you know, wearing an apron and fluffy gloves going around the house.

Sociality (critical coping mechanism): Fiona presents as someone with considerable personal resources, a developed skills set and a confident outlook. She uses words such as independent, hard-working, people person, patient, team worker and honest to describe her attributes. Fiona relies on herself, rather than the support networks of family and friends in her job search. She believes that she has been lucky in her career, obtaining jobs primarily through her contacts, but she recognises that her hard work has helped her to build a reputation as a committed and dedicated employee

Evaluation of career outcomes (career success) and career control (agency): For Fiona, a job is a means to obtain money to buy the „extras in life' (objective, self-referent factor). Her assessment of her career success is her ability to spend her money on life's luxuries, a measure she personally satisfied in the past, but now wants her partner to fulfil:

> I would be quite happy to sit back and spend. ... Once my partner had a job to keep me, I'd be happy.

Fiona believes that she was always in control of both her life and her career. Regarding the choices about what jobs she performed (or roles she declined), Fiona is content with the decisions that she has made.

6.4.4 Two Stories of Changing Relationship Dynamics

6.4.4.1 Maura's Story

Temporality (critical moment): Maura is a divorced woman in her early 50s, with two grown-up daughters. Her career story reflects three distinct phases of her life: working as a bookkeeper; a critical episode in her life involving a marital breakdown, followed by a nervous breakdown; and employment on Community Employment as a receptionist in a parish centre. The majority of Maura's career was spent as a bookkeeper with one company (clothing retailer). She constantly describes her sense of fulfilment in carrying out her duties there and the status she felt attached to that position. Following the dissolution of her marriage, Maura had a nervous breakdown and it took four years to piece her life back together. During this period, she explains how her self-confidence evaporated and her self-belief dissipated. Maura believes that it was the marital breakdown that triggered the critical changes in her life. For the past two years, Maura has been working on Community Employment, and, although she is scathing about it, she participates on it to maximise her monetary return, that is, to claim invalidity benefit in addition to payment for engaging on the scheme.

Place (critical location): The setting of significance in Maura's career is a structural one, the Community Employment scheme. She derides both the position that she occupies and the system that facilitates what she perceives as a meaningless role. This legitimisation generates a negative, downward spiral for Maura because it leads to disrespecting herself:

> The CE things are Mickey Mouse. ... There's no value for me. ... Technically I'm not a fraudster, technically by law I'm not, but in my head I am. ... None of this makes me feel good about myself.

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Sociality (critical coping mechanism): Maura comes across as an exceptionally self-aware individual, a skill possibly heightened by her participation on the Alcoholics Anonymous 12-step programme following her successful recovery from alcoholism two decades ago. An example of this self-understanding is her appreciation of how she consciously changes her accent to complement the roles that she operates in.

Evaluation of career outcomes (career success) and career control (agency): As a bookkeeper, Maura's perception of career success revolved around contributing to the profitability of the organisation by producing quality work (objective, other-referent factor). She claims that she was highly successful in that role and felt in control of her career. Employed as a receptionist on Community Employment, Maura feels she is doing an insignificant job in a meaningless system, and, by default, does not believe that she has a successful career. Maura now works for money (objective, self-referent factor) and does not consider that she can influence her career, as she must remain in the welfare system to earn sufficient money to survive:

> It's only for money. ... It pays my food. ... It suits me for to be staying inside the, emm, welfare system.

6.4.4.2 Zach's Story

Temporality (critical moment): Zach is a separated traveller, in his early 40s, with three children from his first marriage and three children from his second relationship. He narrates his career story over three chapters: currently engaged on Community Employment as a caretaker/security officer in a family resource centre; preceded by an extended phase of unemployment (18 years); and working in paid employment for less than eight years. These eight years included retail work, participating on state-sponsored training schemes for travellers and employed as an operative in a manufacturing facility.

The 18-year period of unemployment coincided with his first marriage, the subsequent termination of that relationship, alcoholism, starting a new relationship (which he perceives as a pivotal turning point) and recovering from alcoholism. Now on Community Employment, Zach has made no future career plans, hoping to remain on the scheme for as long as possible.

Place (critical location): The location that influences Zach's career, both positively and negatively, is the area where he grew up. Being brought up in a wealthy suburb in South County Dublin, Zach observes that people never realised that he was a member of the travelling community. This resulted in a mixed identity for Zach. He was part traveller, part settled person and part in-between:

> As I come from [name of town], I was more or less classed „traveller/settled person/in between'. I didn't know which way I was.

His first job was in a shop in his native village. With hindsight, Zach deeply regrets leaving both that role and the locale at the age of 17 to go to Wales to live with his brother, describing the decision as a „mistake'. Zach believes that if he had remained in that position, both his life and his career would have taken a more positive path. As he could not secure employment in Wales, he returned to Ireland, whereupon he met a woman with whom he had a failed marriage. This resulted in him losing his family and his possessions, and precipitated his alcoholism. Zach asserts that it was the wrong decision leaving his retail job in his local community, setting in train a whole sequence of negative events.

Sociality (critical coping mechanism): The most significant aspect of Zach's persona, as it impacts on his career, is his alcoholism and subsequent recovery from it. Following the conclusion of his marriage, Zach started drinking „to forget'. He drank heavily and consistently from 1994 to 2006, missing the maturation of his three children from his

first marriage and being absent from key family and festive occasions. For the past three-and-a-half years, Zach has been sober. He recognises the role of personal and professional networks in triggering his recovery: meeting a new partner; living in a house in a settled community with his young (second) family; witnessing the death of two close friends from alcohol abuse; and falling off his house roof and receiving medical assistance to „dry-out' while convalescing in hospital with a broken pelvis.

Evaluation of career outcomes (career success) and career control (agency): Zach always worked for money to acquire assets (objective, self-referent factor). In the early stages of his career, he claims that his earnings were used to fund his social activities, but, now, given his family responsibilities, he utilises his income to pay for household bills and to buy presents for his children:

> [Career success is] getting a few bob and having it there for maybe things that you need, you know, for the kids, birthdays, Christmas and whatever.

Zach takes complete responsibility for every choice and decision that he has taken in his life, including his career. He describes his career to date as „disastrous', but both his life and his current and future career appear to be on the road to recovery.

6.5 CAREER SUCCESS STORIES: INDIVIDUAL STRATEGIES OF CAREER (RE)CONSTRUCTION FOLLOWING CRITICAL MOMENTS

The Community Employment scheme participants' stories elucidate the critical moments of change in their lives and careers. These critical moments have been divided into six categories, two characterised by lack of control over the event (Section 6.3) and four by a greater level of potential agency (Section 6.4). This section explores if this distinction has consequences for how the participants (re)construct their career identity.

According to Weick (1995, 2001, 2009), people adapt to change in one of two ways: adjusting to it by weakening their commitments and altering their actions; or manipulating it by reaffirming their commitments and strengthening their actions. To relate these conditions to careers research, I have developed a schematic presentation (Figure 6.2) connecting the participants' evaluation of their career outcomes, that is, their career success, with their assessment of agency over these outcomes. These two parameters capture the essence of the fateful moment (Giddens, 1991) when applied to transitions in careers research. Firstly, undertaking identity work to consider how one's career achievements are perceived during such experiences (what I term ‚envisionment', comparable to Weick's (2001, 2009) terminology). Secondly, exercising agency over these career outcomes (what I label ‚enactment', similar to Weick's (1995, 2001, 2009) definition).

The individual strategies of career (re)construction are charted in Figure 6.2. This classifies the participants' approaches according to the impact the critical moment represents in their assessment of their career outcomes (changed or constant envisionment) and how they perceive their sense of control over these outcomes following the critical moment (changed or constant enactment). Figure 6.2 builds upon Appendix F, which uses narrative inquiry to map the critical and fateful moments in the sample's career success stories. The information in Figure 6.2 is expanded upon in Table 6.1 (p.249).

Figure 6.2 Charting Individual Strategies of Career (Re)Construction Following Critical Moments Using an Envisionment/Enactment Matrix

	Quadrant 1	Quadrant 2
Changed	Nora (family responsibility)	Colm (expert system)
	Rachel (family responsibility)	
	Dorothy (family responsibility)	
	Geraldine (family responsibility)	
	Wendy (bereavement)	
	Katrina (bereavement)	
	Ursula (bereavement)	
	Betty (parenthood)	
	Elizabeth (parenthood)	
	Maura (relationship dynamics)	
	Quadrant 4	**Quadrant 3**
Constant	Penelope (family responsibility)	Hilda (family responsibility)
	Yvonne (family responsibility)	Aaron (family responsibility)
	Violet (family responsibility)	Lara (bereavement)
	Isobel (illness)	Queenie (bereavement)
	John (expert system)	Tanya (illness)
	Sharon (expert system)	Anna (illness)
		Oliver (illness)
		Xandra (expert system)
		Fiona (parenthood)
		Zach (relationship dynamics)

Envisionment (Career Success) — left axis labels: Changed / Constant

Bottom axis: Changed   Constant

Enactment (Career Agency)

Source: Developed by author, Sue Mulhall.

To construct the envisionment axis, an individual's evaluation of the outcome of his or her career experiences, before and after the critical moment in his or her life, is compared. The enactment axis is created by considering an individual's assessment of his or her agency over the outcome of his or her career experiences, also before and after the critical moment. Four strategies of career (re)construction can be distinguished in a 2x2 matrix: changed envisionment and changed enactment (quadrant 1); changed envisionment and constant enactment (quadrant 2); constant envisionment and constant enactment (quadrant 3); constant envisionment and changed enactment (quadrant 4).

The plotting exercise yields: 10 individuals with changed envisionment and changed enactment; one with changed envisionment and constant enactment; 10 maintaining constant envisionment and constant enactment; and six people displaying constant envisionment and changed enactment. For example, Nora has altered her perception of career success from objective, self-referent criteria to subjective, self-referent factors (Heslin, 2005). In addition, she feels a sense of agency over her career outcomes, from a position of perceived lack of agency (Weick, 1995, 2001, 2009). Nora is, therefore, located in quadrant one (changed envisionment and changed enactment). In total, 17 of the 27 participants exhibit what Bauman (2001) terms identification, having transformed their career identity along the envisionment and/or the enactment dimensions, highlighting the processual nature of identity.

As illustrated in Table 6.1, there are, however, significant differences within each grouping: four diverse courses of action are identified under the global heading of changed envisionment and changed enactment; one in the changed envisionment and constant enactment category; five under constant envisionment and constant enactment; and four within the constant envisionment and changed enactment classification.

Table 6.1 Grouping Similar Career (Re)Construction Approaches Within Envisionment/Enactment Matrix

Overall Career (Re)Construction Strategy	*Transition Within Strategy*	*Name/Critical Moment*
Changed envisionment and changed enactment (quadrant 1)	Objective self-referent to subjective self-referent factors Lack of agency to feeling of agency	Nora (family responsibility) Rachel (family responsibility) Dorothy (family responsibility) Geraldine (family responsibility) Katrina (bereavement) Ursula (bereavement) Betty (parenthood)
	Objective self-referent to objective self-referent factors (different criteria) Feeling of agency to lack of agency	Elizabeth (parenthood)
	Objective other-referent to objective self-referent factors Feeling of agency to lack of agency	Maura (relationship dynamics)
	Subjective other-referent to subjective self-referent factors Lack of agency to feeling of agency	Wendy (bereavement)
Changed envisionment and constant enactment (quadrant 2)	Subjective self-referent to subjective self-referent (different criteria) Feeling of agency to feeling of agency	Colm (expert system)
Constant envisionment and constant enactment (quadrant 3)	Subjective self-referent to subjective self-referent factors Feeling of agency to feeling of agency	Hilda (family responsibility) Lara (bereavement) Queenie (bereavement) Anna (illness) Xandra (expert system)
	Subjective other-referent to subjective other-referent factors Feeling of agency to feeling of agency	Tanya (illness)

Overall Strategy	Transition Within Strategy	Name/Critical Moment
	Objective self-referent to objective self-referent factors Lack of agency to lack of agency	Aaron (family responsibility)
	Objective other-referent to objective other-referent factors Feeling of agency to feeling of agency	Oliver (illness)
	Objective self-referent to objective self-referent factors Feeling of agency to feeling of agency	Fiona (parenthood) Zach (relationship dynamics)
Constant envisionment and changed enactment (quadrant 4)	Subjective self-referent to subjective self-referent factors Feeling of agency to lack of agency	Penelope (family responsibility)
	Subjective other-referent to subjective other-referent factors Lack of agency to feeling of agency	Yvonne (family responsibility)
	Subjective self-referent to subjective self-referent factors Lack of agency to feeling of agency	Violet (family responsibility) John (expert system) Sharon (expert system)
	Objective self-referent to objective self-referent factors Feeling of agency to lack of agency to feeling of agency	Isobel (illness)

Source: Developed by author, Sue Mulhall.

The distinction made on the choice/fate continuum (Figure 6.1, p.198 refers) is not significant in the participants' career (re)construction strategies, as there are no connections between where the „choice' critical moments (altering family responsibilities, engaging with expert systems prior to involvement with the Community Employment scheme structure, becoming a parent, and changing relationship dynamics) and the „fate' critical moments (bereavement and illness) are situated within the envisionment/enactment matrix. It appears, therefore, that the location of a critical moment on the choice/fate continuum does not impact on the participants' career (re)construction strategies.

There are no discernible relationships evident when the participants' personal profiles (noted in Table 2.3, p.65) are cross-referenced against the differentiation dividing the choice/fate continuum as:

- The respondents who have experienced bereavement („fate') and parenthood („choice') are women.

- Those who have had to cope with illness („fate') are single.

- The informants who have engaged with an expert system prior to involvement with the Community Employment scheme structure („choice') are single.

- All of the participants who have been exposed to bereavement („fate'), shifting family responsibilities („choice'), parenthood („choice') and changing relationship dynamics („choice') have children.

- Those who have contacted an expert system prior to participation with the Community Employment scheme structure („choice') are childless.

- All of the respondents who have encountered bereavement („fate'), illness („fate'), altered family responsibilities („choice'), expert systems prior to engaging with the Community Employment scheme structure („choice') and

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parenthood („choice') are white Irish (26 of the 27 participants classify themselves as white Irish).

- Both of the informants who have been involved in changing relationship dynamics („choice') have only attained lower secondary education.

Given the inconsistent patterns, and in an attempt to provide a more textured tapestry, I adopt the advice of numerous scholars (e.g., Arnold & Cohen, 2008; Cohen *et al*., 2004; Dries *et al*., 2008a; Gunz & Heslin, 2005; Herr, 2008; Hughes, 1937, 1958; Young & Collin, 2004) urging researchers to pay attention to the structural processes affecting career structures to gain a richer picture of the individual stories of career success. This theme is taken up in the next chapter.

6.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter depicts an exploratory approach to chronicling the critical moments in the lives and careers of Community Employment scheme participants by integrating the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space with Giddens' concept of the fateful moment. It works through the relationship between the individual and his or her evaluation of the outcome of his or her career experiences, that is, his or her career success, before, during and after significant change.

The chapter commences by telling the tales of those who have experienced events that are outside of their control, narratives of bereavement and illness. Five of the accounts revolve around the death of a close family member: three women narrate stories of the passing of their husbands (Katrina, Lara and Ursula); one woman (Wendy) speaks about the affirming impact her brother's bereavement has had on her career; and Quennie tells

a harrowing tale of the loss of her two adult children. We also witness amazing resilience from Tanya, Anna, Oliver and Isobel, whilst coping with illness.

Then the stories of people who have encountered events, the unfolding of which they potentially have agency over, are narrated by once again working through the relationship between the individual and his or her evaluation of the outcome of his or her career experiences, before, during and after these significant changes. How a shift in family responsibilities engenders a lease of life in their career is referred to by nine people (Hilda, Nora, Aaron, Penelope, Rachel, Yvonne, Dorothy, Geraldine and Violet) and the constructive career influence of engaging with an expert system prior to involvement with the Community Employment scheme structure is cited by four individuals (John, Sharon, Colm and Xandra). The perceived positive impact of parenthood is evident in Betty and Fiona's stories, in contrast to a pessimistic picture of motherhood portrayed by Elizabeth. This distinction is also evident in Maura and Zach's stories of changed relationship dynamics: the former describing a downward spiral from a career high-point; and the latter speaking of a progressive, upward trajectory from a life low-point.

The chapter also provides a description of the different strategies of career (re)construction employed by all of the participants following the critical moments of change in their lives. It concludes by recognising that the distinction between critical moments along the choice/fate continuum needs to be complemented and supplemented by integrating structural processes into the stories of career success, before the impact of the participants' (re)construction strategies on their career identity can be fully explored.

Even though eighteen of the stories in this chapter are depicted as representing the „choice' end of the choice/fate continuum, the dialectic nature of agency-structure (Archer, 1995; Barley, 1989; Giddens, 1977, 1979, 1981, 1982, 1984, 1985, 1990, 1992, 1993; Weick, 2001) is manifest in these participants' narratives. This indicates the interconnectedness of micro-individual and macro-social factors in the career concept, a discussion that is referred to in Chapter Four and is continued in the next chapter, thereby supporting the systems theory perspective in the careers field.

Chapter Seven

Findings and Discussion:

Macro Perspective

– Structural Influences

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The micro-level stories of career success in the preceding chapter illuminates the critical moments in the lives and careers of the participants. They do not, however, shed light on how structural processes, such as the educational system or the economy, affect the way participants (re)construct, interpret and make sense of their career experiences. As discussed in previous chapters, influences on constructions of the self do not occur in a vacuum. The form they take is impacted by the existing social and cultural context and the formations of self that are current at that time.

This chapter shines a spotlight on how macro-social processes mould everyday experiences, illustrating the importance of understanding the interconnectedness of the social system when researching individual stories of career success. The pertinent theoretical frameworks that inform this chapter are: identity, identification and narrative (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Bauman, 2001; Deetz, 1992; Foucault, 1988; Thomas, 2009); agency and structure (Archer, 1995; Barley, 1989; Giddens, 1977, 1979, 1981, 1982, 1984, 1985, 1990, 1992, 1993; Weick, 2001); ideology and hegemony (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1992; Forgacs, 1988; Gramsci, 1971; Van Dijk, 2001); and power, knowledge and language (Derrida, 1976, 1978a, 1978b, 1982, 1989; Foucault, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1982). The chapter draws on the participants' narratives to capture the role that macro-social factors play in shaping their career success stories and influencing their career (re)construction strategies. It also explores how the critical moments evolve into fateful moments (Giddens, 1991), examining the behaviours that need to be present for the critical moment to have material consequences for the participants' careers. Finally, the chapter concludes with an exploration of the samples' interpretations of their career experiences during periods of discontinuity.

7.2 CAREER SUCCESS STORIES: IMPACT OF STRUCTURAL INFLUENCES ON INDIVIDUAL CAREER (RE)CONSTRUCTION STRATEGIES

As discussed in Chapters Two and Four, careers do not present infinite possibilities for individuals, as economic, political, cultural, social and occupational factors serve to structure available opportunity (Arnold & Cohen, 2008; El-Sawad, 2005; Gunz *et al*., 2000; Iellatchitch *et al*., 2003; Pfeffer, 1989). Consequently, a useful approach in careers research is to study „smaller-scale milieux' in terms of „larger-scale structures' (Mills, 1959: 149). This section examines how the specific, micro-individual careers of the participants interact with broader, macro-social processes. In particular, it explores the ways that power and knowledge engage with the following to construct a social system: education/social class; family; discourse; economy; and matters of gender and ethnicity (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2003, 2005; Knights, 2009).

The narration of the participants' career success stories, and the identification of their career (re)construction strategies within the envisionment/enactment matrix (Sections 6.3, 6.4 and 6.5, respectively), investigates the critical moments of change from the perspective of what I term a „narrow-angle lens'. This produces a high resolution representation allowing the viewer to distinguish fine detail, but does not provide breadth of vision. What is also required is what I call a „wide-angle lens' to further interpret the stories in the context of the macro factors that impact on the participants' choices, opportunities and decisions. In essence, I am capturing the same scene by taking an identical picture of a person situated in a particular location at a specific time, but I am developing two different perspectives: from a narrow-angle, peering at the individual by foregrounding his or her critical moments of change; and from a wide-angle, focusing on the person's wider, contextual environment.

Table 7.1 provides an overview of how the interviews were worked through interpretivistically, adhering to the multi-stage process involved in analysing data from episodic interviews (Flick, 2009) (see Sections 2.6.3 and 6.2). During the analysis, I paid particular attention to the structural influences noted by the participants when restorying their narratives according to the three dimensions of the narrative inquiry space, that is, temporality, place and sociality (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 2006). A wide-angle lens is used to summarise how particular structural processes shape the individual's career success story and career (re)construction strategy. It encapsulates the interaction between a person's evaluation of his or her career outcomes ('envisionment'), his or her feeling of agency over these outcomes ('enactment') and the role that certain structural processes play in his or her career (re)construction strategy.

For ease of analysis, I offer one structural element per participant as the primary influencer, drawn from their accounts: education, including social class as mediated through the educational system; family; economy; medical discourse; or matters of gender and ethnicity. Other factors that may be relevant to a participant's story, but which do not significantly impact on his or her career chronicle, are noted in parenthesis. For example, ethnicity is crucial in Zach's story, but he also refers to the impact of the structure of the Community Employment scheme, an aspect of economy, on his career choices. The notion of Bourdieu and Passeron's (1990) interconnected social fields is recognised as having relevance to this discussion. They argue that some forms of participation engender others, so that opportunities to engage in areas like education and training programmes have a positive effect on other domains such as employment, and conversely, the absence of such opportunities may have a detrimental impact (Fanning, 2004; Inkson & Elkin, 2008).

Table 7.1 Using Wide-Angle Lens to Capture Structural Influences Shaping Participants' Career Success Stories and Career (Re)Construction Strategies*

Overall Career Strategy	Transition Within Strategy	Name/Critical Moment	Primary Structural Influence (Secondary Structural Influence)
Changed envisionment and changed enactment (quadrant 1)	Objective self-referent to subjective self-referent factors Lack of agency to feeling of agency	Nora (family responsibility)	Education (Family)
	Ditto	Rachel (family responsibility)	Education (Economy - Community Employment)
	Ditto	Dorothy (family responsibility)	Education (Economy - Community Employment)
	Ditto	Geraldine (family responsibility)	Education (Family)
	Ditto	Katrina (bereavement)	Education (Economy - Community Employment)
	Ditto	Ursula (bereavement)	Education (Social class)
	Ditto	Betty (parenthood)	Education (Economy - Community Employment)
	Objective self-referent to objective self-referent factors (different criteria) Feeling of agency to lack of agency	Elizabeth (parenthood)	Family
	Objective other-referent to objective self-referent factors Feeling of agency to lack of agency	Maura (relationship dynamics)	Economy - Community Employment
	Subjective other-referent to subjective self-referent factors Lack of agency to feeling of agency	Wendy (bereavement)	Education (Family)

Overall Strategy	Transition Within Strategy	Name/Critical Moment	Structural Influences
Changed envisionment and constant enactment (quadrant 2)	Subjective self-referent to subjective self-referent (different criteria) Feeling of agency to feeling of agency	Colm (expert system)	Family
Constant envisionment and constant enactment (quadrant 3)	Subjective self-referent to subjective self-referent factors Feeling of agency to feeling of agency	Hilda (family responsibility)	Education
	Ditto	Lara (bereavement)	Education (Social class)
	Ditto	Queenie (bereavement)	Education (Economy - finance)
	Ditto	Anna (illness)	Education (Economy - finance)
	Ditto	Xandra (expert system)	Education (Economy - Community Employment)
	Subjective other-referent to subjective other-referent factors Feeling of agency to feeling of agency	Tanya (illness)	Economy - poverty and diversity in a lesser developed country
	Objective self-referent to objective self-referent factors Lack of agency to lack of agency	Aaron (family responsibility)	Economy - Community Employment
	Objective other-referent to objective other-referent factors Feeling of agency to feeling of agency	Oliver (illness)	Medical discourse
	Objective self-referent to objective self-referent factors Feeling of agency to feeling of agency	Fiona (parenthood)	Family
	Ditto	Zach (relationship dynamics)	Ethnicity (Economy - Community Employment)

Overall Strategy	Transition Within Strategy	Name/Critical Moment	Structural Influences
Constant envisionment and changed enactment (quadrant 4)	Subjective self-referent to subjective self-referent factors Feeling of agency to lack of agency	Penelope (family responsibility)	Gender
	Subjective other-referent to subjective other-referent factors Lack of agency to feeling of agency	Yvonne (family responsibility)	Gender
	Subjective self-referent to subjective self-referent factors Lack of agency to feeling of agency	Violet (family responsibility)	Family
	Ditto	John (expert system)	Medical discourse
	Ditto	Sharon (expert system)	Medical discourse (Economy - Community Employment)
	Objective self-referent to objective self-referent factors Feeling of agency to lack of agency to feeling of agency	Isobel (illness)	Medical discourse

Source: Developed by author, Sue Mulhall.

Note:

* The table's summarised contents are explained in greater detail in Section 7.3.

As illustrated in Table 7.1, the elements from the social system span the choice/fate critical moment continuum (Figure 6.1, p.198 refers) and occupy disparate transitionary approaches found within the four envisionment/enactment strategies (Section 6.5 pertains). In summary, there are: thirteen participants where education/social class is a central tenet in their career story (Anna, Betty, Dorothy, Geraldine, Hilda, Katrina, Lara, Nora, Ursula, Queenie, Rachel, Wendy and Xandra); four participants where the family is core (Colm, Elizabeth, Fiona and Violet); four descriptions revolve around the medical discourse (Isobel, John, Oliver and Sharon); three chronicles concern various facets of the economy (Aaron, Maura and Tanya); and gender is pivotal in two stories (Penelope and Yvonne) and ethnicity in another (Zach).

Extracts from the participants' narratives are presented in Section 7.3 to describe the impact of the structural influences on their career success stories. The structural influences are rendered according to the priority placed by the participants on the particular factors, so education/social class is recounted first, then family, medical discourse, economy, gender and ethnicity, respectively.

7.3 CAREER SUCCESS STORIES: NARRATIVES DESCRIBING THE IMPACT OF STRUCTURAL INFLUENCES ON CAREER (RE)CONSTRUCTION

7.3.1 Introduction

Five additional layers are worked into the stories told in the previous two chapters to generate a panoramic picture of the critical moments in the participants' careers: education, including social class as mediated through the educational system; family; medical discourse; economy; and matters of ethnicity and gender (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2003, 2005; Knights, 2009). I recognise that there are other possible structural influences that could impact on a person's career story (e.g., cultural dynamics), but the five aforementioned processes are specifically mentioned by the participants.

The information contained in Table 7.1 is augmented by Table 7.2, which cross-references the participants' career (re)construction strategies, critical moments of change and personal profiles with the primary structural influences from their social system. The respondents are grouped alphabetically according to the key macro-social process from their social system. The individual stories are narrated collectively according to the following format: the main macro-social themes emanating from the empirical data are highlighted; these themes are illustrated by passages from the narratives; and are linked together by referring to the pertinent theoretical frameworks employed in the dissertation.

Table 7.2 Cross-Referencing Participants' Career (Re)Construction Strategies, Critical Moments and Personal Profiles with Structural Influences

Overall Career Strategy	Transition Within Strategy	Name	Critical Moment (CM)	Primary (Secondary) Structural Influence	Age	Education*	Marital Status*	Family Unit*	Socio-Economic Status*
Constant envisionment and constant enactment (quadrant 3)	Subjective self-referent to subjective self-referent Agency to agency	Anna	Illness	Education (Economy - finance)	55 - 59	Primary only	Single	No children	Semi-skilled
Changed envisionment and changed enactment (quadrant 1)	Objective self-referent to subjective self-referent Lack of agency to agency	Betty	Parenthood	Education (Economy - Community Employment)	35 - 39	Non-degree	Single	1 child	Semi-skilled
Changed envisionment and changed enactment (quadrant 1)	Objective self-referent to subjective self-referent Lack of agency to agency	Dorothy	Family responsibility	Education (Economy - Community Employment)	45 - 49	Lower secondary and technical or vocational	Divorced	2 children	Manual skilled
Changed envisionment and changed enactment (quadrant 1)	Objective self-referent to subjective self-referent Lack of agency to agency	Geraldine	Family responsibility	Education (Family)	35 - 39	Lower secondary	Single	2 children	Unskilled
Constant envisionment and constant enactment (quadrant 3)	Subjective self-referent to subjective self-referent Agency to agency	Hilda	Family responsibility	Education	45 - 49	Lower secondary	Separated/ deserted	2 children	Unskilled

Strategy	Transition	Name	CM	Structural	Age	Education*	Marital*	Family*	Socio-Ec.*
Changed envisionment and changed enactment (quadrant 1)	Objective self-referent to subjective self-referent Lack of agency to agency	Katrina	Bereavement	Education (Economy - Community Employment)	55 - 59	Lower secondary	Widowed	6 children	Unskilled
Constant envisionment and constant enactment (quadrant 3)	Subjective self-referent to subjective self-referent Agency to agency	Lara	Bereavement	Education (Social class)	40 - 44	Upper secondary	Widowed	4 children	Unskilled
Changed envisionment and changed enactment (quadrant 1)	Objective self-referent to subjective self-referent Lack of agency to agency	Nora	Family responsibility	Education (Family)	40 - 44	Primary only	Single	2 children	Unskilled
Changed envisionment and changed enactment (quadrant 1)	Objective self-referent to subjective self-referent Lack of agency to agency	Ursula	Bereavement	Education (Social class)	55 - 59	Upper secondary	Widowed	4 children	Semi-skilled
Constant envisionment and constant enactment (quadrant 3)	Subjective self-referent to subjective self-referent Agency to agency	Queenie	Bereavement	Education (Economy - finance)	60 - 64	Upper secondary	Married	5 children - 2 deceased	Non-manual
Changed envisionment and changed enactment (quadrant 1)	Objective self-referent to subjective self-referent Lack of agency to agency	Rachel	Family responsibility	Education (Economy - Community Employment)	40 - 44	Lower secondary	Single	3 children	Semi-skilled

Strategy	Transition	Name	CM	Structural	Age	Education*	Marital*	Family*	Socio-Ec.*
Changed envisionment and changed enactment (quadrant 1)	Subjective other-referent to subjective self-referent Lack of agency to agency	Wendy	Bereavement	Education (Family)	35 - 39	Lower secondary	Single	3 children	Semi-skilled
Constant envisionment and constant enactment (quadrant 3)	Subjective self-referent to subjective self-referent Agency to agency	Xandra	Expert system	Education (Economy - Community Employment)	20 - 24	Lower secondary	Single	No children	Semi-skilled
Changed envisionment and constant enactment (quadrant 2)	Subjective self-referent to subjective self-ref. (different criteria) Agency to agency	Colm	Expert system	Family	40 - 44	Lower secondary and technical or vocational	Single	No children	Manual skilled
Changed envisionment and changed enactment (quadrant 1)	Objective self-referent to objective self-referent (different criteria) Agency to lack of agency	Elizabeth	Parenthood	Family	40 - 44	Primary degree	Separated/ deserted	1 child	Lower professional
Constant envisionment and constant enactment (quadrant 3)	Objective self-referent to objective self-referent Agency to agency	Fiona	Parenthood	Family	35 - 39	Upper secondary	Single	1 child	Semi-skilled
Constant envisionment and changed enactment (quadrant 4)	Subjective self-referent to subjective self-referent Lack of agency to agency	Violet	Family responsibility	Family	45 - 49	Lower secondary	Single	5 children	Semi-skilled

Strategy	Transition	Name	CM	Structural	Age	Education*	Marital*	Family*	Socio-Ec.*
Constant envisionment and changed enactment (quadrant 4)	Objective self-referent to objective self-referent Agency to lack of agency to agency	Isobel	Illness	Medical discourse	35 - 39	Primary degree	Single	No children	Non-manual
Constant envisionment and changed enactment (quadrant 4)	Subjective self-referent to subjective self-referent Lack of agency to agency	John	Expert system	Medical discourse	35 - 39	Upper secondary	Single	No children	Semi-skilled
Constant envisionment and constant enactment (quadrant 3)	Objective other-referent to objective other-referent Agency to agency	Oliver	Illness	Medical discourse	25 - 29	Primary degree	Single	No children	Lower professional
Constant envisionment and changed enactment (quadrant 4)	Subjective self-referent to subjective self-referent Lack of agency to agency	Sharon	Expert system	Medical discourse (Economy - Community Employment)	25 - 29	Upper secondary and technical or vocational	Single	No children	Non-manual
Constant envisionment and constant enactment (quadrant 3)	Objective self-referent to objective self-referent Lack of agency to lack agency	Aaron	Family responsibility	Economy - Community Employment	50 - 54	Lower secondary and technical or vocational	Married	3 children	Manual skilled
Changed envisionment and changed enactment (quadrant 1)	Objective other-referent to objective self-referent Agency to lack of agency	Maura	Relationship dynamics	Economy - Community Employment	50 - 54	Lower secondary	Divorced	2 children	Lower professional

Strategy	Transition	Name	CM	Structural	Age	Education*	Marital*	Family*	Socio-Ec.*
Constant envisionment and constant enactment (quadrant 3)	Subjective other-referent to subjective other-referent Agency to agency	Tanya	Illness	Economy - poverty in lesser developed country	45 - 49	Upper secondary	Single	5 children	Manual skilled
Constant envisionment and changed enactment (quadrant 4)	Subjective self-referent to subjective self-referent Agency to lack of agency	Penelope	Family responsibility	Gender	55 - 59	Primary and technical or vocational	Single	1 child	Semi-skilled
Constant envisionment and changed enactment (quadrant 4)	Subjective other-referent to subjective other-referent Lack of agency to agency	Yvonne	Family responsibility	Gender	55 - 59	Lower secondary	Single	1 child	Manual skilled
Constant envisionment and constant enactment (quadrant 3)	Objective self-referent to objective self-referent Agency to agency	Zach	Relationship dynamics	Ethnicity (Economy - Community Employment)	40 - 44	Lower secondary	Separated/ deserted	6 children	Unskilled

Source: Developed by author, Sue Mulhall.

Note:

* Denotes classification used by the CSO in 2006 census (CSO, 2007a, b, c, d).

7.3.2 Peering at Career Success Stories Through the Wide-Angle Lens of Education/Social Class

The anecdotes that Anna, Betty, Dorothy, Geraldine, Hilda, Katrina, Lara, Nora, Ursula, Queenie, Rachel, Wendy and Xandra relate demonstrate the vital role that education occupies in their career success stories. When viewed through the lens of education/social class, their stories underline that education is the key to many other exchanges: „the most important chain of exchanges is knowledge for qualifications, qualified activity for high pay, and pay for goods and services' (Willis, 1977: 64). This assertion is supported by numerous studies indicating the relationship between schooling and income levels (the education premium), whereby those with greater levels of education have the opportunity to earn higher salaries, and conversely, those with lesser educational attainment have significantly more modest incomes (e.g., Collins *et al.*, 2010; McCoy & William, 2000; McDonough & Loughrey, 2009; NESF, 2002).

Bourdieu (1984) maintains that different social classes possess different types and amounts of cultural capital and intellectual and educational qualifications, which they transfer to their children. Research emphasises the role of schooling in reproducing social inequalities on the basis of class (e.g., Clancy, 2003; Drudy & Lynch, 1993), which is evident from the participants' narratives quoted later in this section. Other studies note that from first grade, children from higher socio-economic groups outperform their counterparts from lower socio-economic groups (Entwisle & Alexander, 1993) and that these early differences may increase over time due to continuing differences in the quality of education (Kerckhoff, 1995). There is also a positive correlation between participation in higher education and parents' socio-economic background (O'Connell, McCoy & Clancy, 2006), in addition to involvement

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in higher education and parents' educational level (Delaney, Bernard & Harmon, 2009; Panel on Fair Access to the Professions, 2009).

All of the women, apart from Queenie, describe themselves as being from lower socio-economic groups (self-reported): six declare they are semi-skilled; five maintain unskilled; one says manual skilled; and one, Queenie, states non-manual. With the exception of Queenie, they left school prematurely because of their family circumstances and commenced their early careers in low-paid work:

- Anna started sewing in a clothing factory at the age of 14, and then became a skilled operative, working in an electronics facility, printers and in licensed premises.

- Betty was initially unemployed and subsequently worked in factories, bakeries, newsagents and delicatessens.

- Dorothy originally trained as an apprentice hairdresser, but left the profession, later holding various roles in supermarkets, dry cleaners and cafes.

- Geraldine picked vegetables on a farm, worked in supermarkets, shops and a launderette and minded children in another person's home.

- Hilda was employed in retail and production positions.

- Katrina worked as a factory operative, remaining there until she married.

- Lara was employed in shop work.

- Nora held jobs in factories, house and office cleaning, home help and childminding.

- Ursula predominantly worked in the informal labour market cleaning people's homes.

- Queenie commenced her career in nursing, then worked in personnel roles and subsequently was employed in professional caring roles.

- Rachel left school at 15, worked as an assistant hairdresser and was then employed on short-term contracts in the hospitality sector.

- Wendy worked in factories and shops.

- Xandra left school at 16 and was unemployed for two years before participating on Community Employment.

Social class within the educational system is specifically referred to by two participants. Lara, (early 40s, widow) remarks on the socio-economic distinction made in her school. Money, or the dearth of it, influenced how a child was treated by the school hierarchy, ignored if you did not come from a family of financial means and/or status:

> I always felt, because we didn't have the money, we weren't well off, that … we were chosed to be ignored.

Ursula (late 50s, widow) recognises that a student's social standing impacted on how a pupil was inculcated in her school. She tells a tale of when she questioned why the bank managers' daughters, builders' daughters and farmers' daughters were taught commerce, whilst all of the other students, including herself, received instruction in Latin. The response of her teacher was to lock Ursula into a cramped music room:

> I said: ‚are we black and they're white?' And she [teacher] just grabbed me by the scruff of the neck and she threw me into a music cell and I was left there all day.

When Ursula's father discovered this, he immediately removed her from the school. She left the formal school system over four decades ago, and, in the interim, constantly craved education, only returning to that environment ten years ago.

The issue of access to education, in tandem with the participants' family's inability to pay for school fees, is central to Anna and Queenie's early career chronicle. Anna was born in the early 1950s and Queenie in the late 1940s, so both women went to school prior to the implementation of free second-level education in Ireland, which was introduced in 1967 (Redmond & Heanue, 2000). For Anna (late 50s, single), her „poor‟ background influenced the expectations of both her parents and her teachers regarding leaving school at 14:

> We came from a poor family, with seven children. The moment you were going to be 14 you were going to work and that was it. There wasn't any chance of whether you wanted to go to tech, college, or anything like that. … I think probably the teachers knew that we would be heading to the laundry.

Queenie feels she was fortunate to get the opportunity to finish second-level education, as the preponderance of her peers were not afforded that chance. At 18, Quennie went to London to become a nurse, but, due to the constraints of her family's finances, compounded by the cost of tuition, she did not complete her studies:

> They [parents] actually had to pay for our secondary education, which was a lot. People did not go to secondary education at that point in time. ... I had to serve my time as a nurse in London sending money back home and I did three years there. ... I didn't get it because I didn't have the money. Mammy and daddy didn't have the money.

The women, excluding Queenie, epitomise Willis' (1977: 107) contention that for the working class „as the shopfloor becomes a prison, education is seen retrospectively ... as the only escape‟. (As noted above, Queenie does, however, refer to the financial burden of a pay-as-you-go education system). Education is now acting as a form of career liberation for the 12 participants who had to leave school at an early age due to their family circumstances: Anna, Betty, Dorothy, Geraldine, Hilda, Katrina, Lara, Nora, Rachel, Ursula, Wendy and Xandra. They perceive a more enriching future career

experience because of their newly acquired educational qualifications, in the main, obtained whilst on Community Employment: Katrina, Lara, Ursula, Wendy and Xandra have aspirations to become professional childcare workers; Dorothy and Nora want to be receptionists; Betty a graphic designer; Geraldine a fitness instructor; and Rachel a carer. Anna and Hilda, however, are still uncertain as to their impending directions. Ursula's (late 50s, widow) words eloquently encapsulate these women's yearning to continue their studies:

> I craved study and I craved school, okay, but I left before my Leaving Cert [state final examination]. … I always craved education, so 10 years ago I started back.

The low educational attainment levels of participants entering Community Employment has been identified in recent research: Grubb, Singh and Tergeist (2009) found that 37 per cent of participants have primary education only. For Betty, Dorothy, Katrina, Rachel, Sharon and Xandra, the scheme is playing a crucial role in realising their ambition to return to learning. Betty and Dorothy's glowing comments about Community Employment are contained in Sections 6.4.3.1 and 6.4.1.7, respectively. Sharon's career chronicle (Section 6.4.2.2) describes how the scheme acts as an enabling factor, assisting her to acquire administrative skills following her beautician career, but as detailed in Section 7.3.4, the medical discourse is a more pertinent structural influence in her story.

With regard to Katrina (late 50s), following the death of her husband from a long-term illness, she returned to the workplace after a 35-year absence to participate on Community Employment, as a childcare worker. Katrina points to her lack of confidence when she was a homemaker and attributes her new-found sense of self-belief

to receiving training on the scheme. She believes that this has equipped her with the knowledge and skills to search for a childcare position:

> It's [CE] made such a big difference in my life. ... [In the past] I would be very, very shy. ... [Now] I'll advertise in the shops that I'm available for childminding. ... I think ,cos I have so much confidence now that I hadn't got.

Rachel (early 40s, single) is employed as an after-school childcare worker. Her present position is allowing her to become familiar with the operational exigencies of professional childcare and to partake in relevant training, thus engendering greater self-confidence:

> Doing my FETAC 5 [childcare qualification]. ... [In the past] I'd be kind of, if somebody said something to me I'd just go, like that: ,I can't do that'. ... Now I ... have the confidence to say: ,I can do that'.

Being a premature school leaver, Xandra (early 20s, single) had not acquired formal qualifications, but she is now utilising Community Employment (a scheme of which she is effusive in her praise) to obtain certification, so she can forge a career in childcare:

> I mind the kids and I love it. It's very important to me. ... I kind of need a lot of courses. ... FETAC level 5, I'll need that.

Seven stories (Betty, Dorothy, Geraldine, Katrina, Nora, Rachel and Ursula's) particularly highlight how education provides emancipation from a state of being a mere extension of a given environment to an active agent who can choose who she will be. Education has assisted this septuplet to alter their perception of career success (from objective self-referent factors, such as earnings, to subjective self-referent ones, like knowledge) (Heslin, 2005). This learning has also generated a sense of control over their career outcomes, from previously feeling a lack of agency. These seven women

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have transformed their careers from a situation of putting bread on the table to putting qualifications on the wall, a situation summed up by Dorothy (late 40s, divorced):

> I wanted to do something better with my life, you know, than what I was doing. … Without doing some other courses it was never going to happen.

The stories that these 13 women narrate highlight key aspects from the theoretical frameworks underpinning this dissertation (Chapter Five refers). For example, power is expressed in various micro contexts, such as the school. According to Willis (1977: 65), the „school is the agency of face-to-face control par excellence'. For example, students are subordinated by the constricted and inferior space that they occupy and by regulated timetables and elaborate rituals and are subject to the reproduction of social relationships. Phenomena like social class are identified as a special object for knowledge, resulting in action such as different treatment, as in Lara's story, and confinement, evident in Ursula's story (Foucault, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1982). Power thus intervenes in creating conditions of possibility for specific narratives to emerge as dominant and for others to be marginalised (Derrida, 1976, 1978a, 1978b, 1982, 1989). Lara and Ursula narrate examples of how, by virtue of their social class, people are positioned in a different category to begin with, a situation reinforced through the education system. Ursula, however, says that she did not accept this hegemonic discourse (Gramsci, 1971; Van Dijk, 2001), disrupting the common sense assumptions of everyday life in her classroom (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1992; Forgacs, 1988) by engaging in micro-political resistance (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Deetz, 1992; Foucault, 1988; Thomas, 2009). The dialectical relationship between individuals and social structure (Archer, 1995; Barley, 1989; Giddens, 1977, 1979, 1981, 1982, 1984, 1985, 1990, 1992, 1993; Weick, 2001) is also manifest in the women's stories,

particularly those who talk about the significance of the scheme in their careers (Betty, Dorothy, Katrina, Rachel, Sharon and Xandra), a theme explored in Section 7.4.

7.3.3 Peering at Career Success Stories Through the Wide-Angle Lens of the Family

A number of career success stories in the previous two chapters highlight the crucial role of primary socialisation, the comprehensive and consistent induction of an individual into the objective world of a society, or a sector of it (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). It is the first socialisation an individual undergoes in childhood, through which he or she becomes a member of society, whereby his or her social world is filtered to him or her by his or her significant others, typically the parents, thus crystallising the person's identity and subjective possession of a self (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Bruce & Meggitt, 2006; Mills, 1959; Willis, 1977). For example, as mentioned in Chapter Four, Gottfredson's (1981, 1996, 2002) theory of circumscription and compromise explains how a child learns about the roles and rewards that can be pursued in one's career. The theory treats vocational choice largely as a process of eliminating options and narrowing one's choices, which is a procedure that begins in early childhood. Children look to their parents as guides when they begin to explore how they will prioritise these roles and rewards.

As described in Chapter Six, Geraldine, Nora and Wendy's narratives illustrate the negative impact that a challenging childhood can have on a person's early career (Sections 6.4.1.8, 6.4.1.2 and 6.3.2.1, respectively): Geraldine talks about her mother's erratic behaviour forcing her to leave home at 16, which led her down a path of basic jobs; Nora speaks about the limited career options available to the ninth child in a

family of 15, whose mother died prematurely, thus requiring her to care for her younger siblings; and, as the fifth child in a family of 10, remaining within the educational system was not an option for Wendy. As mentioned in Section 7.3.2, education is the main structural process influencing this triad of career stories, not the family. Education, as a form of secondary socialisation, that is, any process subsequent to primary socialisation that inducts already socialised individuals into new sectors of the objective world of their society, has served to re-affirm their subjective reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1967).

There are four participants where the family as a social institution plays a central part in how they (re)construct their career success stories: Colm, Elizabeth, Fiona and Violet. These respondents constantly refer to the role of primary socialisation when describing their current career chronicle, as illustrated by the following excerpts from their narratives. After undergoing counselling to deal with childhood issues, Colm (early 40s, single) decided to contact a number of state agencies to help him secure his first job in over a decade (on Community Employment in a public relations role). He continuously compares his former negative, blaming self (a disposition he recognises emanates from his difficult upbringing) to his current positive, self-accountable identity (stemming from self-awareness generated thorough counselling). Colm does not want to return to his previous persona:

> I came from a horrible background, so success to me is more being a decent person. ... We grew up with alcoholism, so it was crap. ... I wouldn't be that negative git that I was because I was completely negative. ... That was how I grew up. ... Now I try and be more positive.

Elizabeth (early 40s, separated) portrays herself as a reluctant mother. Ironically her own mother has had a major impact on her career, determining both her educational

choice and the subsequent job she took post-qualification. She says she aspired to be a hairdresser, but her mother „pushed' her towards the A-levels and college:

> I did actually want to be a hairdresser, now I remember, but my mum said „don't be stupid' and I was pushed towards the A-levels and university.

Elizabeth's perspective on what constitutes a „good job' mirrors her own mother's view, that is, a job that provides security:

> A good job would be working in a pensionable job. ... It's mad, it's probably still the same as her [mother's] viewpoint.

Fiona (late 30s, single) intends to emigrate to Scotland. She observes that she did not receive parental guidance regarding her career choices, but acknowledges that her mother and father were probably too busy to offer such advice. Her parents may not have moulded her early career decisions, but they instilled a strong work ethic in her, an issue to which Fiona constantly refers. This belief system is one that she is now passing onto her daughter:

> We were never handed anything when we were kids. ... You have to earn it and I have it like that with my little one.

Being a mother of five children, Violet (late 40s, single) has spent the majority of her adult life as a homemaker lacking in confidence. She maintains that she would have liked her parents to have encouraged her to remain at school. Violet is still frustrated by the lack of support she received from them in the early years of her career, believing that this dearth of backup resulted in her remaining a homemaker for over two decades, a situation she feels she should have changed sooner:

I wish I had someone behind me when I was younger that would kind of push me. ... I would have liked to have seen what other direction I would have gone.

Looking at Colm, Elizabeth, Fiona and Violet's occupational orientations through the optic of the family illuminates how their backgrounds are still shaping their career decisions, choices and pathways (Gottfredson, 1981, 1996, 2002; Kirton, 2009; Mathers & Parry, 2009). Three of these stories, however, highlight that there is no fixed core to a person's identity, even those formed through primary socialisation. Colm, Elizabeth and Violet have transitioned within the career (re)construction strategy matrix (Table 7.2 refers), with Colm exhibiting changed envisionment and constant enactment, Elizabeth changed envisionment and changed enactment and Violet demonstrating constant envisionment and changed enactment. This emphasises the process of identification (Bauman, 2001), a feature of one of the theoretical frameworks grounding the dissertation and a topic discussed in Section 7.4.

7.3.4 Peering at Career Success Stories Through the Wide-Angle Lens of Medical Discourse

Four of the participants have some form of disability or illness that currently plays a key part in their career success story: Isobel, John, Oliver and Sharon. By only examining Isobel and Oliver's stories (Sections 6.3.3.4 and 6.3.3.3), in terms of the individual critical moment of acquiring an illness, and John and Sharon's narratives (Sections 6.4.2.1 and 6.4.2.2), simply from the perspective of people with a disability dealing with an expert system other than Community Employment, omits the significant role that medical discourse occupies in their career chronicles. (Even though illness is a critical event in Anna and Tanya's lives, nervous breakdown and cancer respectively, they have successfully recovered, so medical discourse does not appear to be central to their

stories. Education and economy are their primary structural influences, as explained in Sections 7.3.2 and 7.3.5, respectively.)

Medical discourse frames stories in terms of how to fix the problem of the disabled/ill person (Mertens, 2003). It examines disability/illness in an individualised and medicalised way, whereby the medical profession tends to see all difficulties solely from the perspective of solutions for a patient, without recognising that the person has to consider whether the proposed treatment fits into the overall balance of his or her life (Oliver, 1990, 1996). The remedies are designed by able-bodied people in a process where disabled/ill people have little or no control. Consequently, there has been a failure of the medical profession to involve disabled people in a meaningful way, except as passive objects of intervention, treatment and rehabilitation (Goodley *et al*., 2004; Oliver, 1990, 1996).

Medical discourse is constantly presented as authoritative (Goodley *et al*., 2004) in John, Isobel, Oliver and Sharon's descriptions of their career decisions. This is particularly evident in the accounts rendered by the two participants who acquired illness later in life (Isobel and Oliver), compared with the stories related by the two respondents who have lived with disability from birth (John and Sharon). Isobel (late 30s, single) is employed as an administrator, who was diagnosed with a debilitating disease in her early 20s. Her narrative indicates that she was directed to participate on Community Employment by the medical profession:

> I was told by [name of hospital]. I was told that this was the opportunity that I should take.

Isobel talks of the disapproving response of her medical consultants when she refused to accept that she should live and work by their recommendations:

> I've done so much damage now to my joints that they [consultants] were getting actually a bit annoyed, understandably, so they were saying to me that I should do a CE scheme to lessen the stress on me, on any other, emm, irreparable damage I'd be doing.

In Oliver's (late 20s, single) situation, he worked in the USA, whereupon he became ill and returned to Ireland. The decision to come back was made by an unnamed third-party (in the context of our discussion, it is probably his father in conjunction with his doctor). In addition, the reason he is engaging on Community Employment stems from advice provided by the medical profession (previously noted in Appendix E):

> On medical advice there was advice for me not to go back to work full-time again for, for a period of time, just to make sure I'm back to full health again. So, like all the criteria matched me starting in this position [CE]. It would only be 19-and-a-half hours, it would be supported employment, so any health issues I'd have some support.

John (early 30s, single) has an intellectual disability and has lived his adult life in a sheltered environment. He currently works as a gardener on Community Employment. For John, health personnel from his sheltered community apprised him that a place was available on Community Employment (referred to in Appendix E), guidance he observes that he would not have ignored:

> I sort of heard from [name] that there was, sort of a space. ... I sort of went on the scheme. ... I would never have said no.

Sharon (late 20s, single) is profoundly deaf and has been since birth. She recently changed her career direction from being a beautician to an administrator, praising Community Employment, which facilitated this transition. For Sharon, health

professionals within a local employment service suggested she apply for a position in a women's advocacy organisation because they were aware of her „background' (quoted in Appendix E), which they contended, would be appropriate in an organisation sympathetic to disadvantage:

> When I rang [name of service] they recommended that I go on a CE scheme. They knew what I had done before. They said that someone with my background would suit the type of work in [name of advocacy organisation].

All four participants ultimately accepted the medical establishment's direction of their careers towards Community Employment, but, now that they are participating on the scheme, they are utilising it as a means of gaining new skills to diversify into fields of expertise in which they have not previously operated:

- Isobel wants to be a beauty therapist and states: „[I am] going into beauty therapy. … I've just finished doing the exams. … They're very, very supportive [CE]'.

- John plans to be a self-employed gardener and contends: „My dream is to be … self-employed like a gardener. … Since I'm on the CE scheme I've really obviously learned a lot'.

- Oliver aspires to be as a property maintenance consultant and maintains: „I'll have enough time [on CE] to, emm, to, to try and generate some business for my own business ... in property maintenance'.

- Sharon intends to be an administrator and observes: „It doesn't really matter [where] as long as I'm in an office ... Doing what I'm doing now basically [administration]. ... Using my work experience and training from the scheme'.

The four stories stress the relevance of the theoretical frameworks of power, knowledge and language (Derrida, 1976, 1978a, 1978b, 1982, 1989; Foucault, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1982) and ideology and hegemony (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1992; Forgacs, 1988; Gramsci, 1971; Van Dijk, 2001) underpinning this dissertation. The response of the medical profession illustrates that the production of disability and illness is an individual, medical problem that requires special treatment in a carceral network (Foucault, 1979). The hegemony of disability/illness stems from the ontological assumptions produced by society that makes the nature of disability/illness a disease, that is, pathological. It results in the perception that the body/mind of the person with a disability/illness is a problem for him or her (Goodley *et al.*, 2004; Oliver, 1996). To have a disability/illness is viewed as having something wrong with you, which needs to be fixed (Oliver, 1996). Only Isobel exemplifies the final phase of Foucault's (1988) thinking about the self whereby the subject operates as a pocket of resistance to established forms of power/knowledge. When she initially ignores the advice of the medical establishment, Isobel's experiential knowledge of what is happening to her body, what Foucault (1980) terms subjugated knowledge, is afforded less credibility than the knowledge of the professionals. Neither Isobel, John, Oliver nor Sharon wants to be objectified in the singular term of their particular disability/illness, which is only one dimension of their existence. They desire recognition for other aspects of their individuality (Oliver, 1990, 1996), for example, beauty therapist, gardener, property maintenance consultant and administrator, respectively. They are utilising a particular expert system, Community Employment, to ensure a multi-faceted identity. The dialectical relationship between individuals and the social structure (Archer, 1995; Barley, 1989; Giddens, 1977, 1979, 1981, 1982, 1984, 1985, 1990, 1992, 1993; Weick, 2001) is, therefore, manifest in their stories (see Section 7.4).

7.3.5 Peering at Career Success Stories Through the Wide-Angle Lens of the Economy

As mentioned in Chapter Four, an individual's career is influenced by many contextual factors, including the structure of an economy (Arnold & Cohen, 2008; Hughes, 1937, 1958; Mills, 1959; Sullivan & Baruch, 2009). The structure of an economy, *inter alia*, shapes occupational structures, the form and freedom of access to work, the choices available to individuals, in addition to reinforcing certain behaviour while rejecting other actions (Gottfredson 1981, 1996, 2002; Herr, 2008). The prevailing conditions affect how individuals calculate the costs, risks and benefits of alternative career strategies (Nicholson & De Waal-Andrews, 2005), ultimately impacting on their evaluation of the outcome of their career experiences, that is, their career success (Gunz & Heslin, 2005; Heslin, 2005).

How Aaron, Maura and Tanya's career identities are altered and/or strengthened by the structure of various aspects of the economy is discussed in this section: the operation of the Community Employment scheme has consequences for Aaron and Maura; and the social fabric of a lesser developed economy (Nicaragua) has implications for Tanya. In relation to seven other participants, the composition of Community Employment is a secondary influence in their career stories: for Betty, Dorothy, Katrina, Rachel and Xandra, education is the primary macro-social process (Section 7.3.2); for Sharon, the significant element is medical discourse (Section 7.3.4); and for Zach, the predominant factor is ethnicity. As Zach's story is related in a later section (7.3.6), it is useful to include his observations about Community Employment here.

Maura (early 50s, divorced) works on Community Employment as a receptionist in a parish centre, a position and a programme she is scathing about. She asserts that participants on the scheme are involved in a state-sponsored welfare scam, legitimately defrauding the system by partaking in futile programmes. Maura is aware of her own contradictory position; notwithstanding that she believes it is a con, she is still involved with it. Her Janus faced approach is legitimised by her: she does not value the scheme, so she „skives' off; she witnesses other people „skiving off", so it is not a personal abuse of the system, but a systemic issue; and she needs the money that the scheme provides, so she engages in a system that she does not respect:

> There's a stigma attached to CE and to the welfare system. … I disrespect it obviously. I use it obviously, but as far as I can see, that is the structure of it.

This woman also highlights the contradictory positions of central government departments, which create an anomalous situation for the participants. According to the Department of Social Protection, a person is on invalidity benefit because he or she is unable to work, but individuals claiming this benefit, and simultaneously partaking on Community Employment, are actually encouraged by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Innovation to seek mainstream employment:

> I'm on invalidity pension because I'm not capable of working, but I'm on a CE scheme for to get me back to work.

The dilemma of Community Employment participation is also referred to by Zach (as previously mentioned the scheme is a secondary structural influence in his story). Zach (early 40s, separated) contends that he receives a double social welfare payment (Community Employment and invalidity) and to equal this amount from other sources,

he would have to work longer hours than the 19-and-a-half hour week permissible under the scheme:

> If you go and get a job you get, you get the same thing, you know. So for a 40-odd-hour week job you get the same money ... as you get on the Social Welfare.

What Aaron (early 50s, married) believes is a „no-questions' culture is prevalent in the Community Employment system. Aaron spent the majority of his career working as a qualified carpenter interspersed with periods of unemployment. He is now on Community Employment, employed as a caretaker/security officer in a resource centre. Aaron's criterion for career success (objective, self-referent factor of earnings) (Heslin, 2005) indicates a desire to secure a wage, which is the principal reason that he is engaging on the scheme. To supplement this income, he works in the black economy, not declaring his earnings to the Revenue, a practice that is illegal. According to him, it is easier to make additional money in the black economy whilst on the scheme, as opposed to doing so while claiming unemployment benefit only, because fewer questions are asked:

> If I have a chance of getting a bit of work on the scheme here no-one can actually say: „right, you're signing and working'. ... Whereas if I was on the dole and I was caught working on the dole, you're going to be, you're going to be, emm, done like.

There is a sector outside of the Irish economy that is a critical part of another participant's story. Tanya (late 40s, single) is a mother of five grown-up children, who has recovered from breast cancer. She is participating on Community Employment as an information and welfare officer in a resource centre, which is the second time that Tanya has worked in this location. In her previous stint, Tanya promoted the plight of people in poverty after spending two months in Nicaragua. She lived there with the

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locals, witnessing the hardship of the native population, people from a diversity of ethnic backgrounds. At a later date, Tanya carried out fundraising activities to support a number of Nicaraguan women to travel to Ireland to campaign for their fellow citizens and promote the reality of their existence. As a result of her trip, she now operates in a non-discriminatory fashion, working collaboratively with others for the common good. In her current role, employed in a centre that supports its local disadvantaged community, Tanya has numerous opportunities to put her beliefs into practice. She repeatedly encounters individuals and groups facing poverty and social exclusion and does not want to perpetuate their marginalisation:

> I think the fact that I went to Nicaragua allows me not to be, emm, segregate people like indigenous groups and everything like. We're all the one, so that comes out a lot in me work.

The negative comments about the structure of Community Employment from Maura, Zach and Aaron are indicative of the theoretical framework underpinning the dissertation that seeks to understand the dynamics of identity regulation and resistance (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Deetz, 1992; Foucault, 1988). Their behavior mirrors what Thomas (2009: 174) terms dis-identification, where individuals pitch themselves in opposition to the identity positions offered to them in organisations. This stance is often expressed through cynicism, irony, humour and other forms of disengagement, with cynicism particularly evident in Maura's narrative. Her story also reflects the ongoing process of identification (Bauman, 2001), as her career (re)construction strategy demonstrates changed envisionment and changed enactment.

7.3.6 Peering at Career Success Stories Through the Wide-Angle Lens of Gender and Ethnicity

Potentially all of the stories could be viewed through a gender lens, for example, focusing on homemakers, such as Hilda, Lara and Violet, who have recently returned to the labour market, and Nora, who, as the oldest female teenager, had to mind her siblings when her mother passed away. Two stories, however, specifically narrate the process that locates women in a subordinate position to men (Goodwin, 2002; Katila & Meriläen, 1999), Penelope's and Yvonne's. A number of commentators suggest that one of the main configurations of gender practice manifests itself in the roles that men and women play in the public and private spheres, whereby men are inextricably linked with the public realm, but women straddle both domains due to their socially constructed domestic responsibilities (e.g., Bruni, Gherardi & Poggio, 2004; McKeown, Ferguson & Rooney, 1998; Pini & McDonald, 2008; Wagner & Wodak, 2006). Penelope's and Yvonne's narratives indicate that a woman's gender position can be made explicit through discourse because, after years of hearing certain language, they start to believe that their status as inferior is objective fact (Katila & Meriläen, 1999).

Penelope (late 50s, single) is now pursuing her new-found dream of becoming a carer for the elderly after all of her years of attending to her family members' needs. As the only female child, Penelope observes that it was her responsibility, not her six brothers, to care for her parents when they became ill. This sibling social order was readily accepted by her without protest, a role she says that she had no compunction performing:

> I am an only girl with six brothers, so I felt everything, you may as well be an only child, so again it was left to me to look after him [father], which I done with no qualms.

A similar story is told by Yvonne (late 50s, single) when discussing her childhood ambition to be a nurse. This aspiration was not realised mainly due to her parents' gendered expectation of their children: there was a belief that the boys deserved an education because they would be the sole providers in their families, whereas the girls would take a supporting function. As a result, Yvonne was unable to complete her studies to become a nurse:

> I think, emm, back then, women, emm, it was more important to educate the men, in our house anyway. ... The way they [parents] looked at it was you're going to get married, you know, whereas the man was not, you know, so educate the man.

These two stories highlight the theoretical framework of ideology and hegemony (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1992; Forgacs, 1988; Gramsci, 1971; Van Dijk, 2001) grounding this dissertation. Penelope's and Yvonne's early lives were enacted in a society where the taken-for-granted assumptions of everyday life were that a woman, once married, had to cease participating in private sector employment, and in the public sector, this belief was supported by legislation, as the marriage bar was only removed in 1973 (O'Hagan, Murphy & Redmond, 2000). Consequently, female labour force participation was low, or non-existent, for Irish women like Penelope and Yvonne, born in the early 1950s (Treacy & O'Connell, 2000).

Using an ethnicity prism, Zach's (early 40s, separated) story of his ongoing recovery from alcoholism adopts an altered appearance. He states that his family background, as a member of the travelling community, has not impacted on his career experiences. This assertion is contradicted by five vignettes voiced by Zach: receiving no parental

guidance as a child because traveller parents do not engage with their children about their career choices and decisions; his parents being involuntarily transferred from their traveller accommodation in South Dublin to a site in Wicklow when Zach was 17; consequently he went to the UK, and on his return moved into a house with his sister, thus was able to utilise the accepted amenities of a settled lifestyle (fixed location, bathing facilities, etc.) to prepare for work on a daily basis; a tale of discrimination that he faced whilst employed in a factory job (see below); then living in a caravan for three years, thus not having access to modern conveniences, which precipitated his departure from paid employment, only re-entering the labour market 18 years later:

> We were living in a caravan, so going to work, going to look for work or look for full-time employment was a bit awkward when you're getting moved around. ... If I was housed at the time I got married, I probably would have stuck with that job.

The theoretical framework of power, knowledge and language, particularly Derrida's (1976, 1978a, 1978b, 1982, 1989) contention that we possess an essence of who we are by using binary opposites, is relevant to this discussion. Our ability to make distinctions and divisions within the world includes our ability to differentiate between 'us' and „them'. The former stands for the group to which we feel we belong and understand and the latter for the group that we cannot access, or do not wish to belong (Bauman & May, 2001). As such, oppositions become tools that we draw upon to chart the world, e.g., the settled community and travellers. Peering through an ethnicity lens illuminates how constructions of difference operate to produce particular subject positions (Billig, 2001; Christie, 2004; Hall, 2001). Those defined as different are frequently constructed as abnormal or unnatural and, hence, inferior (e.g., travellers). This perception is often (re)produced through discourse and language.

Zach provides such an example, when he narrates a story of workplace discrimination:

> Yer man was a bit of a racist against travelling people. He had a sign on the windows saying: „no more travellers in this building'. ... He didn't know I was a traveller at the time. ... I questioned him and he said to me: „what's it got to do with you?' and I said: „I'm a traveller and I work here' and he changed colour, so I just left it.

7.4 CAREER SUCCESS STORIES: CRITICAL MOMENTS EVOLVE INTO FATEFUL MOMENTS FACILITATED BY STRUCTURAL INFLUENCES

Chapters Six and Seven depict the disruption in the everyday routines of the participants' lives when they experience critical moments of change, which entail varying degrees of choice/fate (Figure 6.1 refers). To ascertain if the critical moment has evolved into a fateful moment (Giddens, 1991) for their careers, I cross-reference their career (re)construction strategy, critical moment and primary structural influence with the principal elements of how Giddens (1991) conceptualises the fateful moment. Giddens maintains that eight factors need to be present to create a fateful moment: considering choices and actions; conducting a risk assessment; engaging in identity work; utilising expert systems; seeking advice; carrying out research; developing new skills; and taking control and exercising agency (see Chapter Five).

Table 7.3 summarises this cross-categorisation. It groups the respondents, arranged alphabetically, according to the principal macro-social process in their careers because of the significance Giddens (1991) attaches to expert systems, such as education and Community Employment, in formulating the construct of the fateful moment.

Table 7.3 Cross-Referencing Participants' Career (Re)Construction Strategy, Critical Moment and Structural Influence with the Conceptualisation of the Fateful Moment

Name	Overall Career Strategy	Transition Within Strategy	Critical Moment	Primary Structural Influence	Conceptualisation of the Fateful Moment							
					Choices/ Actions	Risk Assessment	Identity Work	Expert System	Advice	Research	Skills	Control/ Agency
Anna	Constant envisionment and constant enactment	Subjective self-referent to subjective self-referent Agency to agency	Illness	Education	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Betty	Changed envisionment and changed enactment	Objective self-referent to subjective self-referent Lack of agency to agency	Parenthood	Education	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dorothy	Changed envisionment and changed enactment	Objective self-referent to subjective self-referent Lack of agency to agency	Family responsibility	Education	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Geraldine	Changed envisionment and changed enactment	Objective self-referent to subjective self-referent Lack of agency to agency	Family responsibility	Education	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hilda	Constant envisionment and constant enactment	Subjective self-referent to subjective self-referent Agency to agency	Family responsibility	Education	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Name	Strategy	Transition	Critical Moment	Structural Influence	Conceptualisation of the Fateful Moment							
					Choice	Risk	Identity	Expert	Advice	Research	Skills	Control
Katrina	Changed envisionment and changed enactment	Objective self-referent to subjective self-referent Lack of agency to agency	Bereavement	Education	X	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓
Lara	Constant envisionment and constant enactment	Subjective self-referent to subjective self-referent Agency to agency	Bereavement	Education	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Nora	Changed envisionment and changed enactment	Objective self-referent to subjective self-referent Lack of agency to agency	Family responsibility	Education	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ursula	Changed envisionment and changed enactment	Objective self-referent to subjective self-referent Lack of agency to agency	Bereavement	Education	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Queenie	Constant envisionment and constant enactment	Subjective self-referent to subjective self-referent Agency to agency	Bereavement	Education	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Rachel	Changed envisionment and changed enactment	Objective self-referent to subjective self-referent Lack of agency to agency	Family responsibility	Education	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Name	Strategy	Transition	Critical Moment	Structural Influence	Conceptualisation of the Fateful Moment							
					Choice	Risk	Identity	Expert	Advice	Research	Skills	Control
Wendy	Changed envisionment and changed enactment	Subjective other-referent to subjective self-referent Lack of agency to agency	Bereavement	Education	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Xandra	Constant envisionment and constant enactment	Subjective self-referent to subjective self-referent Agency to agency	Expert system	Education	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Colm	Changed envisionment and constant enactment	Subjective self-referent to subjective self-referent (different criteria) Agency to agency	Expert system	Family	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Elizabeth	Changed envisionment and changed enactment	Objective self-referent to objective self-referent (different criteria) Agency to lack of agency	Parenthood	Family	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Fiona	Constant envisionment and constant enactment	Objective self-referent to objective self-referent Agency to agency	Parenthood	Family	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Name	Strategy	Transition	Critical Moment	Structural Influence	Conceptualisation of the Fateful Moment							
					Choice	Risk	Identity	Expert	Advice	Research	Skills	Control
Violet	Constant envisionment and changed enactment	Subjective self-referent to subjective self-referent Lack of agency to agency	Family responsibility	Family	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Isobel	Constant envisionment and changed enactment	Objective self-referent to objective self-referent Agency to lack of agency to agency	Illness	Medical discourse	X	✔	✔	✔	X	X	✔	✔
John	Constant envisionment and changed enactment	Subjective self-referent to subjective self-referent Lack of agency to agency	Expert system	Medical discourse	X	✔	✔	✔	X	X	✔	✔
Oliver	Constant envisionment and constant enactment	Objective other-referent to objective other-referent Agency to agency	Illness	Medical discourse	X	✔	✔	✔	X	X	✔	✔
Sharon	Constant envisionment and changed enactment	Subjective self-referent to subjective self-referent Lack of agency to agency	Expert system	Medical discourse	X	✔	✔	✔	X	X	✔	✔

Name	Strategy	Transition	Critical Moment	Structural Influence	Conceptualisation of the Fateful Moment							
					Choice	Risk	Identity	Expert	Advice	Research	Skills	Control
Aaron	Constant envisionment and constant enactment	Objective self-referent to objective self-referent Lack of agency to lack agency	Family responsibility	Economy - Community Employment	✓	X	✓	✓	X	X	✓	X
Maura	Changed envisionment and changed enactment	Objective other-referent to objective self-referent Agency to lack of agency	Relationship dynamics	Economy - Community Employment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Tanya	Constant envisionment and constant enactment	Subjective other-referent to subjective other-referent Agency to agency	Illness	Economy - poverty in lesser developed country	✓	X	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓
Penelope	Constant envisionment and changed enactment	Subjective self-referent to subjective self-referent Agency to lack of agency	Family responsibility	Gender	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Yvonne	Constant envisionment and changed enactment	Subjective other-referent to subjective other-referent Lack of agency to agency	Family responsibility	Gender	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Name	Strategy	Transition	Critical Moment	Structural Influence	Conceptualisation of the Fateful Moment							
					Choice	Risk	Identity	Expert	Advice	Research	Skills	Control
Zach	Constant envisionment and constant enactment	Objective self-referent to objective self-referent Agency to agency	Relationship dynamics	Ethnicity	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Source: Developed by author, Sue Mulhall.

The data in Table 7.3 indicates that 17 of the 27 participants satisfy all of Giddens' (1991) eight criteria. Where education is a crucial component in the person's career chronicle, 12 out of 13 informants under this heading meet these requirements (Anna, Betty, Dorothy, Geraldine, Hilda, Lara, Nora, Ursula, Queenie, Rachel, Wendy and Xandra). In situations where the family as a social institution is central, three of the four respondents fulfill the prerequisites (Colm, Fiona and Violet). In the narratives where gender and ethnicity are pivotal, two of the three individuals conform to the postulates of the fateful moment (Yvonne and Zach).

Triggered by a critical moment in their lives, these 17 people have had to evaluate their particular set of circumstances, research the options available, seek advice from appropriate state agencies and take a risk by moving into an unfamiliar environment by engaging on a particular expert system, Community Employment. This has enabled them to upgrade their skills and control their career outcomes. These steps have involved a process of identification (Bauman, 2001) for the respondents' careers: for Betty, Dorothy, Geraldine, Nora, Rachel, Ursula and Wendy, it comprises a changed envisionment (career success) and changed enactment (career agency) strategy; for Violet and Yvonne, it entails a constant envisionment, but changed enactment strategy; for Colm, it means a changed envisionment and constant enactment strategy; and, although Anna, Fiona, Hilda, Lara, Queenie, Xandra and Zach exhibit constant envisionment and enactment, their actions have necessitated reconfirming their strategies.

In contrast, 10 respondents have not fully satisfied Giddens' (1991) eight criteria. None of the participants that have medical discourse as a central constituent to their career stories comprehensively concur with these requirements (Isobel, John, Oliver and

Sharon). With respect to the individuals where economy is a core component of their chronicle, not one of the three people demonstrates full fit with the pertinent factors (Aaron, Maura and Tanya). Where education is crucial, only one person out of 13, Katrina, does not exhibit the characteristics of the fateful moment. Of the four informants where the family as a social institution is paramount, Elizabeth does not show evidence of total accord with the conditions. Regarding the three respondents where either gender or ethnicity is pivotal, Penelope does not completely adhere to Giddens' (1991) eight tenets of the fateful moment.

There are three common elements to these 10 career success stories: engagement with a specific expert system, Community Employment; upskilling; and identity work. Following the critical moment in their lives, these participants are availing of the services of a certain expert system (Community Employment), which facilitates their skills being upgraded and permits them to undertake identity work. The process of identification (Bauman, 2001) in these respondents' careers involves: a changed envisionment and changed enactment strategy for Elizabeth, Katrina and Maura; a constant envisionment and changed enactment strategy for Isobel, John, Sharon and Penelope; and a constant envisionment and constant enactment strategy for Aaron, Oliver and Tanya, albeit with an opportunity to reaffirm their career orientations.

Comparing the 17 participants who completely comply with Giddens' (1991) eight elements to the 10 who do not fully fulfill the factors suggests that four behaviours need to be present for a critical moment to have material consequences for an individual's career (to be fateful):

1. Agency in the initial decision to engage with a particular expert system (Community Employment): five respondents have not been instrumental in their decision-making (Isobel, John, Oliver and Sharon were channeled by medical personnel onto Community Employment and Katrina's daughter instigated the contact with this domain). Consequently, they only satisfy five of Giddens' (1991) requirements (risk assessment, identity work, expert system, enhancement of skills and career control).

2. Unfamiliarity with the operational exigencies of this expert system: two of the informants have previously participated on Community Employment (Aaron and Tanya), so, for them, the system is a taken-for-granted reality of their everyday existence (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). It was, therefore, unnecessary for them to conduct a risk assessment, seek advice or conduct research, so they only fit four of the stipulations (consideration of choices, identity work, expert system and enhancement of skills). Tanya meets an additional criterion (career control) because, unlike Aaron, she prevents potential barriers obstructing her thinking.

3. Positive perception of the consequences of the critical moment: two individuals interpret the outcome of the critical moment negatively (Elizabeth regarding parenthood and Maura with respect to changing relationship dynamics). This leads them to fulfill seven of the eight conditions (consideration of choices, risk assessment, identity work, expert system, seeking advice, undertaking research and enhancement of skills), but feel a diminished sense of agency over their career outcomes.

4. Optimistic outlook of potential barriers to career progression: two people view issues such as institutional age discrimination (Aaron and Penelope) and the recession (Aaron), as prospective threats to their career advancement. The effect of their respective positions differs. For Penelope, as this is the only behavior that she does not exhibit, she satisfies seven of Giddens' (1991) conditions (consideration of choices, risk assessment, identity work, expert system, seeking advice, undertaking research and enhancement of skills). As Aaron does not display two key behaviours (unfamiliarity with the exigencies of the expert system and an optimistic outlook of potential barriers), he only meets four of the requirements (consideration of choices, identity work, expert system and enhancement of skills).

Regardless of the degree of choice/fate attaching to the critical moment in the participants' lives, the critical moment has been crucial in triggering and expediting processes of self-reflection for their careers. This has occurred in tandem with support from a specific expert system (Community Employment). It appears, however, that the scale to which the critical moment facilitates a fateful moment depends on the extent to which the participants deploy four behaviours: agency in the initial decision to engage with a particular expert system, Community Employment; unfamiliarity with the operational exigencies of that system; holding a positive perception of the consequences of the critical moment; and having an optimistic outlook regarding potential barriers to career progression.

This draws attention to the relevance of one of the theoretical frameworks grounding this dissertation: the dialectic relationship between agency and structure (Archer, 1995; Barley, 1989; Giddens, 1977, 1979, 1981, 1982, 1984, 1985, 1990, 1992, 1993; Weick,

2001). This espouses that all human action is at least partly pre-determined based on the varying contextual rules under which it occurs, but the structure and rules, however, are not permanent and external, as they are sustained and modified by human behaviour. These actions are constrained and enabled by structures, which are, in turn, produced and reproduced by actions. All 27 participants, to a greater or lesser extent, as evidenced from their transitions within the career (re)construction strategy matrix, support this duality of structure. Their stories reinforce the contention that, in times of change and discontinuity, people increasingly enact their social constraints, including their career systems, and that the newly influential processes in their lives (Community Employment) displace the original, but weakened actions (starting point on the career (re)construction strategy matrix), thereby strengthening them, producing a situation whereby people live careers partly in response to their own constructions (Weick, 2001).

7.5 CAREER SUCCESS STORIES: PEERING AT PARTICIPANTS' INTERPRETATIONS OF CAREER EXPERIENCES DURING PERIODS OF DISCONTINUITY THROUGH A WIDE-ANGLE LENS

During periods of discontinuity, for example, when the participants were non-employed prior to participating on the scheme, how did they interpret their career experiences? This question is relevant to career success research, because, as discovered in Chapter Four, those who have encountered transformation in their careers, experiencing a period non-employment, are largely excluded from career success research despite scholars stating that contemporary careers are synonymous with change.

On being asked how they perceived their own careers during times of non-employment, and the careers of other non-employed people, the following responses were provided (Table 7.4 refers):

- 16 participants maintain that the definition of career and the construct of career success should include broader activities than the traditional interpretation of only referring to the work experience.

- Five participants contend that the conventional descriptions should apply.

- Two participants have no views on the issue.

- One participant talks about the parasitic mentality of those who believe unemployment is a career.

- Three participants were not asked the question. These respondents correspond to the first three pilot interviews. It was only after the third pilot interview that I realised I should probe the topic with the informants (see Section 2.5.1).

There are no common characteristics in terms of personal profiles, career (re)construction strategies, critical moments, structural influences or embodiment of the elements of the fateful moment, when comparing the 16 participants who advocate a broadening of the conventional descriptions of career and career success (Aaron, Fiona, Geraldine, Hilda, Katrina, Lara, Nora, Oliver, Penelope, Queenie, Rachel, Tanya, Ursula, Xandra, Yvonne and Zach) with those who do not, including the respondent who perceives non-employment as a parasitic activity (Colm, Elizabeth, Isobel, Maura, Violet and Wendy). The only unifying theme between the 16 respondents who favour an expansion of the established definitions of career and career success (detailed in Chapter Four) is that they state that the revised concepts must involve „doing something'. This topic is considered in the next chapter, where a proposal to reconceptualise the definitions is proffered.

Table 7.4 Peering at Participants' Interpretations of Career Experiences During Periods of Discontinuity Through a Wide-Angle Lens*

Supporting Broadening Traditional Definitions of Career and Construct of Career Success During Periods of Discontinuity	
Name	*Quote from Participant's Narrative to Substantiate Viewpoint*
Aaron	„I suppose I did. ... I served my time as a carpenter ... so obviously I thought I had a career as a carpenter [when non-employed]'.
Fiona	„Even if they are unemployed, I think the biggest career you have is a homemaker. ... If you're at home and you are doing things, even if it's only putting up a few shelves, I still think it's a career'.
Geraldine	„They're running a house, they're minding children because that's the most important job of all. ... Course they have careers'.
Hilda	„People with careers lose their jobs, so you could still have a career. … Being a homemaker and looking after the family ... is a job'.
Katrina	„I thought my career was rearing my children to the best that you can rear them and teaching them and just basically having everything ready for them when they came back from wherever they've been'.
Lara	„If they want to have careers ... you have to get involved ... volunteering. ... You have to make it a life. ... It's whatever you choose'.
Nora	„You're an unemployed carpenter or you're an unemployed electrician, or whatever the case may be. I definitely do say unemployed people do have careers'.
Oliver	„The people unfortunately who've lost their jobs, or are unemployed, I believe they do have a career. … [During non-employment] I was just in training. … I think that definitely is a career'.
Penelope	„I suppose I did have a career ... looking after old people. ... It was really, wasn't it? Because it taught me a hell of a lot too, you know, maybe that's why I am successful'.
Queenie	„A home carer ... they are doing the job for the future. They're rearing these children and it's the biggest responsibility any of us will ever do in our lives... because they're the ones that's going to follow us down the line ... so it's a huge career'.
Rachel	„I was minding my granddaughter and to me that was childminding, that was a career. ... If I'm not working in 12 months I'm still, I'm still a mother, I'm still am a housewife. ... That's a full-time career, to me it is'.
Tanya	„I think they [non-employed] have the potential to have a career. I think they are entitled to have a career. I think that it's going to be totally down to themselves to use their own initiative to get up and chase that career'.
Ursula	„Being a housewife and mother is very responsible. … Yes, that is a career. … I suppose I was in paid employment. My husband was paying, was going out to work to pay me for staying at home to look after the kids'.
Xandra	„Full-time moms, they've kind of, you know, they've a job'.

Yvonne	„My friend, emm, who fosters children, emm, she has a career, you know, but works from home, but she would still have to go for her meetings as a fosterer and bringing up her, her children and that, you know. So she has a full-time job. ... . It's up to the individual what motivates them'.
Zach	„I suppose you can make your career out of anything if you set your mind to it'.

Not Supporting Broadening Traditional Definitions of Career and Construct of Career Success During Periods of Discontinuity

Name	Quote from Participant's Narrative to Substantiate Viewpoint
Colm	„I would have never said that I had a career. No, I would have said that I am unemployed'.
Isobel	„If you're at home and not working, you don't have a career'.
Maura	„[The non-employed] have work to do, yeah. They don't have a job to do, no. The job is defined, Sue. A career is defined. The work that you do in life is not defined'.
Violet	„No. … It's your whole self-esteem goes down, you know, you're not really worth, I wouldn't say worthless, but I'd be heading that direction, that's how you feel'.
Wendy	„No. I felt useless, useless. All I done was got the kids ready for school, home, cleaned up and that was it. ... To me it wasn't [a career]. It's just, like, you have to do it, end of story'.

No View on Topic

Name	Quote from Participant's Narrative to Substantiate Viewpoint
John	„That's a hard one, I think, to answer'.
Sharon	„I haven't really thought about it. I don't know'.

Parasitic Mentality of Perceiving Unemployment as a Career

Name	Quote from Participant's Narrative to Substantiate Viewpoint
Elizabeth	„Being unemployed. … It's a career. … They believe that it is their right to sit and do nothing and get everything'.

Source: Developed by author, Sue Mulhall.

Note:
* Anna, Betty and Dorothy not asked the question.

7.6 CONCLUSION

Five additional layers are worked into the stories told in the previous chapter to generate a panoramic picture of the critical moments in the participants' careers: education, including social class as mediated through the educational system; family; medical discourse; economy; and matters of ethnicity and gender. Including the key influencers from a person's social system does not entirely explain why certain cornerstones from the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 2006) are pertinent to an individual's career success story. Neither does it fully explicate the reasons a respondent adopts a specific (re)construction strategy following a critical moment of change in his or her life, a turning point over which he or she may or may not have control.

What it does offer, however, is a thicker description of the possible motivations for particular courses of action. It provides a deeper understanding of the participants' perceptions of their career success, the stories they tell about the personal and social resources in their careers and how these resources enable and constrain their careers. It also affords an opportunity to operationalise the eight elements in Giddens' (1991) conceptualisation of the fateful moment and to peer at the participants' interpretations of their career experiences during periods of discontinuity through a wide-angle lens. This chapter underlines the requirement to take account of macro-social influences when conducting narrative inquiry in the field of careers research, which, I believe, is one of the key conceptual contributions of the study, a theme that is explored in the next chapter.

Chapter Eight

Conceptual Contributions

of this Research

8.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter synthesises the conceptual contributions of the study. It draws together the findings and discussions from the preceding two chapters, and integrates these with the research questions and purpose of the study, the philosophy and methodology grounding the research, the information contextualising the inquiry, the extant literature on career and career success, and the theoretical frameworks underpinning the dissertation.

The first two sections address the central research question (how Community Employment scheme participants construct, interpret and make sense of their career experiences), in addition to four of the sub-questions (the participants' views of career success, how this reality is created and sustained, the stories they tell about the personal and social resources in their careers and how these personal and social resources enable and constrain their careers). This is achieved by explaining how fusing career theory with narrative inquiry within a systems framework facilitates the participants to chronicle their career (re)construction stories following a period of change (Section 8.2). It then proceeds to describe how this fusion opens up the possibility of creating new categories of career success for the participants, people who have experienced critical and fateful moments of change (Section 8.3). This is followed by detailing how the fifth sub-question (discursive practices in the careers discourse that enable and constrain the participants' views as to what is career success) is dealt with, by proposing that career scholars, researchers and practitioners consider re-conceptualising the career concept and the construct of career success to capture the critical and fateful moments in the participants' careers (Section 8.4). The chapter concludes by summarising the contributions of the study.

8.2 FUSING CAREER THEORY WITH NARATIVE INQUIRY WITHIN A SYSTEMS FRAMEWORK

As discussed in Chapter Four, by adopting a contextualising discourse (Young & Collin, 2004), I locate the participants and their careers within their social, economic, cultural, historical, temporal and other contexts. Specifically, I use the Systems Theory Framework (STF) perspective (McMahon & Patton, 1995; Patton & McMahon, 1999, 2006a, 2006b), graphically represented in Figure 4.1 (p.133), to position these influences at and across the level of both the individual system and the contextual system. The relevance of narrative inquiry for careers research is explained in Section 2.4.2, particularly its ability to facilitate individuals to make sense of their career experiences, decisions and transitions, in addition to its capacity to take account of the temporal and developmental aspects of a career. The three-dimensional narrative inquiry space (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, 2006) is the approach used to analyse the narratives, the empirical data derived from the episodic interviews with the participants (Sections 2.4.3 and 2.6.3 refer).

Figure 8.1 illustrates how I amalgamate career theory with narrative inquiry within a systems approach, summarising the findings from the preceding two chapters. It depicts a model that uses the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space to uncover the participants' evaluation of the outcome of their career experiences (career success) before, during and after critical moments of change, plus their assessment of their agency, or otherwise, over their career outcomes. The structural influences that impact on these perceptions are also incorporated into the model, which I call the Three-Dimensional Career Success Inquiry Systems Framework (3-D CSI SF).

Figure 8.1 Fusing Career Theory with Narrative Inquiry Within a Systems Approach to Develop the Three-Dimensional Career Success Inquiry Systems Framework (3-D CSI SF)
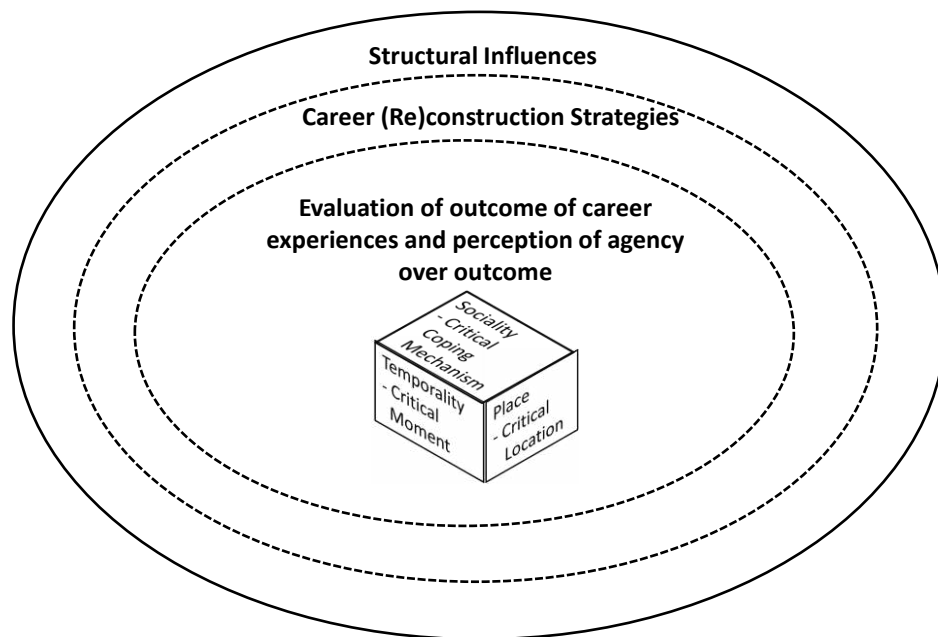
Source: Developed by author, Sue Mulhall.

The three-dimensional narrative inquiry space is represented by the three faces of the cube that are visible: the cornerstone of temporality describes the timeline of experiences involved in the participants' career paths, including the critical moments, over which they have varying degrees of control; the cornerstone of place outlines the significant settings of their career experiences; and the cornerstone of sociality details the coping mechanisms (personal and social resources) employed to deal with the transitions in their career (see Section 6.2). The other three sides of the cube are not discernible, but comparable to the STF, which conceives of the individual holistically, the person's abilities, self-concept, etc., are embodied in the hidden facades (Section 4.4 refers).

All of these aspects coalesce to form the participants' evaluation of the outcome of their career experiences and their sense of their agency over these outcomes. The dotted lines indicate a dynamic, fluid process within the system, as each element interacts with the others in an ongoing manner, across the past, present and future. For example, the participants' views about their career experiences combine to produce one of four possible career (re)construction strategies (Table 6.1, p.249 refers). These, in turn, are reproduced by the primary structural influences in their lives (Table 7.1, p.259 pertains). Similar to the STF, the inclusion of chance is a central feature, emphasising the unpredictability of stimuli within each of the systems. Unlike the STF, however, it is not represented by random flashes, but is an integrated element of the keystone of temporality, encompassing the participant's critical moment, as situated on the choice/fate continuum (Figure 6.1, p.198).

The model, therefore, positions change within the individual's career experience at the intersection of biography, history and social structures (Mills, 1959) by combining the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space with the STF. It uses both a narrow-angle and wide-angle lens to capture a rich, textured picture of the participants' stories of career success. To understand this change process, Giddens' (1991) theoretical construct of the fateful moment is operationalised by cross-referencing the participant's critical moment, career (re)construction strategy and primary structural influence, with the eight principal elements of the fateful moment (see Table 7.3, p.292). This interaction between agency and structure is illustrated in Figure 8.2.

Figure 8.2 Operationalising Giddens' Fateful Moment to Understand Change Process in the Participants' Careers
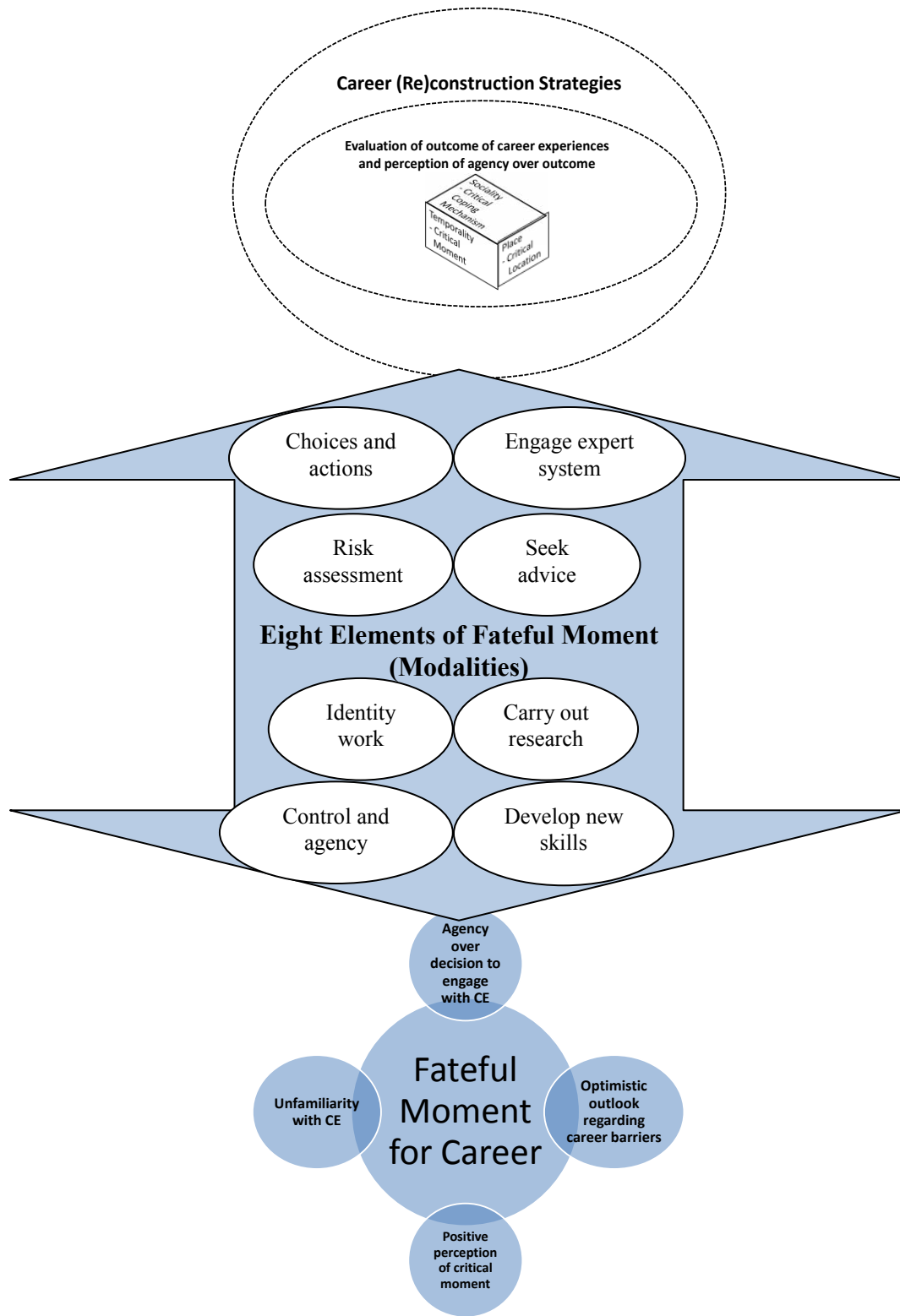
Figure 8.2 is composed of three interrelated parts: the individual located within the cornerstones of the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space (as per Figure 8.1, but minus the structural influences); the modalities (the eight elements of the fateful moment) refer to the mediation of interaction and structure in processes of social reproduction, that is, the means whereby structures are reconstituted (Giddens, 1993); and the degree to which the critical moment facilitates a fateful moment for the participants' careers appears to depend on the extent to which they enact four key behaviours (Section 7.4 refers). Career scripts mediate this structuring (Barley, 1989; Weick, 2001), so when boundaries begin to dissolve, such as following a critical moment, established patterns become less appropriate as guides for action, and, simultaneously, revised interactions become more habitualised, as the participants adapt their behaviour to cope with ambiguity (e.g., engaging with an expert system).

The analysis of the participants' narratives (Chapters Six and Seven) supports the position adopted by Inkson and Elkin (2008: 70) of „agency informed by structure', that is, I am accepting the assumption of agentic human action and self responsibility, especially following a critical moment of change, but I am seeking to take account of the macro-social context in which people enact their careers. Structural processes, specifically Community Employment and its link with the education system, have been identified as significant influences on the participants' views of their career success and how they enact their career outcomes. Prior to discussing these structural influences (see Section 8.4), I present in the next section a typology of career success, emphasising the particular characteristics of the sample, former non-employed individuals who are now engaging on Community Employment, following critical and fateful moments of change.

8.3 CREATING CATEGORIES OF CAREER SUCCESS FOR FORMER NON-EMPLOYED FOLLOWING CRITICAL AND FATEFUL MOMENTS OF CHANGE

Various tables in the dissertation describe the participants' evolving career (re)construction strategies (Appendix F, Tables 6.1, 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3, respectively). These strategies involve envisionment and enactment, which exhibit Weickian (1995, 2001, 2009) properties and utilise criteria based on Heslin's (2005) conceptualisation of career success.

While this categorisation is useful in recounting the career success stories of the participants, it is, however, based on classifications designed for people situated in the domain of paid employment, individuals who have predominantly remained in that locale and have experienced only minimum career disruption. To provide a deeper description of the participants in this study, Table 8.1 sub-divides the sample based on their varying perceptions of career success following their critical moment of change, as derived from the interview narratives. From my interpretation of the interviews, I have elicited and labeled seven categories of career success relevant to former non-employed individuals, who, subsequent to a critical moment of change, are now engaging on Community Employment: „advancer'; „enjoyment seeker'; „monetarist'; „recognition seeker'; „providential'; „security seeker'; and „worker'. I recognise that there may be some overlap in this typology and that it is not an exhaustive list. For example, four of the participants that I call „advancers' have elements from the „enjoyment seeker' category (John, Lara, Ursula and Wendy) and three „enjoyment seekers' (Rachel, Sharon and Yvonne) appreciate the importance of their newly acquired skills and knowledge for their next career move, so display similarities with the „advancers'.

Table 8.1 Categories of Career Success for Community Employment Scheme Participants Following Critical Moments of Change in their Lives and Fateful Moments in their Careers

Label	Criteria	Informed by Literature	Name	Career (Re)Construction Strategy	Transition Within Strategy	Comment	Stories Told
Advancers (x 10)	Education Training Qualifications Learning Knowledge	De Fruyt (2002) Dweck and Elliott (1983)	Betty	Changed envisionment and changed enactment	Objective self-referent to subjective self-referent Lack of agency to agency	Previously Monetarist	6.4.3.1 7.3.2
			Dorothy	Changed envisionment and changed enactment	Objective self-referent to subjective self-referent Lack of agency to agency	Previously Monetarist	6.4.1.7 7.3.2
			Geraldine	Changed envisionment and changed enactment	Objective self-referent to subjective self-referent Lack of agency to agency	Previously Monetarist	6.4.1.8 7.3.2
			John	Constant envisionment and changed enactment	Subjective self-referent to subjective self-referent Lack of agency to agency	N/A*	6.4.2.1 7.3.4
			Katrina	Changed envisionment and changed enactment	Objective self-referent to subjective self-referent Lack of agency to agency	Previously Monetarist	6.3.2.2 7.3.2
			Lara	Constant envisionment and constant enactment	Subjective self-referent to subjective self-referent Agency to agency	N/A*	6.3.2.3 7.3.2
			Nora	Changed envisionment and changed enactment	Objective self-referent to subjective self-referent Lack of agency to agency	Previously Monetarist	6.4.1.2 7.3.2
			Ursula	Changed envisionment and changed enactment	Objective self-referent to subjective self-referent Lack of agency to agency	Previously Monetarist	6.3.2.4 7.3.2
			Wendy	Changed envisionment and changed enactment	Subjective other-referent to subjective self-referent Lack of agency to agency	N/A*	6.3.2.1 7.3.2
			Xandra	Constant envisionment and constant enactment	Subjective self-referent to subjective self-referent Agency to agency	N/A*	6.4.2.4 7.3.2

Label	Criteria	Literature	Name	Strategy	Transition	Comment	Stories
Enjoyment Seeker (x 7)	Enjoyment Contentment Pleasure Satisfaction Fun Happiness Contentment	Hall and Chandler (2005) Walton and Mallon (2004)	Anna	Constant envisionment and constant enactment	Subjective self-referent to subjective self-referent Agency to agency	N/A*	6.3.3.2 7.3.2
			Hilda	Constant envisionment and constant enactment	Subjective self-referent to subjective self-referent Agency to agency	N/A*	6.4.1.1 7.3.2
			Penelope	Constant envisionment and changed enactment	Subjective self-referent to subjective self-referent Agency to lack of agency	N/A*	6.4.1.4 7.3.6
			Rachel	Changed envisionment and changed enactment	Objective self-referent to subjective self-referent Lack of agency to agency	Previously Monetarist	6..4.1.5 7.3.2
			Sharon	Constant envisionment and changed enactment	Subjective self-referent to subjective self-referent Lack of agency to agency	N/A*	6.4.2.2 7.3.4
			Violet	Constant envisionment and changed enactment	Subjective self-referent to subjective self-referent Lack of agency to agency	N/A*	6.4.1.9 7.3.3
			Yvonne	Constant envisionment and changed enactment	Subjective other-referent to subjective other-referent Lack of agency to agency	N/A*	6.4.1.6 7.3.6
Monetarists (x 5)	Purchasing power Salary/wages Acquisition of goods, services and assets	Dreher and Chargois (1998) Wrzesniewski *et al*. (1997)	Aaron	Constant envisionment and constant enactment	Objective self-referent to objective self-referent Lack of agency to lack agency	N/A*	6.4.1.3 7.3.5
			Fiona	Constant envisionment and constant enactment	Objective self-referent to objective self-referent Agency to agency	N/A*	6.4.3.3 7.3.3
			Isobel	Constant envisionment and changed enactment	Objective self-referent to objective self-referent Agency to lack of agency to agency	N/A*	6.3.3.4 7.3.4
			Maura	Changed envisionment and changed enactment	Objective other-referent to objective self-referent Agency to lack of agency	Previously Recognition Seeker	6.4.4.1 7.3.5
			Zach	Constant envisionment and constant enactment	Objective self-referent to objective self-referent Agency to agency	N/A*	6.4.4.2 7.3.6

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Label	Criteria	Literature	Name	Strategy	Transition	Comment	Stories
Recognition Seeker (x 2)	Recognition from others Tangible or figurative measures of output	Dweck and Elliott (1983) Wrzesniewski (2002)	Oliver	Constant envisionment and constant enactment	Objective other-referent to objective other-referent Agency to agency	N/A*	6.3.3.3 7.3.4
			Tanya	Constant envisionment and constant enactment	Subjective other-referent to subjective other-referent Agency to agency	N/A*	6.3.3.1 7.3.5
Providential (x 1)	Fate Luck (good and bad)	Chen (2005) Wagner and Wodak (2006)	Queenie	Constant envisionment and constant enactment	Subjective self-referent to subjective self-referent Agency to agency	N/A*	6.3.2.5 7.3.2
Security Seeker (x 1)	Security of tenure	Higgins and Thomas (2001)	Elizabeth	Changed envisionment and changed enactment	Objective self-referent to objective self-referent (different criteria) Agency to lack of agency	N/A*	6.4.3.2 7.3.3
Worker (x 1)	Any job Located in paid employment	N/A*	Colm	Changed envisionment and constant enactment	Subjective self-referent to subjective self-referent (different criteria) Agency to agency	N/A*	6.4.2.3 7.3.3

Source: Developed by author, Sue Mulhall.

Note:

* N/A denotes ‚not applicable'.

The summarised contents in Table 8.1 propose seven categories of career success for Community Employment scheme participants following critical moments of change in their lives and fateful moments in their careers:

- 10 „advancers': people who place partaking in education and training at the heart of how they interpret the outcomes of their career experiences. They use subjective, self-referent criteria to assess their career success, e.g., learning and knowledge.

- Seven „enjoyment seekers': individuals who emphasise deriving fun and pleasure when considering the outcome of their career experiences. They refer to subjective, self-referent criteria when gauging their career success, e.g., enjoyment and happiness.

- Five „monetarists': participants who focus on the purchasing power that their earnings can acquire when reviewing the outcome of their career experiences. They employ objective, self-referent criteria when measuring their career success, e.g., salary level.

- Two „recognition seekers': respondents who strive for acknowledgment from others when evaluating the outcome of their career experiences. They utilise either objective or subjective, other-referent criteria when benchmarking their career success, e.g., tangible or figurative measures of output.

- One „providential': a person who highlights the role that fate plays when making sense of the outcome of her career experiences. This individual emphasises subjective, self-referent criteria when reflecting on her career success, e.g., good and bad luck.

- One „security seeker': an individual who stresses the attainment of the metaphorical permanent, pensionable position when judging the outcomes of her

career experiences. This participant points to objective, self-referent criteria when gauging her career success, e.g., security of tenure.

- One „worker': a respondent who focuses on obtaining a job in paid employment when interpreting the outcome of his career experiences. He mentions subjective, self-referent criteria when appraising his career success, e.g., sourcing any position.

These categories complement and supplement the existing careers literature, for example, the:

- „Advancers' are analogous to those with a disposition towards learning goals to evaluate themselves and are concerned with increasing their competence (Dweck & Elliott, 1983), but, in contrast to this cluster, do not pursue mastery of a task, desiring knowledge instead.

- „Enjoyment seekers' are similar to people with a calling orientation (Hall & Chandler, 2005), but, unlike this group, only attend to fun and pleasure.

- „Monetarists' are comparable to individuals with a job orientation (Wrzesniewski *et al*., 1997), but, distinct from this set, focus simply on financial rewards.

- „Recognition seekers' are akin to those with a penchant to utilise performance goals to assess themselves and are interested in gaining favourable judgments of their competence (Dweck & Elliott, 1983), but are different in that they desire to be judged competent only; incompetence does not seem to figure in their criteria.

- „Providential' perceives luck as implying some form of fate or coincidence (Wagner & Wodak, 2006), but, unlike the established literature, this person's

story voices her own ambitions and expresses the energy required to cope with tragic circumstances.

- „Security seeker' exhibits an intention to remain, but is different to the current research (Higgins & Thomas, 2001), in that she is not seeking promotion.

- „Worker' is searching for any job in paid employment and this proposed category does not seem to have an equivalent in the extant literature.

This classification deepens our understanding regarding the complexity of concerns an individual is faced with when he or she encounters transition points in his or her life, which impact on the choices and decisions that he or she makes. A total of 17 participants demonstrate some form of change within the career (re)construction matrix, that is, undergoing a process of identification (Bauman, 2001). This is particularly evident in nine of the respondents' lives: Betty, Dorothy, Geraldine, Katrina, Nora, Ursula and Rachel are now „advancers', but they were previously „monetarists'; Rachel is an „enjoyment seeker', but she was formerly a „monetarist'; and Maura is a „monetarist', but heretofore was a „recognition seeker'. The fluidity of the career success construct is underlined in their stories, especially when it is combined with their newly acquired sense of agency over the outcome of their experiences.

The aim of these categories is to position the Community Employment scheme participants' interpretation of their career experiences within a framework of change, highlighting the continuous, evolving nature of the career concept, in addition to the impact that transition has on the person's career identity and career (re)construction. It is my belief, based on this research, that the current conceptualisation of the career concept and the construct of career success are unable to fully accommodate the transformation manifest in the participants' stories because of how the underpinning

theory is currently conceived, located in the dominant discourse of employment. The implications of the present positioning of the careers discourse for this sample are discussed in the next section.

8.4 RECONCEPTUALISING CAREER CONCEPT AND CONSTRUCT OF CAREER SUCCESS TO CAPTURE CRITICAL AND FATEFUL MOMENTS OF CHANGE FOR FORMER NON-EMPLOYED: A PROPOSAL

The identification of the work experience with paid work, epitomised in the dominant discourse of employment, has been observed by a number of commentators (e.g., Bauman, 1999; Coakley, 2004; Collins *et al*., 2010; Katila & Meriläen, 1999; Lister, 2002; Orloff, 1993; Taylor-Gooby, 1991). From my analysis of FÁS annual reports (Table 3.4, p.112), this hegemonic ideology is evident in Ireland's active labour market policy, finding a progressive prominence of a market-oriented philosophy within Community Employment, a scheme designed to (re)integrate the long-term unemployed into employment and/or training/education (FÁS, 2008).

In this section, observations of a concrete situation, Community Employment, will be interpreted to show how the reality of the dominant discourse of employment is embodied in everyday routines and reaffirmed in social interaction (Emerson, 1970). What happens in the domain of paid employment is part of the common stock of knowledge (Berger & Luckmann, 1967), e.g., contracts outlining terms and conditions of employment, accepted norms of performance and behaviour and agreed mechanisms to deal with the transgression of standards. The transition to the active labour market involves more than acquiring the skills to do the job. The participants have to learn how to behave in this locale, regulating their own actions and adapting to the behaviours

around them (Goodwin, 2007; Silverman & Jones, 1973; Van Maanen, 1973; Willis, 1977), similar to what Aaron described in his story about his apprenticeship as a carpenter (Section 6.4.1.3).

Immersed in this world, the Community Employment scheme supervisor, FÁS representatives and external consultants (Section 3.3.3) guide the participant through a potentially problematic situation in a contained manner (Emerson, 1970), from non-employment to engagement in the active labour market. Regimented routine is personified in the daily duties and responsibilities that the participants perform, as mentioned by Lara when explaining her childcare role (Section 3.3.3). Participants are expected to partake in skills and personal development training to progress their careers (FÁS, 2008). There are, therefore, appropriate and inappropriate behaviours attaching to involvement on Community Employment, what Mills (1959: 102) terms „adjustment' and „maladjustment' and Berger and Luckmann (1967: 124, 132) call „normalcy' and „deviance'. To maintain the reality of the dominant discourse of employment, those who do not conform are „punished' and those who observe the conventions are „rewarded' (Willis, 1977: 67). For example, non-attendance on training courses virtually guarantees that participants' contracts will not be renewed, but participation holds out the possibility of an extension. Maura describes feeling like an „outsider' (Van Maanen, 1973: 416), as she believes that she cannot immerse herself in one of the crucial elements of the programme, training:

> I'm very, very clever at computers, I'm really clever at them, but you can't use them here because they want to be able to teach you something. … I think for them it would be hard for them to find something, you know, to actually teach me. ... I just feel isolated, strange and different.

The scheme acts as a carceral network employing disciplinary techniques of normalisation (Foucault, 1979). This is achieved by creating differences between employment and non-employment, that is, between the work experience (as represented in the notion of career) and all other experiences (non-career). Once these disparities are constructed, they are used to reinforce the „essentialness' (West & Zimmerman, 1987: 137) of employment, so that a phenomenon like non-employment is identified as a special object for knowledge (Foucault, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1982), resulting in action such as confinement (engagement on Community Employment) and different treatment (receiving benefits/sanctions for fulfilling/challenging the conditions to progress to the active labour market). Even the very act of involvement with the scheme, a seemingly voluntary activity, is rewarded by the dual payment, being remunerated for participation in addition to retaining social welfare payments (Section 3.3.4).

To paraphrase West and Zimmerman (1987), I contend that partaking on Community Employment entails „doing career', where the participants display themselves as „employees who have a career', simultaneously learning what it takes to be an „employee who has a career'. „Doing career', I argue, is unavoidable because of the social consequences of employment category membership (West & Zimmerman, 1987), where we recognise ourselves as having the characteristics that locate us as members of various sub-classes of dichotomous categories and not of others (Bauman & May, 2001; Davies & Harré, 2001), e.g., employed/non-employed. „Doing career' renders the social arrangements based on employment category membership accountable as normal and natural, that is, legitimate ways of organising social life. The institutional arrangements of a society can be seen to be responsive to the differences, the social order merely an accommodation of the natural order (West & Zimmerman, 1987), e.g., the Department of Social Protection refers unemployed people to FÁS for interview, „signing on' to

receive social welfare payments and participation on Community Employment. Thus, if, in „doing career', employment is also doing dominance and non-employment is doing difference, the resultant social order, which supposedly reflects natural differences, is a powerful reinforcement and justification of hierarchical arrangements (West & Zimmerman, 1987). If we „do career' appropriately, we simultaneously sustain, reproduce and render legitimate the institutional actions that are based on the employment category. If we fail to „do career' appropriately, we as individuals, not the institutional practices, may be called to account (Bauman, 2000; Gibbons, 2002; West & Zimmerman, 1987).

As discovered in Section 7.4, the majority of the participants in this study, however, do not accept the orthodoxy of the dominant discourse of employment in how they interpret their career outcomes: 16 respondents maintain that the definition of career and the construct of career success should include broader activities than the traditional interpretation of only referring to the work experience. These individuals have encountered discontinuity in their careers and their interrupted career paths have afforded opportunities for sensemaking (Weick, 1995, 2001, 2009). This critical reflection has resulted in micro-political resistance, as their notion of self differs from the subject position offered in the prevailing discourse (Davies & Harré, 2001; Thomas, 2009), so these participants are functioning as a pocket of resistance to established forms of power/knowledge (Foucault, 1988).

Combining these observations with the analysis of articles on career success (Section 4.7) focuses our attention on what is assumed and accepted. Adopting a critical look at the assumptions made in these inquiries provides a „fresh insight into the underpinning ideologies and how their ideas are played out in practice' (Arnold & Cohen, 2008: 11).

By not incorporating people outside of employment, the non-employed (the unemployed, volunteers, retirees, carers, homemakers, etc.), in career success research, they are *de facto* excluded. My contention is that the construct of career success has become reified because we have not questioned who is embraced and who is rejected in such research. To avoid reification and reliance on taken-for-granted assumptions, it is important that career scholars, researchers and practitioners continue to examine not only the features of the career success construct itself, but also the reasons for any visibility or obfuscation (Evetts, 1992).

Reification is a „forgetting' and, therefore, de-reification is a process of „re-membering' what has been dismembered (Honneth *et al.*, 2008: 7). A suggested first step in the de-reification process is to reframe the case, that is, to deconstruct (Derrida, 1976, 1978a, 1978b, 1982, 1989) the definition of career, and its associated concept, the construct of career success. Deconstruction aims to demonstrate how something represented as completely different from another thing exists only by virtue of defining itself against that other thing (Goodley *et al.*, 2004). The career success, therefore, experienced by people in paid employment can be understood only when the opposite of this reality is demonstrated: having career success exists merely in relation to not having career success. Deconstruction changes the picture by drawing a different representation of the landscape, putting it into an unfamiliar context to alter previously perceived perceptions (Dilts, 2003; Martin, 2001; Mills, 1959).

How can career success be deconstructed? I suggest that the scholars who study the construct write on one side of the page only; they concentrate on the meaning of the phrase, the synonym, obscuring its antithesis, the antonym. There is an obvious twist to the tale that seems to have been implicitly ignored: does the virtual exclusion of the

non-employed from career success research imply that this group has „career failure'? Career scholars, researchers and practitioners need to construct their perception of the world anew and question that which appears obvious (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005), by asking:

- Who has a career?

- Who has career success?

- Who does not have a career?

- Who does not have career success?

- Why do some groups have a career and have career success?

- Why do some groups not have a career and not have career success?

- What experiences are included in the current conceptualisation of career success?

- What experiences are not included, i.e., excluded?

- What experiences should be included in a revised conceptualisation of career success?

- What experiences should not be included, i.e., excluded?

- When is a career considered successful?

- When is a career not considered successful, i.e., a failure?

- How does a career become successful?

- How does a career not become successful, i.e., a failure?

Locating the definition of career and its associated construct of career success in the domain of employment is tantamount to stating that only some people have a right to career success, that is, those who participate in the active labour market. My proposal, based on the findings in this research, is that a person's career should be synonymous with their life career development, which entails one's whole life not just that which is

occupationally orientated (Wolfe & Kolb, 1980: 1-2), a definition explicated on p.122. This would permit the established definition of career, „the unfolding sequence of any person's work experiences over time' (Arthur *et al.*, 1989; Arthur & Rousseau, 1996) to be modified, omitting the word „work'.

The changed emphasis would diminish the identification of work with paid work and promote activities, such as caring, volunteering and homemaking, as enterprises that have social and economic value (Collins *et al.*, 2010; Healy & Reynolds, 2006; Healy & Collins, 2006). Research indicates that societies that cherish such efforts are more equal and have less health and social problems (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009). The need to recognise voluntary work and caring duties has indeed been acknowledged by the government (Department of Social Community and Family Affairs, 2000; Department of the Taoiseach, 2006) and by organisations such as Social Justice Ireland (Collins *et al.*, 2010). The incorporation of broader experiences in career and career success research would demonstrate appreciation for the estimated 350,000 people providing non-paid care (CSO, 2010b) and the 475,000 volunteers working for charitable organisations in Ireland (Collins *et al.*, 2010).

It is my contention that the definition of career, and its associated construct of career success, should be re-framed to include all experiences at every stage of a person's life, not just those reflecting paid work. These experiences allow people to reconstruct the equilibrium between who they were, what they are aspiring to and the demands of their environment (Bujold, 2004). Life transitions are likely to influence a person's identity, affect his or her perception of the future and contribute to his or her positioning in the social and cultural world (Bujold, 2004; Ezzy, 2004; Super, 1953, 1957, 1980, 1990, 1992, 1994; Zikic & Richardson, 2007). Such changes may also impact on a person's

next role by facilitating him or her to revise his or her view as to what is important in life and how „work‛ fits into his or her new value system, as evident in the career success stories in this study.

8.5 CONCLUSION

This dissertation advances our knowledge of career theory in general, and career success research in particular, in three distinct ways. The first two contributions address the central research question and four of the sub-questions, and the third contribution deals with the fifth sub-question.

Firstly, by fusing career theory and narrative research within a systems framework, a deeper comprehension of the complex and dynamic nature of career success is facilitated, as it allows for the myriad of micro-individual and macro-structural influences on a person's career experiences to be accommodated. The proposed model, the Three-Dimensional Career Success Inquiry Systems Framework (3-D CSI SF), locates career success within temporal and transformational contexts by considering the interrelationship of past critical moments and present career experiences, with the individuals' plans for the future. This approach permits an exploration of how the participants construct, interpret and make sense of their career experiences and assists in developing an awareness of their evolving career identity over time. It also facilitates the operationalisation of Giddens' fateful moment, as a means of appreciating the change manifest in the participants' careers.

Secondly, the proposed typologies of career success for Community Employment scheme participants (advancer, enjoyment seeker, monetarist, recognition seeker,

providential, security seeker and worker) are exploratory groupings, attempting to reflect the change inherent in the contemporary career experience. This, I believe, is a significant contribution to careers research, as it extends our understanding regarding the complexity of concerns an individual faces when he or she encounters transition points in his or her life, which impact on the choices and decisions that he or she makes. As the outcome of this transformation involves, *inter alia*, a person's ability to enhance his or her skills and interpersonal qualities, necessitating lifelong learning and continual adaptation, the „advancer' classification is particularly promoted as complementing and supplementing the current conceptualisation of the career concept.

Finally, based on this research, it appears that the existing conceptualisation of the career concept and the construct of career success are unable to fully account for the transformation described in the participants' career stories because of how the underpinning theory is currently conceived, positioned as it is in the dominant discourse of employment. Building on the previously mentioned investigation of career success research, an examination of active labour market policy, and an analysis of the participants' transcripts, I recommend that a person's career should be synonymous with their life career development, entailing one's whole life, not just an occupational orientation. It is my belief, and that of the participants, that everyone should have an opportunity to assess the outcome of their work experiences; it should not be exclusively confined to those in employment. Going through change influences our interpretation of our experiences. People who have encountered such events should be included in career success research, reflecting both their reality and the contemporary conceptualisation of the career concept, which involves altering career patterns with multiple movements in and out of the workforce.

Chapter Nine

Conclusions and

Recommendations for

Further Research

9.1 REVISITING THE STUDY'S RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

There have been repeated calls for more qualitative empirical studies on the construct of career success (e.g., Arthur *et al*., 2005), particularly with underrepresented populations (e.g., Arnold & Cohen, 2008), in addition to requests to investigate how non-paid work contributes to people's careers (e.g., Heslin, 2005), especially with individuals characterised by voluntary and involuntary multiple movements in and out of the workforce (e.g., Sullivan & Baruch, 2009). This research combines career theory with narrative inquiry to study an underexplored group in career success research, who have had numerous on and off ramps in their careers interspersed with periods of non-employment.

The dissertation explores and conceptualises the career (re)construction patterns of 27 formerly non-employed individuals, now participating on an active labour market programme, Community Employment, in South Dublin and North Wicklow, following a significant life change. The findings contribute to bridging a gap in careers literature, specifically pertaining to the altered experiences of this particular sample of participants. It furthers our knowledge on the nature of career (re)construction as encountered by the sample, through their living stories, narrating how they have taken control and exercised agency over their transformed circumstances, facilitated by the expert system of Community Employment. This dissertation relies upon a number of theoretical frameworks (a pragmatic, paradigmatic approach) to analyse and interpret the careers of the respondents from a holistic, systems perspective.

The study's central research question involves exploring how the participants construct, interpret and make sense of their career experiences. This core question is subdivided into five sub-questions: to uncover what the participants view as career success; to interpret how this reality is created and sustained; to reveal what stories they tell about the personal and social resources in their career experiences; to elucidate how these personal and social resources help and hinder their experiences; and to expose how discursive practices in the career success discourse enable and constrain their career experiences.

Using the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space allowed me to work through the narratives interpretivistically, restorying the participants' experiences. It also permitted me to identify a critical moment in each of the participants' lives, a moment over which they had varying degrees of control, as represented by a choice/fate continuum. In narrating their stories, I charted their critical moments onto the keystones of the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space, and then plotted their reactions to these critical moments, including their evaluation of the outcome of their career experiences, and their perception of their agency, or otherwise, over these experiences. Four different strategies of career (re)construction were distinguished following the participants' critical moments of change. I then described the impact of one primary structural influence on each of their career (re)construction strategies. To understand the participants' change process, Giddens' fateful moment was operationalised by cross-referencing every person's critical moment, career (re)construction strategy and primary structural influence, with the eight principal elements of the fateful moment. The participants' interpretations of their career experiences during periods of discontinuity were also revealed.

This dissertation advances our knowledge of career theory in general, and career success research in particular, in three distinct ways. The first two contributions address the central research question and four of the sub-questions, and the third deals with the fifth sub-question. Firstly, by fusing career theory and narrative research within a systems framework, the proposed model, the 3-D CSI SF, locates career success within temporal and transformational contexts by considering the interrelationship of past critical moments and present career experiences, with the individuals' plans for the future. Secondly, the suggested typologies of career success for the sample (advancer, enjoyment seeker, monetarist, recognition seeker, providential, security seeker, worker) are exploratory groupings, attempting to reflect the change inherent in the contemporary career experience; an important contribution to careers research, as it broadens our understanding of the complex concerns facing individuals following critical moments in their lives. Finally, to fully account for the transformation manifest in the participants' stories, I recommend that a person's career should be synonymous with their life career development, entailing one's whole life, not just that which is occupationally orientated.

The necessity to incorporate the multifaceted, micro-dynamics of career and identity to understand career (re)construction for individuals, in addition to the requirement to consider structural influences in narrative inquiry in the field of career research, is underlined from the findings. Adopting a broader outlook pulls together the disparate threads from the participants' career success stories, stitching material from crucial events (both from the micro-individual context and the macro-collective environment) to create a patchwork quilt reflecting the mosaic of a person's experiences. Adding structural processes as an additional panel to this quilt embroiders the key macro-social motifs into a person's career, thereby appreciating the dialectic relationship between a person and his or her social system.

9.2 RECOGNISING THE LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND MAKING SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Some words of caution need to be signalled as the dissertation draws to a close. Firstly, as a biographically situated researcher (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), I realise that my fingerprints are all over this inquiry, imprinting my DNA on the study, from the first phase of the project, conceptualising the research questions, to the final stage, producing the publication. I have, therefore, taken robust measures to ensure ethically sound research practices (Section 2.6.2). In addition, I am also cognisant of how my worldview has changed over the course of this doctoral journey (Section 2.3), and I am, therefore, conscious of what I term the „reformed smoker syndrome', allowing my conversion to influence my analysis. To avoid this, I have listened carefully to the interview narratives, literally and figuratively, to ensure the participants play the lead role, with their words placed centre stage. In representing their narratives, particularly in Chapters Seven and Eight, however, I accept that I use the „authoritative voice' (Chase, 2005: 664) to make visible and audible taken-for-granted practices, processes and features of our everyday social world. In doing this, I believe that I have spoken differently to, but not disrespectfully of, the participants' voices (Chase, 2005).

Secondly, as noted in Section 2.4.3, the calibre of the communication skills of the narrator can be an issue with episodic interviewing. This was particularly evident in the conduct of two interviews (John's and Sharon's) and the analysis of two transcripts (Rachel's and Tanya's). John has an intellectual disability, so our discussion was punctuated by a significant number of pauses and stammering. Notwithstanding this, he was considered and measured in his responses. With regard to Sharon, who is deaf, I was partially able to understand what she said face-to-face. Consequently, I adopted my

interview style by incorporating the words from her previous answer into my next question and speaking with a slower pace and clearer diction. During my conversation with Rachel, it was difficult to glean detailed information about her jobs and career. When analysing her transcript, I found that there were unexplained gaps in her career path, so I contacted her by telephone to clarify the trajectory of her jobs. Similarly, when interpreting Tanya's transcript, I found that I had not garnered enough detail about her activities in Nicaragua, thus contacted her by telephone to follow-up our discussion.

Thirdly, when I interviewed the participants they were all engaging on Community Employment. The fact that they are partaking on such a scheme is indicative of some form of prior agency, as prospective applicants must communicate with their local employment service for information about these programmes. To engage on the scheme suggests that the person has already taken a level of control over his or her career. This dissertation uses a systems theory perspective in an attempt to understand critical and fateful moments of change, and determine their significance for career identity formation with a group of people who have, by default, previously exhibited agency. The critical moment had, therefore, commenced crystallising the participants' thinking about their careers before the research was conducted, so they had previously started to exercise agency, a crucial component in the conceptualisation of the fateful moment, before they were interviewed.

Fourthly, the experience garnered from similar longitudinal research (Holland & Thomson, 2009; Thomson *et al*., 2002; Plumridge & Thomson, 2003) points towards the shortcomings of applying a theoretical model, such as Giddens' fateful moment, to empirical material, a limitation amplified with the accumulation of multiple accounts over time (Holland & Thompson, 2009). With one-off narratives, there is a threshold to

what can be revealed. Consequently, I appreciate that this exploratory research requires a more detailed study over a longer timeframe.

Finally, the composition of the sample raises legitimate concerns. Accepting that it is not the intention to generalise the findings to a wider population, but to gain insight into the complexity of career issues for formerly non-employed individuals participating on Community Employment, people who have undergone significant transformation, I recognise that the use of 27 cases, predominantly from the same gender and ethnic backgrounds and with prior minimal educational attainment, is restricted. Notwithstanding, the sample is limited only in the sense of representativeness, as it provides rich stories of critical and fateful moments of change in ever-evolving micro-individual and macro-social contexts.

The limitations of the study highlight areas for further research and the following suggestions are made to enhance this exploratory study:

- Same people, different timeframe – carrying out a longitudinal study with the same sample would facilitate returning to the multifaceted issues touched upon in this dissertation, further stitching together the complex threads in a person's career. For example, to revisit Zach's story of his ongoing recovery from alcoholism, to discover how Isobel is dealing with her debilitating, stress-related illness, and to ascertain if Violet's new-found career confidence (Hall & Chandler, 2005) has enabled her to move from full-time domestic duties to full-time receptionist responsibilities. In addition, as observed by Andrews (2008), re-examining one's own data is not so much a journey back into that time, as much as an exploration of that moment from the perspective of the present, with all of the knowledge and experience that one has accumulated in the intervening

years, since the original analysis. During the conduct of this inquiry, Queenie's story of the death of two of her adult children had a profound effect on me. Obviously a heartbreaking story, but maybe its impact was all the more significant as I am a mother. It is possible that if I revert to the data in ten or fifteen years time, Penelope's story of caring for her elderly parents may particularly resonate with me as my personal circumstances may have changed.

- Same approach, different people – to surmount the issue of the specific composition of the sample, a similar future study could focus exclusively on men (Goodwin, 2002), travellers (Christie, 2004), or participants with higher educational attainment (Grubb *et al*., 2009). Table 2.4 (p.69), which summarises the personal profiles of the participants, provides a useful pro-forma template for a researcher conducting a parallel inquiry with a different group, as it indicates the categories not represented in this study.

- Same material, different lens – I use a critical interpretive lens in this research. The same material could be interpreted using a different framework. For example, adopting an interpretive analysis of the narratives (Crowley-Henry & Weir, 2007), or a Foucaultian approach to the transcripts (Tamboukou, 2008), utilising a feminist perspective (Katila & Meriläen, 1999), or employing critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2001) to examine the FÁS annual reports (Section 3.3.5). Applying these lenses could alter the perspective of the picture taken of the Community Employment scheme participants.

- Same people, different approach – in utilising the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space, I focus on the critical moments, places and coping mechanisms in the participants' lives and careers. Alternatively, I could analyse the same stories using Labov's structural analysis (Sinisalo & Komulainen, 2008), ask the participants to keep personal diaries of their experiences (Goodley *et al*., 2004),

or even visually record the respondents during the interview, rather than relying on an audio tape, a method that would require further consideration to ensure confidentiality (Mason, 2002).

9.3 SOME CLOSING REMARKS

The opening sentence of this dissertation states: „Titles matter'. Titles matter in this research, as it explores how the participants construct, interpret and make sense of their career experiences. It also examines how they create their narrative strategies in relation to their discursive environments, how these individual stories are facilitated and inhibited by hegemonic discourses and how this impacts on their career identity. It was evident in the narratives that discourses not only constrained, but also enabled some of the participants.

Titles do matter, but people matter more. My intention was to chronicle the career success stories of the 27 individuals I interviewed between February and June 2009. I wanted their stories to also speak for the silent voices not heard in careers literature, narrative studies or Irish government publications. I feel privileged to have listened to what these people have articulated in their accounts of the critical moments in their lives and the fateful moments in their careers. My ambition is to privilege their prose by relating their restoried narratives to a wider audience. By painting their stories onto a broader canvas, sketching the micro-individual perspective against the macro-social scene, I believe that I have provided a deeper colour and a richer texture to a career success study using narrative inquiry. People matter, but the factors shaping our lives and careers are relevant as well, as we are located in socially, economically, culturally, historically and discursively situated contexts. Structural influences also matter.

In conclusion, this dissertation sounds a call to re-awaken our sociological imagination (Mills, 1959) by listening to the stories from the margins of our society to open our eyes to the dominant discourse of employment underpinning career theory and research. Being a critical bricoleur, I have sought to better understand both the forces of domination that affect the lives of individuals from backgrounds outside of the prevailing culture of the paid labour market and the worldviews of such diverse peoples, intending to commit my knowledge to address the ideological and informational needs of a silent group (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005). Why embrace this group, the former non-employed, people straddling the domains of paid and non-paid work experiences, in career success research? Because they are part of society. Everyone should have an opportunity to assess the outcome of their work experiences; it should not be an activity exclusively confined to those in employment.

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Appendices

1. Meaning of career and career success

- What does „career' mean to you?

- What does „success' mean to you?

- What does „career success' mean to you?

- What words would you use to describe your career?

- Tell me why you use these words?

- What words would you use to describe your career success?

- Tell me why you use these words?

- If you look at your life now, what part does your career play in it? Could you please tell me about this?

- When you look back on your career, what was your first experience of career success? Could you please tell me about this?

- What determines career success in your life? Could you describe this in more detail?

- On what occasion did career success play its most important role in your life? Could you please tell me about that situation?

- What role does career success play in a typical day in your life? Could you describe this in more detail?

- What would your life be like without your career? Could you describe this in more detail?

- What would your life be like without career success? Could you describe this in more detail?

2. General experiences and career experiences on Community Employment

- Phrasing of the question dependant on the status of the participant:
  - For those who have completed their time on the scheme: now that you are finished with the scheme, what did participating on it mean to you?
  - For those currently on the scheme: what does participating on the scheme mean to you?

- What led you to the scheme?

- *You mentioned that you were unemployed prior to participating on the scheme. In your opinion, do people who are unemployed have a career? In your opinion, do people who are unemployed have career success?*

- When you look back on your time on the scheme, what experiences do you recall? Could you describe this in more detail?

- What is/was a typical day on the scheme like for you? Could you describe this in more detail?

- If you look at your life before you participated on the scheme, what part did your career play in it?

- What part has the scheme played in your career? Could you describe this in more detail?

- What, if anything has changed between before you participated on the scheme and being on the scheme? Could you describe the difference in more detail?

- What affect does the scheme have in a typical day in your career? Could you describe this in more detail?

- What role does career success play in a typical day on the scheme? Could you describe this in more detail?

- *What are your future career plans when you finish participating on the scheme? Could you describe this in more detail?*

3. Access to and use of personal and social resources

- What personal resources do you use in a typical day to assist your career? Please give examples. Could you describe these in more detail?

- What personal qualities have been important in your career? Please give examples. Could you describe how these are important?

- What personal skills have been important in your career? Please give examples. Could you describe how these are important?

- What qualifications have been important in your career? Please give examples. Could you describe how these are important?

- What personal qualities and skills will be important to you in your future career? Please give examples. Could you describe how these will be important?

- Who has been important to you in your career? Could you describe how these people have been important?

- What networks do you use in your career? Could you describe how these networks have been important?

4. Freedom, choice and agency

- When you look back on your life, what plans did you make for your career? Could you describe these in more detail?

- When you look back on your life, what decisions have been important to your career?

- For each decision, probing questions to be asked:
  - Could you describe the situation in more detail?
  - How did you make the decision?
  - Who helped you make the decision?
  - What choices were available to you?
  - What led you to your ultimate choice?
  - How do you feel now about the decision you made?

- Describe some decisions that you make in a typical day regarding your career. Could you please tell me about these in more detail?

5. Identity and primary socialisation

- When you were a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

- What led you to want to be a XXX?

- What were your parents' views of your aspiration?

- What did your parents do in their careers?

- How was your career aspirations dealt with by your parents when you were growing up? Could you describe this in more detail?

- When you look at your life now, how do/did your parents impact on your career today? Could you describe this in more detail?

- What do your siblings do in their careers?

- How was your career aspirations dealt with by your siblings when you were growing up? Could you describe this in more detail?

- When you look at your life now, how do your siblings impact on your career today? Could you describe this in more detail?

- What did your grandparents do in their careers?

- How was your career aspirations dealt with by your grandparents when you were growing up? Could you describe this in more detail?

- When you look at your life now, how do/did your grandparents impact on your career today? Could you describe this in more detail?

- Are there any other family members apart from your parents, siblings and grandparents who had an impact on your career? If yes, please describe their impact.

6. Identity and secondary socialisation

- You mentioned earlier that you wanted to be an XXX when you grew up. Outside of your immediate family, who did you tell your plans to?

- How was your career aspirations dealt with by these people? Could you describe this in more detail?

- When you look back on your childhood, what experiences outside of the family setting still impact on your career today? Could you describe this in more detail?

- When you look at your life now, what experiences outside of the family setting still impact on your career today? Could you describe this in more detail?

- What affect do people outside of your family have in a typical day on your career? Could you describe this in more detail?

- Have your relations with people outside of your family changed due to your career? Could you describe this in more detail?

- Are there any other people outside of your family that we have not mentioned who have had an impact on your career? If yes, please describe their impact.

7. Impact of cultural institutions

- What part do/did different organisations play in your career? Please explain.

- What part does/did the media play in your career? Could you describe this in more detail?

- What part do/did religious organisations play in your career? Could you describe this in more detail?

- What part does/did school play in your career? Could you describe this in more detail?

- What part does/did college play in your career (if relevant)? Could you describe this in more detail?

- What part do/did government agencies play in your career? Could you describe this in more detail?

- Have there been other organisations that we have not mentioned that have had an impact on your career? If yes, please describe this in more detail.

- What affect do any of the aforementioned organisations have in a typical day on your career? Could you describe this in more detail?

Appendix B - Interview Format

Start interview with:

- Acknowledgement: thank you for participating in the research.

- Explanation of the purpose of the research: the aim of my research is to explore the views of Community Employment scheme participants about their careers.

- Consent forms: before we start, I would like to get your written agreement to partaking in the research:
    - o Consent form.
    - o Tape recording form.

- Explain format of the interview: I will ask you to describe situations in your career and ask you about your views on your career experiences.

- There are no „right' and „wrong' answers; just your views and opinions.

Using interview guide:

- Our discussion will be broken down into a number of sections.

- Ask questions from the guide.

At end of interview:

- We are coming to the end of our discussion. Have you any additional comments to make about the issues we discussed?

- Thank you for taking time out to talk to me.

- I will turn off the tape now.

- Before we finish, could I ask you to complete:
    - o Confidentiality declaration consent form.
    - o Personal details form.

Permission to Interview Community Employment (CE) Scheme Participants

<div align="right">

School of Marketing
Dublin Institute of Technology
Aungier Street
Dublin 2

</div>

Mr./Ms. X
CE Scheme Supervisor
Scheme Name
Address

Date

<div align="center">

Re: Interviewing Participants for PhD Research

</div>

Dear X

Thank you for agreeing to allow the CE participants on your scheme be interviewed as part of my PhD research with the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT). The aim of the research is to explore what views the participants have about their careers.

I would be grateful if you could advise participants on your scheme that confidential interviews are being carried out for the purpose of doctoral research. The interviews will be carried out on a one-to-one, face-to-face basis and will last for up to two hours. All participants have a choice whether to partake in the research, decline the invitation and/or withdraw from the interview once started. In addition, the participants have the option of where to hold the interview, although it is anticipated that the majority of respondents will opt for their workplace. It is not expected that the participants will endure discomfort or stress during the interview, but if they feel uncomfortable about talking about a particular issue, the discussion about that topic will cease.

To ensure that the interviews are appropriately conducted, I will ask each participant to complete the DIT's consent form prior to their interview. Additionally, participants will have a choice about how their quotations are attributed in the analysis. They will also have the opportunity, if they so choose, to review the transcript of the interview, and check what information, if any, from the interview, will be used in my dissertation, and amend it, if required.

Could you please indicate your consent to the interviews being conducted for the purpose of doctoral research with the participants on your scheme by signing and dating this letter? Thanking you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely

_____
Sue Mulhall

Signed: _____   Date: _____
     (CE scheme supervisor)

Interview Consent Form

Researcher's Name: Sue Mulhall	Title: Ms.

Faculty/School/Department: School of Marketing, Dublin Institute of Technology

Title of Study: Living Stories of Career Success for Community Employment Scheme Participants – A Critical Interpretative Analysis

To be completed by the interviewee:

3.1 Have you been fully informed/read the information sheet about this study?   YES/NO

3.2 Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study?   YES/NO

3.3 Have you received satisfactory answers to all your questions?   YES/NO

3.4 Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from this study?

- At any time.
- Without giving a reason for withdrawing.
- Without affecting your future relationship with the Institute.   YES/NO

3.5 Do you agree to take part in this study, the results of which are likely to be published?
     YES/NO

3.6 Have you been informed that this consent form shall be kept in the confidence of the researcher?   YES/NO

Signed: _____   Date: _____

Name in Block Letters: _____

Signature of Researcher: Sue Mulhall   Date: _____

Tape Recording Consent Form

School of Marketing
Dublin Institute of Technology
Aungier Street
Dublin 2

Mr./Ms. X
CE Scheme Participant
Scheme Name
Address

Date

Re: Tape Recording of Interview for PhD Research

Dear X

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of my PhD research. The aim of the research is to explore what views CE scheme participants have about their careers.

The information from your interview may be used in the analysis and documentation of research findings for my PhD dissertation.

For the sole purpose of the research, your interview will be tape recorded and transcribed word-for-word. This will assist me in using accurate quotes from your interview in the final analysis of the research. The tape recording of the interview, and the subsequent transcript, shall be kept in my confidence.

If, at any time during the interview, you wish to stop the tape recorder, simply let me know.

Please note that, on your request, I will forward you (as an e-mail attachment or hard copy) the transcript of your interview for your consent. In addition, I will also send to you, on your request, the information from your interview that I will be using in my dissertation, for your agreement.

Could you please indicate your consent to the interview being tape recorded for the purpose of my doctoral research by signing and dating this letter?

Thank you for your valuable contribution to this research.

Yours sincerely

_____
Sue Mulhall

Signed: _____   Date: _____
    (CE scheme participant)

Confidentiality Declaration Consent Form

School of Marketing
Dublin Institute of Technology
Aungier Street
Dublin 2

Mr./Ms. X
CE Scheme Participant
Scheme Name
Address

Date

Re: Confidentiality Declaration for PhD Research

Dear X

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of my PhD research. The aim of the research is to explore what views CE Scheme participants have about their careers. The information from your interview may be used in the analysis and documentation of research findings for my PhD dissertation.

You have the right to choose how you will be portrayed as an interviewee and the level of anonymity you wish to impose on the usage of your information in my dissertation. Please tick the box that corresponds with how you wish your interview data to be applied:

1.   I agree to the use of my name and the scheme name in the final thesis (e.g., Mary Murphy, CE scheme participant, Wicklow Childcare Centre).
----

2.   I agree to the use of my name in the final thesis, but not the scheme name (e.g., Mary Murphy, CE scheme participant, Scheme A).
----

3.   I do not wish to be named in the final thesis, but the scheme may be used (e.g., CE scheme participant, Wicklow Childcare Centre).
----

4.   I do not wish to be named in the final thesis, nor do I wish the scheme name to be used (e.g., CE scheme participant, Scheme A).

Yours sincerely

_____
Sue Mulhall

Signed: _____   Date: _____
          (CE scheme participant)

Appendix D - Personal Details of Interviewees

General Information

Name: _____

Date of interview: _____

Venue: _____

Job: _____

Contact details:

_____   _____   _____
Work Telephone   Home Telephone   Mobile

Email address: _____

Start date with scheme: _____

Anticipated end date on scheme: _____

Educational Information*

Education Level Achieved	Please Tick (✔)	Date Achieved/Will Achieve
No formal education		
Primary education only		
Secondary education: • Lower secondary • Upper secondary • Technical or vocational • Both upper secondary and technical or vocational		
Third-level education: • Non-degree • Primary degree • Professional qualification (of degree status at least) • Both a degree and a professional qualification • Postgraduate certificate or diploma • Postgraduate degree (masters) • Doctorate (PhD)		
Not stated		

Personal Information

Gender:	Female Male
Age:	< 20 20 – 24 25 – 29 30 – 34 35 – 39 40 – 44 45 – 49 50 – 54 55 – 59 60 – 64 65+
Marital status*:	Single (never married) Married (first marriage) Remarried (following widowhood) Remarried (following dissolution of previous marriage) Separated (including deserted) Divorced Widowed Other _____
Family unit*:	No children Children 0 – 4 years Children 5 – 14 years Children 15 years and over

Ethnic background*:	White:
	  • Irish
	  • Irish traveller
	  • Any other White background
	
	Black or Black Irish:
	  • African
	  • Any other Black background
	
	Asian or Asian Irish:
	  • Chinese
	  • Any other Asian background
	
	Other (including mixed background)
	
	_____

Socio-economic group*:	Employer/manager
	Higher professional
	Lower professional
	Non-manual
	Manual skilled
	Semi-skilled
	Unskilled
	Own account worker
	Farmer
	Agricultural worker
	Gainfully occupied but unknown

Note:

* Classification used by the CSO in the 2006 census (CSO, 2007a, b, c, d).

Appendix E - Clustering of the Critical Moments in the Participants' Lives

Name	Age	Current Role	Community Employment (CE) Scheme*	Critical Moment	Quote from Participant's Narrative to Describe Critical Moment
Hilda	45 - 49	Cleaner/ Caretaker	Parish Centre - CE scheme D	Stage in cycle of family responsibilities (empty nest)	Well my youngest lad will be 18 now, so I have to start making a living for myself, rather than depending on the dole.
Nora	40 - 44	Receptionist	Parish Centre - CE scheme E	Stage in cycle of family responsibilities (empty nest)	My kids are grown. … I feel that, after being at home for so long while they were children and giving them so much, it's time for me now.
Aaron	50 - 54	Caretaker/ Security	Family Resource Centre - CE scheme G	Stage in cycle of family responsibilities (empty nest)	My youngest is, is, emm, 19. ... She kind of has a part-time job; it keeps her in her own pocket money. So it's only, it's only really me and my wife now that we have to think about.
Penelope	55 - 59	Care Worker for Elderly	Family Resource Centre - CE scheme F	Stage in cycle of family responsibilities (caring responsibilities for seriously ill parents ended)	I looked after my son and then my mother got bad. She was in a wheelchair and I had to look after her. … He [father] became very bad, and he got, emm, Alzheimer's. That I just couldn't look after him at home any more so I had to let him go into a home. So then I said: „what am I going to do with myself?'
Rachel	40 - 44	Childcare Worker	Family Resource Centre - CE scheme F	Stage in cycle of family responsibilities (finished caring for grandchild)	Then my daughter had a baby so I left [previous job] to mind her and she's went to Playschool. So I needed, you know, to get out like, something for me to do.

Name	Age	Current Role	CE Scheme*	Critical Moment	Quote
Yvonne	55 - 59	Administrator	Advocacy Organisation for Disabled - CE scheme F	Stage in cycle of family responsibilities (finished caring for grandchild)	Back at home and emm, finished with my grandson. I needed something for myself, moneywise, and something to get up to every morning as well and to get back in and try and learn.
Dorothy	45 - 49	Receptionist	Trade Union Centre for Unemployed - CE scheme B	Stage in cycle of family responsibilities (to provide support to son doing state examinations)	I should've stayed and done this and that [education], you know. My son is doing his Leaving [final state examination] now this year, you know. Because you can't even help them, you know, because you haven't been there and done it yourself.
Geraldine	35 - 39	Cleaner/ Caretaker	Community Centre - CE scheme D	Stage in cycle of family responsibilities (youngest child started school)	I was just looking after my son ... The first year was grand and then the second year I was, oh God, boredom sets in. ... I was ready to go back to work at that time, my son was big enough.
Violet	45 - 49	Receptionist	Family Resource Centre - CE scheme G	Stage in cycle of family responsibilities (youngest child started school)	Then I had Jane [pseudonym] and then when she went to school, I kind of came back here [current role]. … It's kind of my life started again when the kids went to school and I was thinking: „yeah, I can do this'.

Name	Age	Current Role	CE Scheme*	Critical Moment	Quote
Wendy	35 - 39	Childcare Worker	Family Resource Centre - CE scheme G	Bereavement (death of brother)	I think it was actually when my brother died, emm, four years ago, I said, like, he'd just wasted his life, wasted it and I said: „no I'm not doing this anymore'. I just want to sort myself out, help myself like.
Katrina	55 - 59	Childcare Worker	Parish Centre - CE scheme E	Bereavement (death of husband)	My husband was sick, emm, he was sick for 14 years, he had a brain tumour. ... He was just basically like a child. You couldn't leave him for any, if you, if you left to go somewhere, you'd have to have somebody else to step in.
Lara	40 - 44	Childcare Worker	Parish Centre - CE scheme E	Bereavement (death of husband)	I would have come along since James [pseudonym] died. I would have had to. I had to go out there now „∞s he wasn't there to protect me.
Ursula	55 - 59	Childcare Worker	Family Resource Centre - CE scheme G	Bereavement (death of husband)	Unfortunately my husband died four years ago. … If I was going to get back in to be trained and all for different things, that the CE Scheme was the way to go and do it.
Queenie	60 - 64	Childcare Worker	Family Resource Centre - CE scheme F	Bereavement (death of two grown-up children)	Then tragedy hit me. My 22-year-old got sick. He was [crying] and he died at the age of 25 of colon cancer. ... My youngest daughter .. 18 years of age, did her Leaving and I noticed her pale the night before. ... The next morning at quarter past ten, she never woke up and then she was gone. She went to the bathroom and never made it.

Name	Age	Current Role	CE Scheme*	Critical Moment	Quote
Tanya	45 - 49	Information & Welfare	Family Resource Centre - CE scheme G	Illness (breast cancer)	I'm after coming through, emm, breast cancer and I successfully got through that and I'm over here doing rehabilitation. … I had five tumors.
Anna	55 - 59	Recreational Assistant	Hospital - CE scheme A	Illness (nervous breakdown)	About eight, nine years ago I had what you call a mild breakdown, and of course, you probably wouldn't know that can really knock you off your feet. It takes you right to the bottom and it takes a long time to pick yourself up again.
Oliver	25 - 29	Administrator	Advocacy Organisation for Disabled - CE scheme F	Illness (not stated; possibly nervous breakdown)	I became unwell about two years ago. … On medical advice there was advice for me not to go back to work full-time again for, for a period of time, just to make sure I'm back to full health again.
Isobel	35 - 39	Administrator	Community Centre - CE scheme D	Illness (stress-related, debilitating disease)	The disease I have, stress causes pain and more pain, so it's like a vicious circle. I need to be in a working environment that isn't stressful.
John	35 - 39	Gardener	Sheltered Community - CE scheme D	Engagement with expert system (sheltered community)	I sort of heard from [name] that there was, sort of a space. … I sort of went on the scheme then. … I felt it was, kind of, it was more like an opportunity.
Sharon	25 - 29	Administrator	Women's Advocacy Organisation - CE scheme F	Engagement with expert system (employment service)	When I rang [name of service] they recommended that I go on a CE scheme. They knew what I had done before.

Name	Age	Current Role	CE Scheme*	Critical Moment	Quote
Xandra	20 - 24	Childcare Worker	Family Resource Centre - CE scheme G	Engagement with expert system (resource centre)	I knew there was a crèche down here. … I really love kids. … I was in with Claire [pseudonym for manager]. … I was talking to her about it and she kind of signed me up, you know, for the job here.
Colm	40 - 44	Public Relations Officer	Trade Union Centre for Unemployed - CE scheme B	Engagement with expert system (counselling)	For years I went to Al-Anon as well. Then I decided to go to a counsellor. It was actually going to the counselling inspired me to get up and go out to find work as well. I started counselling and I was doing that for about six months before I then decided I wanted to find employment, so that kind of dealt with a few issues from childhood.
Betty	35 - 39	Graphic Designer	Trade Union Centre for Unemployed - CE scheme B	Parenthood	If I don't do this now [CE], I'm not going to do it, I'm going to be left in this rut for the rest of my life and I want my son to see me doing something as well. I don't want him to see me the way I saw my parents, you know, living on social welfare.
Elizabeth	40 - 44	Administrator	Family Resource Centre - CE scheme C	Parenthood	My career was going okay until I had the child. ... I was a reluctant mother (laughs). ... I sort of felt like my career was cut short because I had the child. ... I had the rug pulled from me, from underneath.

Name	Age	Current Role	CE Scheme*	Critical Moment	Quote
Fiona	35 - 39	Youth Project Worker	Family Resource Centre - CE scheme C	Parenthood	Then obviously the child came along and it [bar work] wasn't suitable. ... It was a wake-up call, the little one, she hasn't, I won't let her hold me back either, but I never would work full-time, I only want part-time.
Maura	50 - 54	Receptionist	Parish Centre - CE scheme E	Changing relationship dynamics (marital breakdown)	Unfortunately my marriage broke down and I broke down then. ... I couldn't continue. ... My confidence took to, well it took a huge, huge dip. ... It really depleted any sense I had of myself.
Zach	40 - 44	Caretaker/ Security	Family Resource Centre - CE scheme G	Changing relationship dynamics (meeting new partner)	I'm off it [alcohol] 3-and-a-half years. It's, it's, it's the girl that I met. It sort of changed me. I was still drinking, but after two years I met her. ... The right decision was going off the drink, meeting my partner when I did, having my lovely kids and living in the estate.

Source: Developed by author, Sue Mulhall.

Note:

* The overall Community Employment scheme structure is outlined in the contextualisation chapter (Section 3.3).

Appendix F - Using Three-Dimensional Narrative Inquiry Space to Map Critical Moments and Fateful Moments in Participants' Career Success Stories*

Pseudonym	Cornerstones of Narrative Inquiry			Evaluation of Outcome of Career Experiences, i.e., Career Success**		Evaluation of Agency over Outcome of Career Experiences, i.e., Career Success		
	Temporality - critical moment (CM)	Place - critical location	Sociality - critical coping mechanism	Before past critical moment (CM)	After past critical moment (CM)	Before past critical moment	After past critical moment	Into future
Hilda	Stage in cycle of family responsibilities (empty nest)	Previous place of employment	Personal resources (education, self-awareness)	Subjective self-referent factors (fun, enjoyment with colleagues)	Subjective self-referent factors (fun, enjoyment with colleagues)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nora	Stage in cycle of family responsibilities (empty nest)	Place within family when growing up	Personal resources (skills, abilities, education)	Objective self-referent factor (earnings)	Subjective self-referent factors (knowledge, learning, qualifications)	No	Yes	Yes
Aaron	Stage in cycle of family responsibilities (empty nest)	Previous places of employment	Personal resources (skills, abilities, sense of responsibility)	Objective self-referent factor (earnings)	Objective self-referent factor (earnings)	No	No	No

Pseudonym	Temporality (CM)	Place	Sociality	Career Success Before CM**	Career Success After CM**	Agency Pre CM	Agency Post CM	Agency Future
Penelope	Stage in cycle of family responsibilities (caring duties for seriously ill parents ended)	Nursing home where her father resided	Personal resources (skills, abilities)	Subjective self-referent factors (enjoyment, satisfaction)	Subjective self-referent factors (enjoyment, satisfaction)	Yes	Yes	No
Rachel	Stage in cycle of family responsibilities (finished caring for grandchild)	Current workplace on Community Employment scheme	Social resources (supervisor)	Objective self-referent factor (earnings)	Subjective self-referent factors (enjoyment, satisfaction, pleasure)	No	Yes	Yes
Yvonne	Stage in cycle of family responsibilities (finished caring for grandchild)	Previous place of employment	Personal resources (skills, abilities, self-confidence)	Subjective other-referent factors (enjoyment and satisfaction derived from praise)	Subjective other-referent factors (enjoyment and satisfaction derived from praise)	No	Yes	Yes
Dorothy	Stage in cycle of family responsibilities (provide support to son doing examinations)	Education	Personal resources (education)	Objective self-referent factor (earnings)	Subjective self-referent factors (knowledge, learning, self-improvement)	No	Yes	Yes

Pseudonym	Temporality (CM)	Place	Sociality	Career Success Before CM**	Career Success After CM**	Agency Pre CM	Agency Post CM	Agency Future
Geraldine	Stage in cycle of family responsibilities (youngest child started school)	Childhood home	Personal resources (skills, abilities, education)	Objective self-referent factor (earnings)	Subjective self-referent factors (knowledge, learning, qualifications)	No	Yes	Yes
Violet	Stage in cycle of family responsibilities (youngest started school)	Her home	Personal resources (training, self-confidence)	Subjective self-referent factors (enjoyment, happiness, satisfaction)	Subjective self-referent factors (enjoyment, happiness, satisfaction)	No	Yes	Yes
Wendy	Bereavement (death of brother)	Place within family when growing up	Personal resources (education)	Subjective other-referent factor (no negative feedback from others)	Subjective self-referent factors (knowledge, qualifications)	No	Yes	Yes
Katrina	Bereavement (death of husband)	Current workplace on Community Employment scheme	Social resources (family)	Objective self-referent factor (earnings)	Subjective self-referent factors (enjoyment, fulfilment)	No	Yes	Yes
Lara	Bereavement (death of husband)	Education	Personal resources (education)	Subjective self-referent factors (knowledge, learning, qualifications, enjoyment)	Subjective self-referent factors (knowledge, learning, qualifications, enjoyment)	Yes	Yes	Yes

Pseudonym	Temporality (CM)	Place	Sociality	Career Success Before CM**	Career Success After CM**	Agency Pre CM	Agency Post CM	Agency Future
Ursula	Bereavement (death of husband)	Own moral compass (sense of equity, fairness)	Personal resources (skills, abilities, education)	Objective self-referent factor (earnings)	Subjective self-referent factors (knowledge, qualifications, satisfaction, enjoyment	No	Yes	Yes
Queenie	Bereavement (death of two grown-up children)	Broken heart (idiomatic expression)	Personal resources (optimism, resilience, self-awareness, skills, abilities)	Subjective self-referent factors (good and bad luck, happiness, satisfaction)	Subjective self-referent factors (good and bad luck, happiness, satisfaction)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tanya	Illness (breast cancer)	Nicaragua (social activist)	Personal resources (skills, abilities, optimism, positivity, self-confident)	Subjective other-referent factors (euphemistic external comparator, recognition by others)	Subjective other-referent factors (euphemistic external comparator, recognition by others)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Anna	Illness (nervous breakdown)	Training centre	Personal resources (optimism, resilience, self-awareness)	Subjective self-referent factors (happiness, content, enjoyment)	Subjective self-referent factors (happiness, content, enjoyment)	Yes	Yes	Yes

Pseudonym	Temporality (CM)	Place	Sociality	Career Success Before CM**	Career Success After CM**	Agency Pre CM	Agency Post CM	Agency Future
Oliver	Illness (not stated; possibly nervous breakdown)	USA (where became ill)	Personal resources (skills, abilities, self-awareness)	Objective other-referent factors (contributing to profitability of business, financial recognition of input)	Objective other-referent factors (contributing to profitability of business, financial recognition of input)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Isobel	Illness (stress-related, debilitating disease)	Her body	Personal resources (skills, abilities)	Objective self-referent factors (acquire assets, security of tenure)	Objective self-referent factors (acquire assets, security of tenure)	Yes	No	Yes
John	Engagement with expert system (sheltered community)	Garden	Personal resources (education)	Subjective self-referent factors (knowledge, learning, enjoyment)	Subjective self-referent factors (knowledge, learning, enjoyment)	No	Yes	Yes
Sharon	Engagement with expert system (employment service)	Current workplace on Community Employment scheme	Personal resources (skills, abilities)	Subjective self-referent factors (enjoyment, pleasure, happiness)	Subjective self-referent factors (enjoyment, pleasure, happiness)	No	Yes	Yes

Pseudonym	Temporality (CM)	Place	Sociality	Career Success Before CM**	Career Success After CM**	Agency Pre CM	Agency Post CM	Agency Future
Colm	Engagement with expert system (counselling)	Sofa in his house where he sat while unemployed	Personal resources (self-awareness)	Subjective self-referent factors (life happiness, being nice, nice life)	Subjective self-referent factors (life happiness, being nice, nice life, having job)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Xandra	Engagement with expert system (resource centre)	Current workplace on Community Employment scheme	Personal resources (self-awareness, education)	Subjective self-referent factors (learning, training, qualifications, enjoyment)	Subjective self-referent factors (learning, training, qualifications, enjoyment)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Betty	Parenthood	Education	Personal resources (confidence, education)	Objective self-referent factor (earnings)	Subjective self-referent factors (knowledge, learning)	No	Yes	Yes
Elizabeth	Parenthood	Motherhood	Personal resources (skills, abilities)	Objective self-referent factor (acquire assets)	Objective self-referent factors (basic standard of living, security of tenure)	Yes	No	No
Fiona	Parenthood	Scotland (future home)	Personal resources (skills, abilities)	Objective self-referent factor (acquire assets)	Objective self-referent factor (acquire assets)	Yes	Yes	Yes

Pseudonym	Temporality (CM)	Place	Sociality	Career Success Before CM**	Career Success After CM**	Agency Pre CM	Agency Post CM	Agency Future
Maura	Changing relationship dynamics (marital breakdown)	Current workplace on Community Employment scheme	Personal resources (self-awareness)	Objective other-referent factor (contributing to profitability of business)	Objective self-referent factor (earnings)	Yes	No	No
Zach	Changing relationship dynamics (meeting new partner)	Geographical area where he grew up	Social resources (personal and professional networks)	Objective self-referent factor (acquire assets)	Objective self-referent factor (acquire assets)	Yes	Yes	Yes

Source: Developed by author, Sue Mulhall.

Notes:

* The table's summarised contents are explained in greater detail in Sections 6.3 and 6.4.
** Using Helin's (2005) criteria of career success, which are based on self-referent and other-referent factors drawn from the objective and subjective domains.