

**The Changing Nature of Work in the UK since Hassard et al (2009):
3 perspectives of employees' perceptions of the changing nature of work in
2014?**

A Study of 3 Companies.

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Doctor of Philosophy

January 2017

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my first supervisor Dr. Diane Keeble–Ramsay, you have been incredible in guiding me through this process. Your advice on the research journey was crucial and I have learnt so much. I would like to thank my second supervisor Professor Jim Stewart for your encouragement when it was required.

A special thanks must go to my family. My mother passed away from dementia during the doctorate process, but I will know she will be there with me during the defence of my thesis. To my father who is also not with us, thank you for showing me the importance of education. I am also very thankful to my mother-in law and father-in-law, as you have taken up the mantle of support that I have sadly lost.

I would also like to thank all of my friends who supported me in writing and in particular Dr Andy McVicar, Adam Jones, Jill Smit and Beth Punter, who have assisted in proof reading my work, due to my struggles with dyslexia.

I would like express gratitude to my wife Helen Kemble, who has put up with me over the last four years and has always supported me in the difficult times, when I was struggling to understand why I was attempting this.

Abstract

The conceptual foundations of this paper emerge from the prior research by Hassard et al (2009) in the publication, *Managing in a Modern Corporation*, which considers work practices. Hassard et al (2009) proposes that work can play an important role in addressing the contextual issues given the scarcity of longitudinal research on post-millennium work practices. They observed increasing work intensification and change within multinationals in differing countries (United Kingdom, United States of America and Japan). Middle Managers' work hours, stress and responsibility were all found to have increased. Therefore it becomes critical to examine whether this has continued to worsen since the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) and whether it has had an impact on the employee experience.

The initial focus was upon the non-supervisory employees, with middle managers and senior management perceptions being explored as they are also considered employees. Whilst the focus of the study intended to consider the experiences of non-supervisory employees in the first instance, the reality that all levels of employees remain employees, meant that the determination of 'non-supervisory' would not limit the study by not including differing perspectives occupied at each level of employee, in terms of their subsequent responses to the changing nature of their work. Qualitative interview data was gathered from three companies within the EADT (2014) top one hundred companies in the UK's East Anglian region. Since the benefit of template analysis lies with its potential plasticity, the study used a priori themes to develop an initial template to collect the data.

Findings report that the data concurs with the observations of Hassard et al (2009). However further problems emerged stemming from control, time frames, quality and financialisation. The project looks to also extend Hassard et al's (2009) previous work by incorporating employees as a focus, but including and middle managers and senior managers.

Key words: Global Financial Crisis (GFC), Employee Perceptions, Template analysis, Control, Financialisation

Contents	
Acknowledgements.....	2
Abstract.....	3
List of Table / Figures / Models	10
Chapter 1.....	11
Introduction	11
Problem Statement	21
Aim.....	22
Initial research questions	22
Developed research questions.....	22
Chapter 2.....	25
Introduction to Historical Nature of Work: Review of Literature.....	25
Historical context of the development of the process of work	31
Marx (1844).....	31
Weber (1907)	36
Taylor (1911).....	38
Fordism (1918).....	44
Braverman (1974)	47
Post Fordism (1980/1990): TQM &HPW	55
Section Summary	59
Chapter 3.....	62
Post Millennial Work Environment	62
Hassard et al (2009)	62
The Work Place Employee Relations Study (WERS) 2013	67
Skills and Employment Survey (2012)	68
Chapter 4.....	74
The Global Financial Context: The Work Context	74

Contextual Literature.....	74
Summary of the Literature	98
Initial Conceptual Framework.....	100
Gaps within the Literature	101
Pilot Study: Post 2008 - Baby Ceiling Pilot Study (2014)	103
Insights Gained	110
Chapter 5.....	111
Methodology	111
Introduction	111
Research philosophies.....	115
Ontology & Epistemology.....	121
Critical Realist approach	127
Axiology	132
Good Qualitative Research	133
Reflexivity.....	136
Research Design	137
Methods	139
Template Analysis.....	140
Reflection of the Interviews	144
Population and Sampling	146
Telephone Interviews.....	149
Analysis.....	151
Coding	153
Conceptual Lens	154
Constraints.....	156
Ethical Considerations	157
Chapter 6.....	161

Findings	161
Process.....	161
Company 1	163
Work Intensification.....	164
Employees	164
Middle Management	167
Senior Management	168
Career Management	171
Employees	171
Middle Management	173
Senior Management	174
Communication	175
Employees	175
Middle Management	176
Senior Management	178
Technology	179
Employees	179
Middle Management	180
Senior Management	181
Summary of Company 1	182
Company 2.....	186
Work Intensification.....	187
Employees	187
Middle Management	188
Senior Management	189
Change	190
Employees	190

Middle Management	192
Senior Management	193
Communication	195
Employees	195
Middle Management	196
Senior Management	197
Technology	199
Employee	199
Middle Management	201
Senior Management	202
Career Management	203
Employee	203
Middle Management	206
Senior Management	207
Summary of Company 2	208
Company 3	210
Work Intensification	211
Employee	211
Middle Management	213
Senior Management	214
Change	216
Employees	216
Middle Management	218
Senior Management	219
Technology	220
Employee	220
Middle Management	221

Senior Management	223
Communication	224
Employees	224
Middle Management	225
Senior Management	226
Career Management	228
Employees	228
Middle Management	229
Senior Management	231
Summary of Company 3	233
Summary of the Findings: Three Cases.....	237
Chapter 7.....	244
Discussion: Emerging Themes	244
Financialisation	247
Quality	248
Recruitment	249
Stress	251
Control	252
Reflections on Hassard et al (2009).....	253
Chapter Summary	255
Chapter 8.....	257
Discussion and Contextualisation.....	257
Finalising the Contextual Framework.....	264
Chapter 9.....	267
Conclusions.....	267
Increase of Taylorism (1911)	273
Reflections	279

Organisational reflections	279
Project Reflections.....	281
The Doctoral Journey Reflections.....	283
Final Thoughts and Contribution.....	285
Reference List	287
Appendix 1	321
Appendix 2	324

List of Table / Figures / Models

Table 1: What is Methodology.....	Page 114
Table 2: Competing Worldviews.....	Page 116
Table 3: Key for Descriptions.....	Page 164
Figure 1: Historical timeline of the key developments in work processes.....	Page 30
Figure 2: Initial Conceptual Framework.....	Page 101
Figure 3: Research Design.....	Page 138
Figure 4: Conceptual Framework.....	Page 266
Model 1: JD-R model of work engagement.....	Page 89

Chapter 1

Introduction

During this time period of Global Financial Crisis (GFC) (2009–2014) there appeared to be much upheaval. O'Reilly et al (2011) suggest that the scale of the crisis was beyond imagination. It had gripped the world with the idea that there was the prospect of a financial 'Armageddon', with the well-established, albeit cyclical, banking sector needing assistance from the UK government. The topic arose from initial experiences of work and an understanding of the chaotic nature of the workplace by not fully understanding or knowing how to react to the GFC. The reaction and instability related to the GFC have been explored, with Burnham (2010) suggesting that the GFC exposed much of the fragility of both the globalisation process and the varying economic models implemented around the world. There were changes in the way in which individuals were managed, with the knock-on effect of a financialised focus and no additional remuneration for any extra work expected. There has also been a further understanding of restructuring that the GFC has put significant global pressure on many organisations who responded by reorganising and restructuring, and this appears to be a problem (Boyle and McDonnell, 2013).

It would be of interest to investigate how organisations have been coping with the changing world and perhaps to understand the processes that have been adopted. It would be useful to understand the differing ways in which companies reacted to this change and how employees perceived this change. According to Christiano et al (2014) pg 2 the 'Great Recession' has had an impact on investment and output, as indicated by organisations' reactions. Christiano et al (2014) suggests that the unemployment rate may have improved from the peak of the GFC, but this improvement is not in participation rates, but rather a greater number of vacancies, not an enhancement of employment. The researcher, from the data collected, will explain the impact of how the change during the GFC has affected the companies, with a focus on work intensification and communication.

The term 'financialisation' has become more pronounced in today's language, with Fullerton (2015) commenting that it has become as popular as globalisation. Fullerton (2015) goes on to suggest that it is now the characteristic 'unrestricted' idea around what is capital, due to finances contributing to so many growth strategies within the leading economies. Financialisation has encroached on everyone's everyday life, and as Fullerton (2015) suggests it has manifested itself through mortgages and loans. With the GFC, this has only added to the importance of finance and financialisation within the working world, in gaining a better understanding of the perceptions of the workforce. The reader will be able to gain an understanding of the repercussions of taking a deeper financialised approach.

The UK has experienced a time of change over recent years, 2008–2014, owing in part to the GFC and the reaction to it by the UK government. Given the increased financial pressures on organisations, it felt timely to access the perceptions of this change within companies to get a view of how employees feel that this has impacted upon their work and working environment. It was also considered that this context might be interpreted differently at three different levels. It was understood that insights were to be collected throughout the company, from employees and middle management, through to CEO or chairman level, providing further insights across the organisation. This context also differs from the initial study by Hassard et al (2009) as they were investigating middle managers. This study engaged with employees, middle management and senior management in terms of their perception of operations and management processes; thus adding further insights.

The proposed study of the employees' perspective of how they were managed from 2009–2014 within three companies in the East Anglia region aims to extend the current literature covering this area. The focus is on the non-supervisory employees, with middle managers and senior management perceptions also being considered, as they are also considered employees.

The appraisal of change is fundamentally in terms of the understanding of the issues facing the workplace environment by each employee reflect. This informs any such response of employees to change since most employees seek to manage their workplace through establishing a level of consistency within the space they operate (Arnold and Silvester, 2011). It appears reasonable to progress, that those employees in a middle management position may consider the forces for change from a different viewpoint to those positioned higher or lower in the organisation.

Therefore the study sought to consider the possible differing perspectives of the middle managers and senior managers in order to illustrate the differing appraisals that their responses to the changing environment. In so doing the differing interpretations does not necessarily suggest a conflict of interpretation but potentially differentiation in their approaches to their inter-relationships and subsequent actions. Perception remains with the individual, and rather than subject to individual bias, reflects that this study does not seek to make comparative analysis of the collective views but to gain insights from scrutiny of the contribution of individual's perceptions to the changing nature of work.

Whilst the study reports differing interpretations from the 3 levels identified, it recognised that this reflects the perceptions of those respondents rather than 'the realities' of the organisation. Whilst it might be argued that their perceptions could impact upon the realities, this study does not seek to address the problems of perceptual bias but to record the findings in an attempt to explore and understand the lived experiences of the employees within the organisations investigated. Thus as employees in totality records their overall experiences but by providing differing levels offers a rich transcription in order to seek the inner drama (Thompson and Vincent, 2010).

In 2014 perceptions from the experience of primary factors experienced during the recent financial austerity, were collected. Pollitt (2010) suggests there is a possibility during a period of austerity, that any conditions for innovation will deteriorate and countries will face an extended period of public fiscal austerity. The view of employee perceptions, as opposed to management, has recently received higher attention, specifically regarding its potential impact on performance (Cullen, et al, 2014). Examining employee perceptions might highlight the changing nature between what 'management' claims as policy, versus how this has been viewed from a workforce perspective. Further still, by looking at the perceptions of employees, it might facilitate some insights into whether that the GFC impacted upon work processes in the UK (see Colley, 2012; Kamp, Lund and Hvid, 2011; Teague and Roche, 2013).

When choosing a starting point / springboard into the current research, it was understood that the GFC clearly had an effect on how people were being managed (WERS, 2011). For this reason, the GFC may be viewed as having impact upon managerial approaches. A comparison prior to the GFC would help any consideration of possible changes in the managerial approach as perceived by employees. It was important to find a study that had been completed prior to the GFC and then look to replicate the themes that emerged from the previous study, while allowing new themes to develop. Whilst examining the literature, it became clear that Hassard et al (2009) was the only collective study of middle management, which was close enough to the actual GFC as it happened. The work of Hassard et al (2009) was initially separated into three individual journal articles (Hassard et al, 2007, McCann et al 2008a and McCann et al 2004a) which had been published in various journals. The authors Hassard et al (2009) had worked on all three papers and decided to combine the three articles into a monograph titled 'Managing in a Modern Corporation' (Hassard et al, 2009).

The GFC, it was assumed, had an impact on organisations throughout the country and the world. There had been no evaluation into how the differing levels within Hassard et al (2009) had reacted, within the context of the post-GFC era, along with an evaluation of the perception of how management shifted and changed over this time. Furthermore, there was a dearth of evidence of how management had shifted both pre and post GFC in terms of the views of employees. The insights gathered from this study could inform other generations about how companies responded to a government-level financially constrained environment and learn from both the positives and negatives of their reaction.

The reasoning behind choosing the work of Hassard et al (2009) as a comparator and springboard to this study, is the relative proximity of the study pre-recession. It appeared to be the best fit, given the purpose of the study owing to the subject area that Hassard et al (2009) examined. A key finding of Hassard et al (2009) was the examination of the increased intensification of work, with middle managers being the primarily the focus. Hales (2010) suggests that the work discusses the intensification of work demands, examining the stress and anxiety experienced by the organisations investigated, and the consequences of this on the labour process. Within the work, Hassard et al (2009) suggests that there appears to be a focus on reducing costs, owing to an increase in global competition. This appears to be an angle on which it approaches some of the findings, a suggestion further supported by Hales, (2010). There appears to be evidence of corporate downsizing, de-layering and cost savings, indicated within Hassard et al (2009) and in a sense, the changing nature of the working environment for middle managers within the organisations viewed during this longitudinal study. Finally, there appears to be pressure on middle managers to perform and that the workplace was becoming more target driven, with Hales (2010) suggesting that middle managers had more responsibilities, more targets, increased pressure and a feeling of being less secure in the workplace.

Various themes such as Work Intensification, Career Management, Technology, Change and Communication have been drawn from the previous monographed work of Hassard et al (2009) *Managing in a Modern Corporation*. This will act as a firm basis on which to revisit the themes of their studies in the post-2008 environment. By changing the timeframe from Hassard et al (2009) previous studies, the researcher is looking to examine what happened post-2009. During the collection of data, the researcher has understood employees' perceptions of this changing environment, thereby contributing to (Hassard et al, 2009). Hassard et al (2009) took middle managers' views and the researcher is using the lens of employees to extend Hassard et al (2009) in the later time frame. Attempts are made to gain insights into further issues that may not have been expected, through the Labour Process Theory (LPT) (1974) lens. The world of work in the UK, in East Anglia, in the three companies, in employees' perceptions might have appeared to have changed over the period of the GFC and subsequent austerity.

Interview data was collected focussing upon six a priori themes identified from Hassard et al (2009) prior research. Whilst exploring the project questions surrounding an individual, the project highlights any differences and comparisons amongst the different respondents within the three companies. Finally, the data will be used to find comparisons and differences with the previous work of Hassard et al (2009) and acknowledge new or greater emerging themes. The research is contributing to an area which lacked research at the point of beginning the study in February 2013. There appeared to be very little existing research across the time period 2009–2014 covering the issues recognising the limitations of research post GFC from the viewings of employees in terms of the shifts in management practice observed by Hassard et al (2009) and potentially further changes post (Hassard et al, 2009). This has developed over the time period with publications from WERS (2011) and Skills Employment Survey (2012) highlighting issues around work intensification. This research will explore the critical

issues surrounding how employees perceived shifts in management between 2009 and 2014, with data collected in 2014 and then analysed through a combined labour process theory (LPT) Braverman (1974) was also utilised by (Hassard et al, 2009).

The rationale for the current research reflects turn of the century optimism. The workplace was going to be a much improved place with the incorporation of High Performance Working (HPW). Wood and De Menezes (1998) suggested that the innovative current forms of organizations, labelled high commitment, high involvement and high-performance models would be central to many management decisions and human relations. Wood and De Menezes (1998) explained that High Commitment Management (HCM) can be defined by personnel practices such as sharing of information, problem-solving, job flexibility and team working. More importantly, so HCM designers would suggest, it would work if all the personnel practices were used in combination with one another, to be seen as a commitment from an employer to their employees.

There was confidence that the post-2000 era would improve management behaviour, which would, in turn, lead to better productivity. Keeble-Allen, (2007) suggested that 21st century society would be demanding of a highly skilled workforce and that employers would seek to gain their employees' commitment by adopting more of a High-Performance Working (HPW) system for their organisations. It could be assumed that there appeared to be more flexible outsourcing, with regards to the way in which employees are managed. Burgess and Connell (2013) suggest that when the GFC intensified, more companies began to outsource some of the activities. During the early 2000s, Ware and Grantham (2003) suggested that many companies had to relearn the hard lesson of mean reversion, where whatever goes up, be it demand, revenue, profitability, headcount or floor space, will eventually revert towards their long-term average, given the cyclical nature of all industries and businesses. With regards to downsizing and restructuring, Ware and Grantham (2003) suggest that this merely reflects efforts to do more with less. For example, when reducing the workforce without reducing the

workload and delaying essential investments. Ware and Grantham (2003) proposed the assumption that increasing workload could ensure short-term survival, but at the cost of weakening prospects for long-term success.

When examining who was in charge of one's career, Drucker (2005) suggests that employers are no longer managing their employee's careers, but that the responsibility for this now lies primarily with employees, requiring a better understanding of one's individual self-motivation and personal targets in order to progress. There were also overtones that the demographic of the workplace will be different in years to come, with Burke and Ng (2006) suggesting that one of the most influential powers that could affect the workforce is the evolution of worker demographics. Burke and Ng (2006) suggested that the workforce of 2015 would be somewhat different from 2005, given lower birth rates and the fact that increased labour supply has seen an increase of immigrant workers to the UK labour market.

After the publication of Hassard, et al (2009) the world has gone through a prolonged period of slower growth, with primary drivers struggling to maintain the high level of growth. Burgess and Connell (2013) suggests that China was latterly overshadowed by an underlying workforce challenge, which hampered their short and long-term growth with an ageing population and skilled labour shortages, but had initially helped push the world out of a post-financial crisis recession. There has been an absence of earlier post-millennial studies or post-GFC investigations covering the period 2009-2014 at the time of writing this thesis. Hassard et al (2009) covers a period prior to the (GFC) hence the need for this further research. Hassard et al (2009) provides a firm framework by which to revisit the themes of their studies in the post-2008 environment. When looking at Hassard et al (2009) (2003-2009) work, the researcher will attempt to gather these themes from their empirical results and conclusions. The findings from Hassard et al (2009) can be further supported by Burke and Ng (2006), who suggested areas of change within the workplace, which can contain a number of similarities

with (Hassard et al, 2009). The similarities within Burke and Ng (2006) cover the increases in technology, globalisation, communication, de-skilling and outsourcing.

When looking for the best approach for this analysis, the researcher had the choice between an existing theory and proposing their own. The work of Hassard et al (2009), who utilised the Labour Process Theory (LPT), appeared to be a genuine fit for this research. Both Braverman (1976) and Hassard et al (2009), assessed manufacturing companies within their research. Although a different industry-set of participants are used, including employees, middle managers and senior managers, covering a different timeframe; it is felt that there are clear grounds to update the analysis of Hassard et al (2009) and to also offer a contribution to current knowledge about how the GFC has impacted upon the workplace environment. This provides the grounds to draw on the analysis and conclusions from LPT (Braverman 1976 and Hassard et al, 2009), within this project.

The research from the work of Hassard et al (2009) therefore provides the starting point for this thesis. The reason for choosing their work on the labour process was that Hassard et al (2009) provides useful indicators about the intensification of work in middle managers in the period immediately before the GFC of 2007/2008. Hassard, et al (2009) provides evidence from managers of their experience. By gaining insights from the lived experience of employees by way of their perceptions and broadening coverage from not only managers to include other employees' and senior management's perceptions. One of the key findings from the research of Hassard et al (2009) is the amount of work middle managers are expected to produce, meaning that their work hours, stress and responsibility have all increased. While their study was looking at managers' experience, the researcher is attempting to gain insights into the experience of employees, with the expectation to triangulate the views of operational workers versus middle and senior management over the recent GFC.

What is also apparent over the time period for the GFC, is the way in which the UK government has chosen to react. The Conservatives took over leadership of the government, with a policy of austerity (ostensibly 'balancing the books') and Reed (2016) proposes, that following the 2008 financial crash, there was a perceived need for austerity by the current government, which was on the political agenda in the United Kingdom. There has been a perception of change, with Colley (2012) suggesting that austerity does not only make changes within the workplace, but changes were also introduced throughout work practice. Support for this comes from The 2011 Workplace Employment Relations Study (WERS) (2011) which provides details on more work with less pay, and how pay freezes affect most sectors. Green (2004) suggests that, for most workers in the UK, average working hours have increased, compared with other industrialised countries up until the mid-1990s.

Chartered Institute Personnel Development (CIPD) (2013) suggests that employees are working harder, with WERS proposing that the intensification has risen from 27% in 2004 to 34% in 2011. This is an absolute rise of 7% but proportionate rise of almost 25% on the previous level rise. Macky and Boxall (2008) argue that productivity is hampered when greater work intensification leads to working longer hours and employees beginning to feel overloaded. There are suggestions that the pace of intensification has been rising since 2001, with a steady increase since the global credit crunch (CIPD 2013; CIPD 2012; Kelliher and Anderson 2010). This further supports an investigation into the current understanding of issues pertaining to what appeared to have been going on during 2014.

When ascertaining which companies to include in the sample, the researcher would approach the top largest 100 companies within the region of East Anglia. Many of these companies are listed on the stock market in the UK, on the FTSE 100 Index. The majority of companies that fall into this category have existing exposure to global markets, both in terms of operations

and client base. The aim was to cover a similar manufacturing sample group to that used by (Hassard et al, 2009). Unfortunately there had to be a mixture of companies due to access being difficult and hence three companies were picked for the current research.

It would be a valuable proposal to investigate management behaviours after a major event like the GFC. Furthermore to understand if the GFC has had a positive or negative impact on employee perceptions of management behaviour in 2014. This research would contribute to the current literature on an under-researched area. The researcher has attempted to provide clear key areas of focus for the proposed research and supporting questions. When investigating this area, Template Analysis King (1998) was used and a priori themes were gathered from the previous study by (Hassard et al, 2009). The initial themes were taken from the study by Hassard et al (2009) to help understand the identification of change in the workplace, and to assess if they in turn had a positive or negative outcome. It was felt that positioning this so closely with the previous study allowed for a review of the conclusions proposed by Hassard et al (2009), potentially to reinforce what was perceived to be happening, or the process of change evidenced, within the three case companies. The review of literature has also been focused on the work of Hassard et al (2009), which has played a critical part in the way in which the literature review has been structured and discussed.

Problem Statement

It has been perceived that there has been an increase in work intensification over time. The GFC may have affected it. In order to understand the effect perceived by the workforce force, the researcher needs to extend the previous work of (Hassard et al, 2009). The researcher will look to extend the previous work by incorporating not only middle managers, but also junior employees and senior managers.

Aim

The aim of this research is to identify perceptions of changes of work from 3 perspectives (employee, middle managers and senior management) of the workforce with employees as the focus, within 3 companies in the timeframe of the GFC (between 2009 and 2014).

Initial research questions

What are the employee perceptions of the changing nature of operational work in 2014?

Across three levels of an organisation:

1. Has work intensified after the Global Financial Crisis GFC?
2. Has there been any perceived change related to the GFC?
3. Has the nature of career management within the organisation changed after the GFC?

The questions above were initially perceived as being too general. The researcher considered the broad nature of the initial questions could almost be a thesis of their own and thus were focused more on the changing nature of work. In order to pose more fundamental questions, the questions have focused on assessing the overall aim of exploring non-generalizable perceptions of employees with regards to their work, between 2008 and 2014.

Developed research questions

The research focuses on the three questions below in the three companies/levels studied:

1. Has there been an increased intensification of work? If so, how has that manifested itself within the workplace?
2. With regards to career management and continuous professional development (CPD), how has the workplace responded to the GFC?

3. Has the process of communication altered, in terms of how management has communicated with its employees?

With these more specific research questions, it was intended that by investigating three organisations within the East Anglia region there should be the opportunity to understand perceptions of how these organisations may have either reacted or adapted to the changing economic environment. The researcher has chosen to focus on employees' perceptions, whilst also collecting data from middle management and senior management, providing evidence of any difference in opinion between each level of seniority. The research questions give the researcher insights into how the work place in East Anglia region has changed since the start of the GFC, giving some information on how employees have perceived those changes. Many companies have had to make workers redundant during the GFC, with the Telegraph (2015) proposing that 'one in seven workers out of 3.5m employees have been made redundant since the start of the recession'. This level of change has an effect on any organisation, with many companies having to downsize or even cease trading. It had been understood that this piece of research was timely in order to understand how employees perceived this change and how organisations have reacted to the global crisis. This begs the question about how change has been undertaken and whether the reduction in staff numbers has been reflected in a reduced volume of work, or if the existing employee base is expected to do more.

It could be suggested that there has been a paradigm shift in employment, owing partly to the GFC, which has impacted not only on the way in which we work, but also the way in which we are managed. Thus, it was felt that it was required to use the previous study by Hassard et al (2009) to assist in ascertaining if there was evidence of a worsening, improvement, or stabilisation of conditions. The purpose of the research is to understand the various influences,

and how these factors may have impacted companies, potentially changing work practices, since the GFC commenced. This process will go some way to fill a gap in current knowledge around the subject.

Through the changing nature of work over the GFC, the project will attempt to bring new knowledge to assess how organisations have been perceived to have reacted to their changing economic circumstance. The findings have been linked with previous literature, and have also been able to suggest new areas for further investigation. It is recognised that the research does have its limitations, owing to the fact that the findings cannot be sufficiently generalised to apply across sectors, industries or geography. The fact that the findings cannot be generalised will not be a detriment as the insights offered would be of benefit for future study. Given the lack of current knowledge about employees' perceptions of their management, the research can provide new evidence and initial insights into what has been perceived by the researcher as an under-researched area.

From this empirical study of the post-global financial crisis period, the researcher has sought to gain some insights into the experiences of UK employees and further perceptions of the changing workplace (post-2008) with three individual companies. When viewing the empirical insights of the post GFC period, there is still a recognition of the limitations of the scalability of the study. Nonetheless, it should provide new insights and contribute to knowledge around this area. Initial work reveals some links to the current UK labour market and to that of the perceptions of the recession observed in Ireland (Teague and Roche, 2014a). Their interpretation suggested that in Ireland, work processes evolved to help potentially stabilise the economic climate, but it appears there was also a tendency of work intensification, similar to that observed by (Hassard et al, 2009).

Chapter 2

Introduction to Historical Nature of Work: Review of Literature

The literature review has been split into three sections and considers authors such as Marx, (1867), Weber (1907), Ford (1918), Taylor (1911), Braverman (1976), Thompson (2003), Hassard et al (2009), The Work Place Employee Relations Study (2011), Brewster and Mayrhofer (2012) and Skills and Employment Survey (2012). These were considered key to understanding historical shifts in practices and policy and have been informed by Hassard et al (2009) and also informed by the data collected.

This first section acts as an historical introduction and analysis of the impact of the historic contributions, which provides a sound foundation from which to examine current research. The reasoning behind understanding the development of the management of labour is embedded within the previous study of (Hassard et al, 2009). This literature review therefore looks to assess the key factors of the current published understanding of the management of labour post 2008. The primary reason for looking at the change in management of labour between 2009 to 2014 is that this coincides with the potential impact of the (GFC). Lanchester (2010) pg xii suggested that Gross Domestic Product (GDP) globally was around \$70 trillion dollars in 2007 and that growth had subsequently sharply declined. He describes it as 'putting the car in reverse when going at 70'.

There appeared to be a gap in coverage, assessing the perceptions of employees during this period, which may represent a lost opportunity to provide a full assessment of the impact of the GFC on the world of employment, when considered alongside a somewhat lost voice. The suggestion by Conway and Monks (2009) was that employees views and real lived experiences have not been collected and that predominately only the perceptions of managers has been the area of focus. There appears to have been a lack of assessment of employees'

attitudes within the (LPT) research, as opposed to studies specifically around that of management, despite the impact that employees have upon organisations (Conway and Monks, 2009). The work of Braverman (1974) *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century*, incorporates the LPT and appears to be integral to the work of (Hassard et al, 2009).

There appears to be a broad range of material available on work intensification and change in the working environment (Boselie, Dietz and Boon, 2005; CIPD,2012; Peltonen, Vaara, Brewster and Mayrhofer, 2012; Hassard et al 2009; and Koch and McGrath, 1996). The investigation looks to address the work of Marx (1867), which pre-empted the work of Braverman (1974), using it as a further aid to develop an understanding of the rationale for using a labour process lens to view assessed data.

The search strategy is also based around the monograph created by Hassard et al (2009), which has enabled the researcher to create a historical timeline of key theorists studying issues which have contributed to the body of knowledge within Hassard et al (2009) monograph. The search strategy has enabled key themes/words to be collected through an index analysis. The researcher has primarily used areas such as Technology, Change, Career Development, Work Intensification and Communication, as well as more contextual key words or phrases such as Recession and Global Financial Crisis (GFC).

This has enabled the researcher to clearly categorise the various theories and literature, due to the timeline nature adopted, to initially discuss the literature highlighted (Hassard et al, 2009). In being able to frame this research against the initial study of Hassard et al (2009), it has enabled the researcher to contribute new data and context to an emerging and evolving field of enquiry. It is assumed that some of the historical assumptions could perhaps be relevant within the current post GFC paradigm.

The initial part of the second section has attempted to approach five clear areas ascertained from the literature of Hassard et al (2009), namely work intensification, communication, technology, change and career development. These were the a priori themes chosen to examine in greater detail within this project through pilot study and linked projects. The research also touches on others alluded to in the monograph from (Hassard et al, 2009). The reasons for choosing this particular study was the lack of longitudinal studies achieved so close to the start of the GFC, providing context when compared with the changed work landscape since that major event. Between 2003 and 2007, Hassard et al (2009) undertook interviews with middle managers in large work organizations in the UK, Japan and the US, which were written up in peer-reviewed journals (McCann et al, 2004; Morris et al, 2006; Hassard et al, 2009).

The work provides a starting point for the research to examine the potential issues within different contexts and different time frames. The focal part of the second section examines the current (post 2009) literature around employees' experiences over the GFC time period, and how this has affected their work. The third and final section of the literature review examines a study conducted by Keeble-Ramsey, Kemble & Lovett (2014). This was felt to be beneficial to provide the various opinions and views from a pilot study of women with caring commitments, within a GFC context.

It is important to note that the purpose of this section was to offer an insight into what was happening to a specific sub-set of employees. UK employees' perceptions since Conway and Monks (2009) identify criticism that management were not focusing upon their workers, yet have failed to recognise the importance of assessing the view point of those employees. It is difficult to comprehend the impact the GFC might have had on different groups within the workforce, such as working mothers, hence the reason why this area was used to provide a

snapshot. It provides further evidence from employees' views of changes in work practices post GFC, with Hassard et al (2009) some overlooked issues faced within the current workplace.

The subsequent chapter examines and explores work on the 'baby ceiling' (further to the 'glass ceiling' concept, suggesting that working mothers face additional obstruction to the development of their careers), that provides initial collection of data on how women may have been affected in 2013, with a focus on understanding employee perceptions. The study by Keeble-Ramsey, Kemble and Lovett (2014) aimed to report the contemporary (2013) experiences of working mothers in a higher-education institutions (HEI) and explored the perception of any changes within working practices, post 2008. The objectives of the study were:

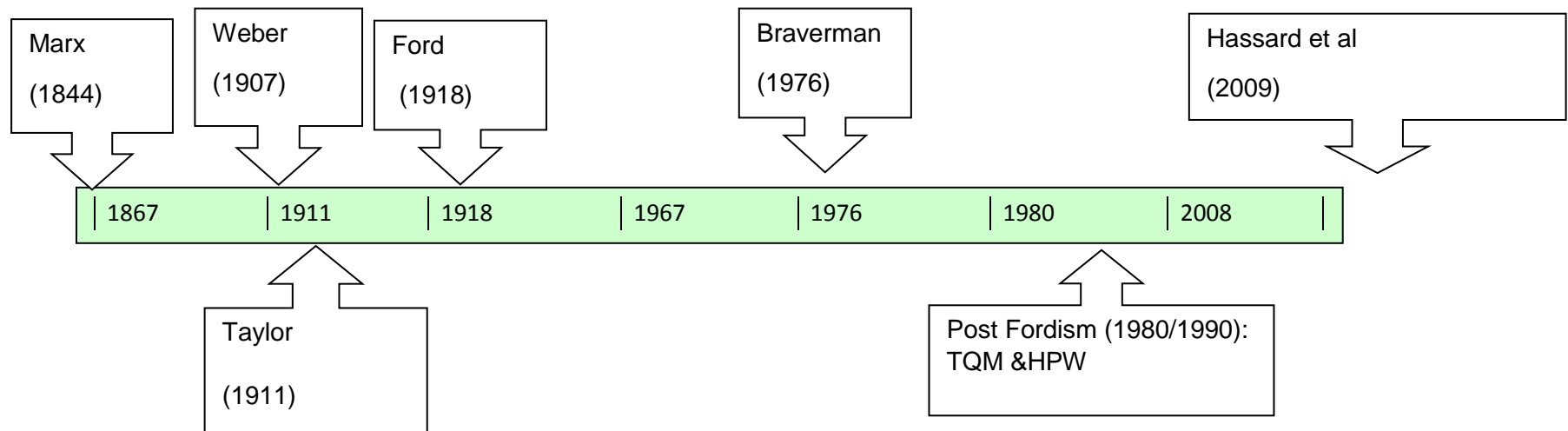
1. To explore the current experiences of working mothers and if there was a perception of a shift from a conceptual 'glass ceiling' towards a 'baby/nappy ceiling'.
2. To explore any links between the existing economic climate and any shift towards a 'baby ceiling', and to identify any improvements in meeting the needs of working mothers.

It is established that the investigation would provide some insight into existing issues facing mothers in the professional world, and from there, highlight areas that could assist in the development of questions which were asked during the semi-structured interviews, with the three companies investigated. In starting to understand the current issues, this has assisted the development of future projects, as well as highlighting areas for future and deeper investigation. This added study provides the reader with initial insights into some current issues, in the context of the research project. The historical nature of the source material has

enabled the researcher to clearly detail the first section of the research and produce a timeline (see figure 1 on the following page).

Historical timeline of the key developments in work processes.

Figure 1



Historical context of the development of the process of work

The starting point of this literature review was to enable the reader to understand the historical nature of how management has evolved over time regarding this study (See figure 1). The work of Hassard et al (2009) has assisted in providing analysis of some of the key historical developments and the structure was merely linear by date order. There has been an increase of focus on Taylor (1911), given that the findings related to the project and also an emphasis on what Hassard et al (2009) had suggested utilising Marx (1844) and Braverman (1954). Management has been forced to address changes with the external working environment over time, which had influenced thinking. The timeline highlighted is an indicative journey throughout the process of work, which informed (Hassard et al, 2009). More focus is targeted in this section towards the areas which Hassard et al (2009) discussed within their work, for example Marx (1844) Taylor (1911) and Braverman (1954).

Marx (1844)

According to the work of Hassard et al (2009), it was understood that Marx (1844) appeared to be an appropriate starting point, whilst touching on the works of (Smith, 1776; Hegel, 1821). Marx (1844) appears to be a key area of study for Hassard et al (2009) owing much to what was discussed within the work of (Braverman, 1976; Hassard et al, 2009). When reviewing Marx (1844), the researcher suggests that there are areas that bear resonance within the current study, given Marx's use of employees' views. Engels and Marx (2004) published The Communist Manifesto (1848), containing their theories and beliefs on the nature of society and politics and suggested:

"The history of all hitherto existing society is in the history of class struggles". Engels and Marx (2004)

Marx (1844) takes a geopolitical view of the economy, noting the doctrines of Adam Smith (1776), and tries to understand the role of labour. When looking at the earlier career of Marx (1844) it is important to highlight the initial work of Hegel (1821). There was an interpretation by Marx (1844) which suggests that Hegel (1821) only really recognised the labour of the mind, while Marx (1844) believed that alienation had its beginnings in human practice, i.e. the actual act of manual labour, rather than just in the mind. Marx (1844) suggested he has rescued labour from Hegel (1821) by externalising labour and the alienation process on the worker.

The work of Marx (1844) stated that minimum wages should be sufficient to provide food for the employee and to support their family, with the long-term objective of ensuring a continued pool of willing employees. Through this assumption Marx (1844) created a logical and social critique of capitalist nature. This was hugely influential, resulting in the change of a number of different political and philosophical movements around the world (Schuman, 2013). The impact of Marx's ideas can be highlighted from Schuman (2013), who suggested that Marx's (1844) critique, namely that capitalism is intrinsically unjust and self-damaging, cannot be so simply dismissed in the modern world. Marx (1844) arguably supported Smith (1776), concluding that the ordinary wage should be the lowest possible, 'consistent with humanity living a 'cattle-like existence'. Marx (1844) theorised that workers are like commodities, to be bought in the same way as real assets. In his view, workers react in the same way as supply and demand theory suggests, where when supply exceeds demand, then employees resort to begging or starvation. This puts downward pressure on wages, and ultimately reduces the workforce (through worker migration, alternative employment or other means), thus reasserting balance. Conversely, where there is a limited supply of workers, or a limited pool of necessary skills, this suggests that wages are more likely to rise and gain control of their labour process.

Atzeni (2013) states that Marx (1844) was dismissive of political programmes and policies aimed at improving the process of capitalism. Atzeni (2013) suggests that Marx felt that the development of capitalistic technology would ultimately result in more money in the hands of the few, i.e. to the benefit of the top tier of capitalists. Marx (1867) states that the labour process is where man and nature act coherently and in balance, where man controls the ways in which raw materials are used, for the benefit of his/her own wants and needs, and where nature can, consequently, influence the wants and needs of workers. By changing the external world, man can, in the same frame, be changing his own nature (Marx, 1867).

Marx (1867) was writing at a time of significant social and economic upheaval. The Industrial Revolution saw considerable change to working practices, with the use of more advanced technologies becoming more apparent. Atkeson and Kehoe (2001) suggest that a second Industrial Revolution took place between 1860 and 1900, with the advent of many new technologies, including usable forms of electricity. The advent and integration of new inventions had a corresponding impact across the economy, resulting in dramatic changes across industries, and changing the role and use of workers. When combining an analysis of work as integral to human function it could be assumed to be slightly critical of work achieved under capitalism (Atzeni, 2013 op cit Marx, 1867). Marx (1867) also had a thought-provoking idea about labour, suggesting that the hand is not only the organ for labour, it can be assumed that it can be the product of labour as it is necessary to learn the process involved in producing something and thus that capability has itself become a tangible asset (Braverman, 1974 op cit Marx, 1867).

Alienation appeared prominent within Marx (1867), having some resonance with the difficulties preceding the GFC (Poynter et al, 2012). Alienation was first introduced in Marx's work (1844) within the Economic and Philosophic Manuscript (1844), where he suggested that alienation

of employees would keep happening until capitalism had been replaced by communism (Atzeni, 2013). When discussing the different aspects of alienation, it is important to consider the four prominent factors identified (Atzeni, 2013, op cit. Marx, 1867). Firstly, workers were alienated from the product of their own labour, since management hired them to do the work, rather than to benefit from it. Secondly, that the worker is disconnected from the process of work itself, as decisions over how, where and when they work have been taken by management. Thirdly, Marx (1867) identifies that the ability to be creative is essential to human nature and that being separated from this will result in alienation (Atzeni, 2013). Finally, Marx (1867) states that workers will feel estranged from fellow workers, who are also in turn feeling alienated by the experience of work, and will thus struggle to connect with the situation in which they find themselves (Atzeni, 2013). There were suggestions that Marx (1867) was of the assumption that, ultimately, alienation was a source of great misery to the working classes. Marx (1867) asserted it was the cause for resistance to the work itself.

(LPT) is regarded as a Marxist theory and was introduced within the Labour and Monopoly Capital (Braverman, 1974). According to Hales (2010), however, LPT appears to be very closely linked to the Labour Theory of Value (Marx, 1867). Hales (2010) suggested there is more need for explanation of any new Neo – Marxist perspectives within Hassard et al (2009) as it was not specifically highlighted fact. When examining Marx (1867) it appears to discuss labour process in some depth and puts forward that workers' labour is treated as a commodity, which can be traded. This is useful for the capitalist management who can, in turn, use that labour to make money. Marx (1867) also discusses the difference between insects and humans in an employee context. He illustrated that spiders are like weavers and bees are like architects. The difference between the best bee architect and the human architect is that the latter can imagine the finished product before it has been created. From there, Marx (1867) came to the conclusion that there must be a formula for the generation of capital. The process of 'Money, Commodity, Money (M-C-M) suggests that management buys a commodity to sell

on at a higher price. When applied to employment, the efficient purchase of workers' time results in the higher generation of capital for businesses. Marx (1867) argues that within this formula something needs occur for the surplus value of the commodity to improve and the owner of the commodity has a relationship to the commodity after all. Marx (1867) also suggests that 'absolute' capitalism is destructive, where the pursuit of profit is not balanced in the context of broader matters (i.e. 'good' capitalism).

There appears to be some opposition to the management proposals put forward by Marx (1867). Fleischman (2000) proposes that opposition towards organised labour by that of 'scientific management'. Taylor (1911) would best be explained within Marxist theory. Understandings from Marx (1867) that there appeared to be new perspectives emerging (Thiry-Cherques, n.d.) suggesting that the view of work expressed by Marx (1867), that 'work is a substance and the inherent measure of value, but without value itself' represents a potential problem, with the agreement of an appropriate price (value) as one factor. With this, the reader is drawn to Taylor (1911) as, under the Taylor System (Taylorism) and methods pioneered by Henry Ford (Fordism), some products have become very cheap, meaning that the production lines and machines have potentially caused a disconnection between the value of the work in the production process and that of the product. It is also worth acknowledging, briefly, that the researcher realises it is important to highlight the historical work of Weber (1907) and the thinking around examining bureaucracy, if only to acknowledge its contribution in shaping the world of work within that timeframe. When acknowledging this contribution it is worth noting the difference between the production elements which Taylor (1911) and Ford, (1918) pioneered, through to the thinking of Weber (1907), who was focused on bureaucracy to improve work.

Weber (1907)

Moving from Marx (1844) the impact of Weber (1907), who understood that meaning is attached by individuals to their own actions (Macdonald and Gerber, 2011). It had also been suggested that Weber (1907) was of the opinion – according to Eldridge (1972) – that sociology was a science and, with other scientists, his view was seen as a rational method of enquiry. It is understood that with Weber (1907), according to Macdonald and Gerber (2011), there were concerns that he had associated sociology with the rise of capitalism, which he saw as a result of an enhanced way of considering the world. It also became apparent that Weber (1907) had been aware of this paradigmatic shift. Mommsen (1977) suggests that Weber (1907) predicted the emergence and growth of the industrial capitalist, which in turn resulted in social developments and new accretive themes. It was also suggested by Mommsen (1977) that Weber (1907) had predicted this shift as early as 1893 and that it would destroy much of the social systems in place at the time.

When examining Weber (1907), it is suggested that he had thoughts around leadership, power and authority. There were perceptions around bureaucracy (British Library, 2015). This research area offered a broader scope than just the organisational level, including other factors such as sociology and philosophy. When examining areas in which Weber (1907) has contributed to this current piece of work, it appears prudent to mention one prominent area that assists in providing context, namely how bureaucracy can shape an organisation. The British Library (2015) suggests that Weber (1907) believed that bureaucracies were organised through structured lines and that any abuse of power by leadership is minimised because of a number of reasons, ranging from the process of recruitment into a position of power, individuals being subject to hierarchical rule, and finally that those in power also have specific duties and responsibilities that impede the development of abuse. It had been suggested by

the British Library (2015) that there is a proportion of depersonalisation owing to the fact that the rules are clearly defined and that there is a rule for every situation.

Weber (1907) suggested that there were some limitations within bureaucracies. Firstly, that the process of decision-making could be perceived as awkward and slow. Secondly, that each employee was required to conform to a particular type or behaviour, to enable them to join the bureaucratic organisation. Thirdly, that bureaucracy could lead to depersonalisation (British Library, 2015). Weber (1907) appeared to understand that the more efficient bureaucracy becomes, the more it is able to exclude the personal and irrational. In this way, it will tend to appear more emotionally detached and professional. As previously stated, Weber (1907) understood the hazards of bureaucratisation in its attempts to measure processes, keeping in mind Taylor (1911), and the cost of turning employees into 'cogs' of a much larger machine. This understanding of Weber (1907) bears a lot of resonance to Marx's theories of alienation (1884). Weber (1907) believed that the only way for employees to make a noteworthy contribution was to value the procedures of large-scale organisations above that of workers' personalities and personal goals. The British Library (2015) suggests that Weber (1907) was of the assumption that the only way to escape a future of scientific management and specifically, the dehumanising side of management, would be to recruit a charismatic leader to promote positive change in the organisation. It can be argued that even if there is a charismatic leader, it will not always promote positive change.

This leads us to consider the next stage of management, via Principles of Scientific Management (Taylor, 1911). This era of management theory was highlighted by Taylor (1911) and theory of scientific management has often been termed as 'Taylorism' by a number of authors (Littler, 1978; Fleischman, 2000; Locke, 1982a).

Taylor (1911)

The starting point, when looking to examining the Principles of Scientific Management (Taylor, 1911), is to highlight the work of Babbage (1832). The context of Babbage (1832) was that there was a keen interest within engineering, as a key concept in making the workplace more efficient. In doing so, it could be presumed that technology / engineering could go some way to improve efficiency with Clegg et al (2011) suggesting that Babbage (1862) understood that engineering could be used to improve efficiency in the workplace. Optimising and simplifying jobs would increase output while also reducing input – a potentially appealing combination for managers.

When examining the springboard into current research, Hassard et al (2009) suggest that the post-2000 workplace is heading towards this same process of 'efficient' assembly line work, not only within the context of factories, but also within other organisations - in some ways a resurrection of Taylorism. Taylor (1911) deliberates on the assembly line and identifies the benefits of managing employees in this way. He argues that each assembly line workman becomes more skilled in their own trade than that of any one of the management team. Therefore the work is best left for them to complete (Taylor, 1911). Scientific Management tasks were the reason to develop and find ways of controlling employee labour in what could be considered a quickly growing capitalist environment (Cooper and Taylor, 2000). Cooper and Taylor (2000) also proposed that capitalistic economic relations are fundamental to Scientific Management, which considers the aggressive social relations created by capitalism to be 'natural' and unavoidable, for example, work intensification.

To provide context, regarding Frederick Taylor and the production of his theories, he was born in Philadelphia in 1856 (New York Times, 1915) and entered employment with the Midvale Steel company in Philadelphia in 1878, where he was perceived as being good at a number of jobs. In 1889, he started to work on reorganising the industrial manufacturing workplace. A number of changes were subsequently evident throughout the workplace, ranging from the employment of a 'water boy', through to the president of the company placing emphasis on treating employees humanely. Taylor's theories were taking shape after the American Civil War, when the American Industrial Revolution was at its height. Manufacturing was growing, but company owners offered limited safety measures and almost no wage incentives for workers (Saylor, 2013). As a consequence of this, injuries were common, productivity was inconsistent, owing to under-staffing, and employees saw very little need to be diligent. It has been suggested by Saylor (2013) that Taylor's interpretations of work methods and outputs at this time directly influenced the ideas behind Scientific Management.

Taylor's (1911) attempts to address the problems of factory organisation prompted the modern-day assembly line, and Boddy (2009) suggests that the keystone of Scientific Management is a focus on the relationship between the employee and the machine system. Boddy (2009) also notes that Taylor (1911) advocated some main beliefs in business, for example, picking the best person to do the task, by making sure they have the correct physical and mental capabilities so that they are able to follow procedure exactly. Moving forward, Boddy (2009) also notes that by providing extra financial incentives, the employees could follow the procedure exactly. Finally, moving the responsibility of organising and future planning from the employee on to management.

It had been assumed by Taylor (1911) that there were a number of problems to solve, the perceived 'labour problems' would need to be added through developments in management philosophies (Thompson and McHugh, 2009):

1. Developing a science for every element of work taking place.
2. Scientific selection, development and training of staff.
3. Co-operation between the managers and employees to make sure the work is produced in line with the science.
4. Equal division of work with responsibility between both management and employees with each element allocated in line with skills and knowledge.

Thompson and McHugh (2009) explain that at first glance the four principles seem 'flavourless' and 'common sense' but this can only be understood when measured against contemporary work practices and Taylor's description of the issues, as he identified them. Thompson and McHugh (2009) believe that employees were actually motivated by 'rational self-interest', rather than incentivised wages, within Scientific Management.

Taylor (1911) attempted to improve the management of the organisation by taking away the 'ad hoc' guesswork method which had prevailed, and introducing a more scientific method of management. Through this method, work would be divided up into unambiguous tasks by specialist managers and given to the employees. By creating these principles, Taylor (1911) attempted to make the workplace more efficient, with the apportioning of smaller tasks, in turn creating specialised knowledge in the workplace, while at the same time giving more control to the managerial team (Boody, 2009).

It appeared that Taylor (1911) identified two influences which had prevented employees, in essence, from achieving a 'fair day's work'. Cooper and Taylor (2000) pg 559 proposed that these influences are those of 'sluggishness' and 'natural soldiering'. The latter was given further consideration and was subsequently termed 'systematic soldiering' (Taylor, 1911). Cooper and Taylor (2000) proposed that Taylor (1911) appeared less concerned with 'natural soldiering' than with 'systematic soldiering', namely the act of stopping management from knowing the truth about their productivity levels. Roland, Kidwell and Bennett (1993) go on to reiterate that 'soldiering' appeared to have been highlighted within Scientific Management, with concern about whether or not employees were concealing their maximum capabilities.

In essence, Taylor (1911) was not suggesting that staff should not be paid, but that the development of the whole business was the priority and, thereby, leading to further prosperity. Taylor (1911) gives reasoning for producing the work, through a range of examples and illustrations. The losses that countries and organisations suffer through poor management, and to attempt to persuade the reader that there is the possibility to resolve these issues through systematic management (Taylor, 1911). Furthermore, to demonstrate that the most productive process of management is a true science, which ought to be based on clearly defined rules and principles.

Boddy (2009) argues that Taylor (1911) had an underlying philosophy of scientific analysis to improve and develop the workplace and, like Smith (1776), that the tasks within the workplace need to be more routine and predictable. Boddy (2009) then goes on to suggest that Taylor (1911) proposed more scientific studies like motion study, standard tools and individual incentives, whilst also breaking up tasks in order to increase control over the work force.

Taylor's Scientific Management appears to have created a legacy, with Drucker (1999) arguing that it can still be applied within the context of the post-2000 workplace. Drucker (1999) comments on the breadth of Scientific Management theory, suggesting the scale of its impact could be likened to the impact of Marxism in the way it has spread around the globe. Further adding to this Braverman (1974) also discusses Taylor (1911) within that context, while Harris (1998) highlights that scientific management was evident in every area of capitalist organisations. Furthermore, Cleveland et al (2015) suggests that with the early attempts to develop these assets, Taylor (1911) was treating employees more like HRM tools and recognized that employees could not be developed without understanding and taking into account the needs of employees.

There has been some criticism of Taylor (1911), however, with Wagner-Tsukamoto (2008) proposing that Taylor's (1911) work could be perceived as inhuman and mechanistic - criticisms that are supported by Braverman (1974). Benschop and Doorewaard (1998) have also criticised Taylorism for the lack of organizational flexibility and the low quality of work. This criticism appears to cover an apparent lack of adaptability within a team-based work environment, and thus was deemed inappropriate in some situations.

There was further criticism of Taylor (1911) and Locke (1982) attempting to reposition criticism of Taylor (1911) within *The Ideas of Frederick W. Taylor: An Evaluation* (Locke, 1982). It is interesting to note that Locke's own criticism of Taylor (1911) was focused on the impression that his work saw men as equivalent to machines. Locke (1982) had a different view, where machines were instead integrated with the worker (see below for further findings from Locke, 1982). More broadly, however, Locke (1982) dismissed much of the criticism of Taylor's (1911) work regarding Scientific Management, considering much of it as either false, or based on incorrect interpretation.

When looking at some of the arguments, Littler (1978) argues that from a 'sociological' perspective, Taylorism is solely an 'ideas system', considering workers and their motivation. Littler (1978) op cit Nelson (1975) proposed that Taylorism grew from systematic management in the 1880/90s. Taylor (1911) argued that the principal purpose for management should be to secure maximum success for the employer, coupled with the maximum success for each employee within the company. More importantly, it also means the improvement of each and every single worker's ability to work at maximum efficiency; generally meaning the best work that employees are able to complete, befitting their natural capabilities (Taylor, 1911). Taylorism has been a leading factor in the global work environment for many years, with around 10% of manufacturing workers in France still working on assembly lines in 1978 (Doray and Macey, 1988). Taylorism, and its successor Fordism, has become a model for manufacturing, impacting upon the way in which we work in the modern world.

Moving forward, Henry Ford (1914) was an enthusiastic advocate for Taylorism in the workplace. Scientific Management was introduced into Ford's manufacturing plants, resulting in a significant improvement in assembly line productivity, with the time taken to produce a single car falling from 700 hours to just 93 minutes. Ford (1918) built on Taylor's theories, developing a system based on material flows and plant layout (Biggs, 1996; Williams and Haslam, 1992 op cit Boddy, 2009). Yet Clark (1992) proposes that the problem of labour control was not new and that it had already been a key issue for businesses, since it sought to establish control over production. Without an appropriate form of control of the labour force, Ford (1918) felt the integration of new technology would be impossible. Thus, the resolution of the problem of labour control was a condition for the profitable introduction of Fordism (Clark, 1992). Examining further, Clarke (1992) states that new methods were needed, since Taylorism involved a laborious process of observing and regulating the effort by every worker in the production process. However, within any new theory regarding the assembly line, it was deemed that the method of payment was vital to any new forms of organisation of labour.

On reflection of the literature it could be assumed that there has been a resurgence of Taylor (1911) within the modern concept of work and the 'control' of work during the GFC, discussed later within the research. This leads the reader to the next development, namely the previously highlighted work of Ford (1918), in which Ford (1918) built on the work of Taylor (1911), by proposing that employees are accessories to machines (Clarke, 1992).

Fordism (1918)

Fordism has its beginnings with Henry Ford and the Ford Motor company. Clarke (1992) suggests that Ford created the decomposition of tasks within the workplace, transforming the production of motor vehicles, and thus Fordism was born. Fordism moved a step beyond Taylorism by suggesting that employees are accessories to machines (Clarke, 1992). Doray and Macey (1988) noted that the Fordist system swept the industrialised world from 1918 onwards. Although the use of technology saw the number of workers on assembly lines fall (Milkman and Pullman, 1991), this type of strategic management has been increasingly applied to clerical and intellectual roles. The consequence has been that the demands on workers in clerical positions has increased (Conant and Kilbridge, 1965). Braverman (1974) recognised the introduction of the moving assembly line as a significant development in manufacturing technologies.

Clarke (1992) concludes that the differences between Taylorism and Fordism was that Taylorism assigns tasks to individual employees, whereas Fordism fits the individuals into what is termed 'a human machine', with the number of workers and their roles decided by the necessary tasks. Doray and Macey (1988) suggest that Taylorism dominated the production world for at least half a century and still referred to the work as 'assembly line work'. In contrast, Fordism has been credited for using the assembly line to make the workplace more productive. Productivity is popularly attributed to the assembly line with Clarke (1992) suggesting this

undoubtedly provided the biggest increase in productivity during the time Fordism was introduced.

When examining if Fordism is regarded as being positive for the workforce, while it is generally considered to have been inherently positive for productivity (Clarke,1992; Doray and Macey,1988), Atzeni (2013) argues that in the context of automotive workers in the 1930s and 1940s, Fordism was also inherently labour strengthening rather than labour weakening, especially by comparison to today's 'at risk' work force. However, for Fordism to take on the guise of being labour strengthening, it would have had to been unionised. Silver (2003) suggests that, while Fordism was seen as labour strengthening rather than labour weakening, this was only evident after the unionisation of mass production. Subsequently, Silver (2003) suggests that Fordism not only made the skills of the majority of employees obsolete, but also freed employers to look for new sources of labour, resulting in downward wage pressures and a working class that was seen as desperately separated by ethnicity and other differences. It was at the point of unionisation, when Silver (2003) suggests that Fordism became labour strengthening, within the workplace.

Alienation has also been shown to be prominent during the Fordism era, with the assembly line environment only serving to intensify the isolation of automobile workers, as suggested by Blauner (1964). This phase of production would see the promotion of trade unions, owing to the fact that Fordism required a large workforce with equal rights, obligations and a military style ethos in order for it to exist (Atzeni, 2013).

Linking back to alienation, which was discussed earlier in relation to the work of Marx (1867), Blauner (1964) refreshes Marx (1867) and tries to examine alienation within a different context, that of the industrial revolution (known as the 'technological–scientific' revolution) between 1950 and 1960. Blauner (1964) suggests that, owing to the creation of new factories and machines, jobs that were previously left to the worker were now completed by machines. Workers are left with more repetitious, uninteresting work, resulting in increased alienation and feelings of powerlessness. There have been criticisms of Blauner's (1964) work. Erikson (1986) suggested that it can sound somewhat naïve to accept that something such as a feeling of alienation can be captured, for example, by completing a job satisfaction questionnaire. Yet by all accounts that is what Blauner (1964) had done, even though his data was rich in its analysis.

During the time that Blauner (1964) was writing, there appeared to be further divisions, with Blauner (1964) suggesting that the 'division of labour' meant that, whilst it was easier for jobs to be achieved, there was less responsibility for employees. This was not only because of technological factors, but also due to the new managerial concepts pioneered by Ford (1918). There is also a perspective put forward by Blauner (1964) that it is possible to plot a course of alienation. He proposed that, in the beginning, alienation in the workplace was lower, and that increases in productivity led to a greater propensity for alienation, with the technological advancement of the assembly line matched by a simultaneous intensification of all magnitudes of alienation. Further criticism of Blauner (1964) came from Shepard, (1977), who based his challenge on how Blauner used and collected data in his efforts to raise the questions of worker alienation coming from the Marxist perspective to a more scientific level. Blauner (1964) included a study where data was taken within a chemical plant, yet the data was out of date and had not been originally collected to specifically measure the scale or frequency of alienation (Shepard, 1977).

In contrast, Braverman (1974) suggests that Blauner (1964) actually identified that the average worker can influence their job, but that it is the epitome of tedium. This illustrates the point from sociologists that the modern labour process has degraded for employees. From a sociological perspective, Braverman (1974) challenge to Blauner's (1964) work was his presumption that the only point worth studying was not the work itself, but the dissatisfied reaction of the employee to the work being set. The researcher is of the belief that both the work itself and employee's perception of it should be acknowledged when analysing employment, in order to gain a comprehensive picture of the context of work. Blauner (1964) also understood that production technologies needed to be divided into four different variations, namely: craft; machine tending; assembly line; and continuous progress. Together, these make the process of work easier to control and implement, a point which is also highlighted by Braverman (1974) and can be transferred into modern day sectors.

Braverman (1974)

Hassard et al (2009) suggest that their work shares ground with Braverman (1974). Yet Hassard et al (2009) do not feel that the method of de-skilling is a consequence of labour process, but rather exploitation and work intensification, as described in *Labour and Monopoly Capital* (Braverman, 1976). To expand, LPT is regarded as a Marxist theory and was initially highlighted within the publication *Labour and Monopoly Capital* (2009). It appears to be very similar to Marx's Labour Theory of Value (Marx, 1973). Braverman (1974) attempts to use his revitalised Marxist theory to explain how workers' bargaining power has been eroded in the 1970s. Comparisons have also been offered in *Managing in the Modern Corporation*, Hassard et al (2009). Braverman (1974) was writing in a predominantly Fordist era in the United States and attempted to analyse thinking about labour through a Marxist lens. Braverman (1974) attempted to use his own experiences, focusing upon process, and suggested that this was a gap in the literature. He suggests that, rather than having an employee focusing on a single task, through a Taylorist division of labour approach (see Taylor, 1911), work would be divided into simple tasks to merely facilitate the production of higher quantities.

Braverman (1974) highlights the importance of Taylor (1911) in understanding the labour process and its complexities at that time. Braverman (1974) further states that the approach adopted by Taylor (1911) was pioneering, providing principles that are fundamental to work design and engineering today. Thus Braverman (1974) explains each of Taylor's three key principles.

The first principle was that managers will assume the responsibility of gathering together all of the available traditional knowledge previously possessed by the workmen. From there, they are able to clarify and tabulate, using this knowledge to build applicable laws, rules and formulae (transferrable knowledge). The second principle was that all thinking should be removed from the shop floor and centralised in a department dedicated to planning or development. The third principle was that each worker becomes more skilled in their own trade than anyone in the management team and therefore the work is best left for them to complete.

In the case of principle one, Braverman (1974) simplifies it further by suggesting managers will compile the information to then facilitate the transfer of knowledge in an efficient manner. This is generally termed as 'dissociation of the labour process from the skills of the worker'. This immediately highlights the issues of alienation among workers, as the worker is disconnected or alienated from the actual work itself. They have lost responsibility for how their work is completed, ceding this to the capitalist management. The assumption is that this contributed to alienation and was a source of great misery to the working classes, directly contributing to resistance against the work itself (Atzeni 2013 cit al Marx 1867) and assumed to be linked to the alienation indicator on pg 31.

Braverman (1974) views the second principle as the 'separation of the conception from execution', attempting to dehumanize the labour process, and therefore making the management of purchased labour even more critical. In this scenario, the thinking side of work was to be dealt with by management, who would then communicate and allocate appropriate tasks to their employees. Braverman (1974) suggests that, once simplified tasks are communicated, then it is the workers' duty to 'unthinkingly' complete these, without the need for understanding the context or rationale. Yet this principle goes against the concept of Marx's (1867) discussions on alienation. Braverman (1974) suggests for Principle Three the prioritisation of monopoly over knowledge to help control each step of the labour process.

In this scenario, the work of every employee should be planned out, with detailed instructions of how this work is executed, and specifying the time required to completing each task. (Braverman 1974 cit al Taylor, 1911a) supported this and also went on to suggest that this principle would be problematic to introduce, if workers were familiar and comfortable in their roles, ie. doing the same thing, using the same process, for years. In those cases, employees will often feel that they know as much as their bosses – or perhaps even more – about the business they work in, and certainly their function. It might be assumed that modern day management had its beginnings within Taylor's three principles, a point which has been supported by Braverman (1974).

Division of labour has been investigated by Braverman (1974), revisiting these ideas to explain how workers' bargaining power has reduced since the 1970s. Braverman (1974) further suggests that scientific management was an attempt to apply systematic and measurable methods, to address the complex problems surrounding the control of labour. Modern management was based on the principles addressed within *The Principles of Scientific*

Management (Taylor, 1911). The separation of mental and manual work was examined by Braverman (1974) in the guise of scientific management, proposing that if these two areas of production are separated, then this limits the time wasted on unimportant or unrelated factors, allowing employees to concentrate on a primary (and therefore more efficiently completed) task.

In the view of Reid (2003), Braverman (1974) accepted that the essential components of Marx's (1867) assessment of the labour process were that the use of labour to facilitate the gathering of capital, creates an important conflict of interests between workers and capitalists. Reid (2003) goes on to suggest that Braverman (1974) shared with Marx (1867) the perception that employees are unable to be trusted to work in the best interests of capital generation, arguing that control is crucial to ensure that the maximum amount of capital can be realised from the full potential of labour. The need for tougher control that regulates the structure of work within a capitalist society creates class struggles (Reid, 2003).

In recent years, Smith (2014) has proposed that there are nine key concepts to LPT:

- 1) Labour power: i.e. what is sold and for how long.
- 2) Control: what is the reason for the capitalistic labour process.
- 3) The labour process.
- 4) The work regimes of employees.
- 5) The division of labour and the migration of work or the worker.
- 6) The potential conflicts within the labour process.

- 7) The various trends and dynamics of capitalism.
- 8) The labour market and the structure of organisations.
- 9) Employment relations within the organisation.

These nine concepts are being used as a framework to assess the information from participants within the present study. Much has been discussed about the division of labour (Spencer, 2000; Littler and Salaman, 1982; Lewis, 2007; Wood, 1987; O'Doherty and Willmott, 2001; Thompson, 2003). Braverman (1974) submits that the capitalist model representing the division of labour was not identical to the distribution of tasks, skills and specialities. Braverman (1974) proposes that the appropriate division of labour in production first begins in the analysis of the process: for example, how the work is separated into different areas. Braverman (1974) analyses this in more detail, proposing that there is a second step, where the worker can break the process down further, but is no longer in control of the tasks. Responsibility for the allocation of tasks falls to the capitalists (meaning the organisation). This in turn means that capitalists now have control over both productivity and management (Braverman, 1974).

Braverman (1976) realised that labour power had become a valuable commodity and that it was no longer systematized by the organisation selling the product, but in essence this aspect has been taken over by the actual need of the customer. From this statement, Braverman (1974) concludes that labour power not only shaped the nature of work, but also that of the population. The creation of a large number of simple jobs, as suggested by Braverman (1974), is the main feature of an industrialised capitalist country. Braverman (1974) also proposes that it is of high importance for capitalist management teams to control the labour exchange from

employee to management, a primary cause of alienation. In short, as highlighted by Taylor et al (2015), LPT looks to understand three key areas, namely control, consent and resistance at the point of construction.

Given the movement to post-Fordism, and the evolving knowledge economy (Thompson and Smith, 2001), LPT has been accused of lacking relevance to any current paradigm (O'Doherty and Willmott, 2001). Alternative understanding, through the subjectivity of managerial work, exploring the relevance of poststructuralism to base a reconstruction of LPT, has long been argued (Willmott, 1987, 1997). It was suggested that taking a view of managerial work as both the subject and object of an organisation would result in improved control of capitalist labour processes (Willmott, 1997). These debates may provide an alternative understanding of labour processes, in relation to 1970s LPT. Some application of managerial analysis was argued by Thompson and Smith (2000), that LPT theory is potentially well placed to help synthesizing new perceptions within the framework of the current economic situation (Thompson and Smith, 2009). As such, changes in globalisation and improved technology, which have underpinned the downsizing of the workforce, have meant further updating of LPT was necessary. Even if the issues relating to improved technology have less of an impact, LPT can be assumed to be a useful tool (Brown, 2012).

LPT promised to change the thinking of academics on work organisations. Yet in reality, almost 30 years on, it would appear that it has instead created further problems. Spencer (2000) suggests that LPT has made it more problematic to connect labour process to capitalist production. Spencer (2000) goes on to suggest that LPT will go 'full circle', helping to assist the problems within an organisation which could be used to gain more control, which in turn could exploit the work force. It can be assumed that Braverman (1974) and Marx (1867) were

attempting to improve the workplace for employees. However Spencer (2000) concluded that LPT could be turned in on itself and used to manipulate, and potentially further control, the work force. With this in mind, the researcher believes that LPT will need to be revamped as a theory in order for it to be used constructively as a strategy within the workplace, rather than against the labour force.

The dominant problem for management has been that of control, according to Braverman (1974), who appeared to place the highest importance on capitalist management as the control exchange between employee and management. It is accepted that Braverman (1974) was writing in a Fordist era and was evaluating personal experiences in the growth of LPT. Smith (2014) proposed that there were some key concepts to LPT, ranging from labour power, control, actual labour process and work regimes, to division of labour, migration of the work/worker, potential conflicts within the labour process, capitalism and the various trends and dynamics of capitalism, as well as labour market and employment relations within organisations.

There have been some other criticisms of LPT, such as it being close to irrelevant in the current environment (post-1990), according to (O'Doherty and Willmott, 2001 op cit Storey, 1985; Lash and Urry, 1994). Yet LPT was deemed to be appropriate material for use of the Managing in the Modern Corporation (Hassard et al, 2009). Building on the criticisms of the exhaustion of the LPT as a theory, there is an assumption that it needs to be updated to fit within the context of today's world. It does, however, some seem to echo within today's labour market, where companies appear to have downsized and made substantial job cuts during the post-2008 global financial crisis.

One final thought on the criticism of Braverman (1974), Elger (1979) suggested that the work of Braverman only followed on from the work of Baran (1966), in analysing monopoly capitalism. Elger (1979) argues that Braverman (1974) does, however, offer a more rigorous consideration of the examination of the capitalist labour process. There also appeared to be a realisation that the context of the theory needed to change, supported by Adler (2007), going some way to confirm the researcher's initial thoughts of the need to utilise LPT in a different way to reflect a changing work environment.

With regards to the pursuit of workplace improvement post-2000, it has been argued by Jaros (2000) that LPT may require analysis within the context of with right wing political organisations and neo-liberal schools of thought in order to make appropriate updates. While perhaps some of the issues surrounding improved technology may have limited impact, it has been argued that further progress towards downsizing (Brown, 2012) has had an effect upon the currency of LPT, particularly in the post-2008 market place.

In conclusion, the efforts of Braverman (1974) attempted to analyse particular work processes, with Young (2015) suggesting that Braverman's (1974) views successfully identified the work process, further ascertaining the area between the tangible and intangible aspects of work. It goes on to reiterate how important Braverman's (1974) work was becoming in analysing the current work environment. There are a multitude of reasons for assessing Braverman within the current work. Braverman (1974) provided one of the first clear, critical understandings for over a century within a capitalist labour society. The work of Hassard et al (2009) also drew on the work of Braverman (1974) to assist their own analysis.

Braverman's (1974) labour process theory has played a major role in helping to lay a foundation for the creation of Hassard et al (2009) studies in which observations of increasing work intensification for managers within multinational financial services companies, post 2000 and has been observed. The project now moves forward in time, examining High Performance Work Systems (HPWS) and how this may affect the way people work.

There was an assumption that HPWS would revolutionise the way in which people were employed, with Keeble-Allen and Armitage (2007) proposing that themes of high performance working (HPW) are becoming the norm for a human resources (HR) post-2000. A multitude of organisations have proposed adopting this method of working, but in reality have they carried this out? Have they adopted this style of work or have changes made been merely nominal and undermined by short term 'low road' managerial imperatives (Thompson, 2003)?

Post Fordism (1980/1990): TQM &HPW

When examining High Performance Work Systems (HPW) the researcher felt it timely to touch on the work of Deming (1982) and that of Total Quality Management (TQM). Krüger (2001) suggests that, in the period following World War II, there was a period of large-scale immigration. The United States was awash with unskilled workers and Taylor's (1911) theory of scientific management was considered an appropriate tool in finding ways to employ this under-skilled workforce. Deming (1982) established that quality was not important in this instance, while Krüger (2001) suggests that number was a more significant factor, with the extra profit generated via greater employment seen as more than enough to cover any lack of quality. Zairi (2005) highlighted that TQM was characterized by three fundamental principles:

1. Customer Orientation
2. Process Orientation

3. Continuous Improvement

Tamkin (2004) suggested that TQM introduced a change in how things were produced, with 'just in time' production techniques. Much of the competitive success of Japan since WWII had been understood by European and US markets. Tamkin (2004) suggests that TQM was needed to help incorporate quality programs with reduced costs. There appeared to be a number of issues with the TQM method, with Tamkin (2004) suggesting that with the reduction of costs and layering, things tended not to be completed as rigorously. On a positive note, Tamkin (2004) proposes that employees tended to become more up skilled.

When reviewing TQM and how it impacts with High Performance Work Systems (HPWS) it has been suggested by Tomer (2001) that while the two approaches are not the same, there is scope for them to be utilised together. When understanding how TQM could work with HPWS, (Lawler, 1992 op cit Tomer, 2001) suggests that when TQM approaches employee involvement it takes the majority of autonomy and control away from the employee to control the process of tasks. According to (Lawler, 1992 op cit Tomer, 2001) it does not enable organisations to be restructured and simplified. Also, employees are given information and power to improve certain specific elements of the organisation's work processes. It has been suggested (Lawler, 1992 op cit Tomer, 2001), that HPWS organisations can be recognised as using an approach that is essentially different from that of the historical hierarchical or bureaucratic ones, in a manner than can be understood as 'control-oriented'. TQM has been criticised by Keeble-Allen (n.d.) for its failure to deliver on what has been promised and that, when examining HPWS, there has been a movement towards "continuous improvement", an aspect that has its roots in TQM.

HPWS has been championed since the 1990s as a potential strategy to help to address the trials of the 21st century. Keeble-Ramsay and Armitage (2011) suggested that there are already a large number of organizations dedicated to the HPWS philosophy. The landscape of human resource management (HRM) has been changing rapidly in the 21st century, owing in part latterly to the GFC and the paradigm shift experienced. In this climate, firms have attempted to outperform their competition by adopting a 'lower road' approach. Thompson (2003) pg 364 and Joo and Mclean (2006) suggest that globalization, the pressure for speed and innovation, and the growing competition for talented workers have given organizations an added incentive to analyse their approaches to employee relations.

When looking to understand what high performance work systems (HPWS) are, Harley, Sargent and Allen (2010) propose that HPWS practices can generate positive outcomes for employees by attempting to match their interests, in an orderly and a predictable way. Ramsay, Scholarios and Harley (2000) suggest that, historically, the majority of work on HPWS has attempted to examine the direct connection between management practices and performance results. Ramsay et al (2000) propose that this presumes that some connections operate through incentives and motivational factors, such as high-commitment, high-involvement or a focus on employee outcomes.

There does not appear to be a clear definition of HPWS, or any assessment of whether or not it represents a previously unseen way of managing people. Timyo (2014) suggests that HPWS is not a new paradigm in HRM, as the idea of managing people at an optimal level existed for some time. Further to Timyo (2014), (Godard and Delaney, 2000 op cit Lloyd, Payne, 2004) conclude that there appears to be an inconsistency in the measures introduced, which do not match the definitions within applicable literature. The exact definition of HPWS remains subject to debate, with the measures utilised and processes followed being unique to each

organisation (Sung et al, 2005). Despite this confusion, there does appear to be some fundamental areas which HPWS aims to examine. As such, HPWS would seem to be broadly defined as the practices that human resources (HR) managers adopt in order to improve employee performance (Ashton and Sung, 2002).

The enhanced level of performance measurements in the UK over the past two decades has led to a cultural shift in the way public services and organizations have been managed, with WERS (2013) suggesting that life could change for the employees who have remained, such as pay cuts or freezes. Also, there may be changes to the actual work required, for example the reorganisation of tasks or increases in workload, with no increase in pay. There appears to have been an aspiration towards HPWS, but it seems that thought might have faltered in progress, due to the GFC and Keeble-Ramsay and Armitage (2011) indicate that this may have been, in part, due to problems with the definition of the HPWS philosophy. Without clarity of conception, it is difficult to use as a clearly defined model to follow (Timyo, 2014; Wood and de Menezes, 2008).

There appears to be a view that HPWS has not always been seen in a positive light, with Mariappanadar (2014) suggesting that employers could benefit from HPWS, but that this is not always beneficial for employee wellbeing. Mariappanadar (2014) goes on to suggest that HPWs are not inherently harmful, but that they could be harmful for employees in the way they are applied within an organisation, or via the continued use of the practice by managers. When looking to examine how one might be able to catalogue the harmful aspects of HPWPs, Mariappanadar (2014) pg 315 goes on to propose the stakeholder harm index, which is defined as:

‘A catalogue to capture the harmful aspects of reduced psychological, social and work related health wellbeing outcomes for the stakeholders (employees, their families, and the community) and the aggregate social costs of welfare loss due to such harmful aspects caused by either a specific form of HPWP or a bundle of HPWPs.’

According to Mariappanadar (2014), what is discussed within their paper is positivistic and measurable, but the current project was to gain perceptions of the post-GFC workplace and the changing nature of work did not therefore appear to be of use within this particular project. That said, it still offers some consideration for future projects when examining HPWS specifically.

Section Summary

Section 1 provides an overview of the development of work practices, which has been informed by the work of Hassard et al (2009). More focus is targeted in this section towards the areas which Hassard et al (2009) highlighted within their work, for example Marx (1884), Taylor (1911) and Braverman (1954). As data has been collected, the assumption is that the above historical theories have become more relevant within the current post GFC paradigm and are discussed in more detail (see chapter 4, 5, 6). It is understood that section 1 is an overview and not a complete history of work, owing to limitations over word count and suitability of literature. The researcher decided to focus on the work of Hassard et al (2009) and the data collected, to assist in the inclusion strategy in section 2. Existing literature will allow the reader to gain a firm starting point for the study, whilst providing a historical background and relevance for the study.

The literature review will now examine the work of Hassard et al (2009) building on the previous historical context. Within this next stage of the work, the researcher will move forward

in analysing the current literature, from 2000 to 2014. It is interesting to note that the themes illustrated previously appear to worsen during the GFC. The sub-themes were helpful to build the initial interview template and to help provide a starting point for the interviews. Having reviewed what has been stated previously (Braverman, 1974; Taylor, 1911; Marx, 2012b; Marx, 1867; Ford, 1918), it is possible to see a clear historical development of management, within the context being explored.

It has been suggested that organization theorists have gradually agreed that history matters and that historical context is important for assisting in understanding ourselves (Rowlinson et al, 2014 cit al Brown & Härtel, 2011) and for understanding the organizations that investigated (Rowlinson et al 2014 cit al Sydow, Schreyögg, & Koch, 2009). Within the study the researcher has offered an understanding of historical context and also acknowledged Rowlinson et al (2014) suggestion of the need for increased reflexivity regarding the epistemological problem of presenting the past, which could lead to just a creation of a repository of data.

When reviewing the journey that has provided the springboard of the research of Hassard et al (2009), and which also provides the current context of this research, the number of pre-GFC studies were limited. They did, however, clearly address work over a number of countries and sectors. That is the reason why Hassard et al (2009) provide an important sounding board to contrast and compare with the current research. Section 2 draws predominately on literature post-2000 and looks to address literature that covers work practices, assessing if there was any worsening of these during the GFC. An investigative measure has been applied to assess how the current process of work has changed and where this can be applied to the GFC. The next section also sees the researcher attempt to provide a holistic approach to the analysis.

Furthermore, in the following section, the researcher has chosen the literature of the Workplace Employment Relations Study (WERS), (2011). This government report, the sixth in a series of surveys providing a nation-wide assessment of employment, records perceptions of the workplace at a contemporary level. The survey suggests that changes are becoming apparent within today's workplace, and provides a useful snapshot of employee perceptions during the period of the GFC. Building on the WERS Report, the author found it useful to examine the Skills and Employment Survey (2012), a nationwide survey of people between the ages of 20 and 65 who were in paid employment at that time, as well as literature that followed this, specifically focusing on (Gallie et al 2013; Inanc et al 2013; Green et al 2013a; Felstead et al 2013a; Green et al 2013b; Felstead, et al 2013b). Employee engagement is also examined within section 2, in particular how this might have changed post-GFC. Finally, this section looks to investigate the key highlighted themes, which have been extracted from Hassard et al (2009) and further informed by the WERS (2011) and Skills and Employment Survey (2012). Through the justification and findings from Hassard et al (2009) the reader will begin to understand why the study has been utilised as a springboard into the current research.

Chapter 3

Post Millennial Work Environment

Hassard et al (2009)

The reason for choosing the Hassard et al (2009) studies as a starting point for the project was that there has been little research about the primary issues affecting the post-2008 work environment. Hassard et al (2009) work captures 'real lived experiences' from managers. This, in essence, is what the researcher is attempting to achieve, by providing an assessment of employee experiences instead. Hassard et al (2009) suggest that there is little evidence within the study to expect any major organised resistance to any post-2008 culture of over-work. Between 2003 and 2007 Hassard et al (2009) undertook interviews with middle managers in large work organizations in the UK, Japan and the US, which were written up in peer-reviewed journals (McCann et al 2004; Morris et al 2006; McCann et al 2008). Through them, they proposed clearly documented differences within three countries (UK, US and Japan), from the structure of administrative tradition through to institutional regimes.

Further publications from McCann et al (2010) and Morris et al (2008b) attempted to analyse the issue of managing in a modern corporation, having understood that the context of the situation has perhaps changed (Hassard et al, 2009). One of the key findings from their research was the amount that middle managers are expected to achieve, meaning that their work hours, stress and responsibility had all increased. The research from Hassard et al (2009) on work intensification covered white-collar managers in multinational manufacturing companies. In order to establish a good base, this work draws heavily on the empirical work of (Hassard et al, 2009).

Hassard et al (2009) looked to understand the effects of corporate downsizing and de-layering, which was becoming apparent within middle management. They used Braverman (1974) as a lens to understand the context of the data being presented. The authors intended to incorporate a Marxist theory, adapting it to modern day systems (therefore within a neo-Marxist framework). Hassard et al (2009) found differences between the varying cultures they reviewed, suggesting that some were more forthcoming with information than others, with different ways in which they manage. In Japan, Hassard et al (2009) found that that opportunities for self-orientated study is particularly limited. Within the UK, Hassard et al (2009) describe how new organisational philosophies and technologies have led to the fragmentation of work, leading to flexibility and prosperity within contemporary organisations. Hassard et al (2009) had already begun to make assumptions on what conclusions they might find before they had collected the data. Hassard et al (2009) go on to suggest that various stories had been seen in the media, often regarding blue-chip companies making major job cuts, which in turn added to the sense of crisis within the countries in question.

There appear to be some comparisons to the current environment. Hales (2010) suggests that, when applying the findings of Braverman (1974) they were able to argue for the increase in intensification, stress, anxiety and overworked within the managerial labour process. When examining the work of Hassard et al (2009), the researcher found that that there was little evidence to suggest much analysis of the Labour Process Theory (LPT), and there were no broader links with the work of Braverman (1974). This is supported by Hales (2010), who suggests that greater emphasis is required on the theoretical framework of the neo-Marxist LPT.

Of particular interest for Hassard et al (2009) was their ability to gain access to a large amount of data and information from different sector organisations. This wealth of cultural and

organisational information provided a useful addition to the global body of information, although the research was gathered in a timeframe before the onset of the GFC. When analysing the work of Hassard et al (2009), Hales (2010) proposes that this is perhaps more of a macro-economic view rather than a micro-level view of managerial work (Hassard et al, 2009).

The researcher has also concluded that Braverman's (1974) LPT arguments about de-skilling do not hold true, as the workers are expected to do more and it could be argued that they are actually up-skilling (Harvey, 1995). However, rationalization about the intensification of labour is still relevant to the LPT and the managerial change. Hassard et al (2009) looked to highlight key areas in ways the quality of working life could be improved. McCann, et al (2010) recognises the 'dirty secret' that corporate down-sizing and de-layering, apparent in modern corporations, does not in reality actually improve productivity. Hassard et al (2009) go on to suggest from their findings that stakeholders and unions can go some way to improve the quality of life, but that it also requires additional effort by managers to improve this situation. After looking initially at Hassard et al (2009), it became clear that the data collected was predominately analysed by the LPT, but it was not inherently suggested that this was the case, rarely relating the work produced by Braverman (1974). With this in mind, the author felt it had been important to touch on the theory that inspired Braverman in the 1974 Labour Process Theory, this being Marx's Labour Theory of Value (1867) and its Marxist roots.

Technology appears to be a key theme within Hassard et al (2009), and this has led to this being a theme within the thesis. Hassard et al (2009) propose that, historically, new technologies have impacted upon organisational strategy. (Hassard et al 2009 op cit Marchington et al 2004) suggest that new technologies can facilitate the fragmentation of work and that this increased complexity has negatively affected modern organisations. (Hassard,

et al 2009 op cit Green, 2006, 2001) goes on to suggest that productivity has increased, but as a result of increased work intensification. Following on from the suggestion that increased work intensification has had consequential links to the use of new technology, Hassard et al (2009) contribute that email is something that can now no longer be avoided, with managers receiving over one hundred emails a day. These emails are often dealt with outside of work hours, which in turn impacts on the balance between work and life. One contributor summed up the effect of this by suggesting that they feared the outlook of the workplace in the years to come. When looking at new technologies, Hassard et al (2009) discusses the introduction of new Information Technology (IT) systems in the late 1990s, which assisted further centralisation. This turned the banking sector into high street retail units, adding stress and burdening employees with aggressive sales targets. Beirne (2013) proposes that their research highlights the growing stress, lowering morale and the growing resentment of staff. However, by documenting the changes and experiences of the middle managers, it appears that the implications for the wider employee base has been overlooked.

This can be further informed by Hassard et al (2011) when they focused one of the research questions of how careers have changed within this new organisational form. With these new forms Hassard et al (2011) have claimed major implications on the workplace of degradation of labour pools, increased job insecurity, and the reorganisation of employee careers. When examining Hassard et al (2011) it was understood that career opportunities had been reduced, and that middle managers had less prospect of promotion. This further informs the adoption of research question 2 within the thesis.

There have been some critics of Hassard et al (2009), with Beirne (2013) proposing that, had the managers and employees not jointly felt these pressures, then the negative impact of technology could have been offset by greater loyalty, camaraderie and mutual support – a factor that does not appear to have been addressed within the study by (Hassard et al, 2009). When examining this further, two recent studies were conducted within the workplace over the

period of the GFC, which enables the reader to gain some understanding of the current working perception. There is however, a clear difference between the work of Hassard et al (2009) and Braverman (1974). Hassard et al (2009) took the perspective of middle management, but in contrast Braverman (1974) examined changes from the employees' perspective. Are their findings transferable between the different investigations? If so, how?

The researcher is examining how labour is processed via the LPT, with Young (2015) suggesting that Braverman's (1974) analysis correctly identifies the work process and goes on to delineate the area between tangible and intangible aspects of work. This allows relevant theory to be central to the work of Hassard et al (2009) as well as the current work.

In conclusion, the work of Hassard et al (2009) gives a clear snapshot of issues surrounding the intensification of work, pre-GFC, as well as other affected areas. The work gives a clear overview of relevant issues, with Hales (2010) suggesting that Hassard et al (2009) examine the changing nature of work and the developments of local stories from varying organisations, which have been collected and used as a foundation from which to develop their findings.

The work now attempts to move closer to the current date, assessing the prevailing paradigm and providing an overview of contemporary literature. The key literature during this timeframe focuses on the Work Place Employee Relations Study (WERS), (2013), and the Skills and Employment Survey (SES), (2012), and the publications that have stemmed from those projects. The two publications are prominent within the current project as they set the scene to review current issues of how employees perceive themselves to be managed over the relevant timeframe. They also provide a useful generalised example of the perception of work within the UK. Finally, the work then moves towards an understanding of a number of current issues and connections between the publications (SES 2012; WERS, 2013), showing how they are significant within the current context.

The Work Place Employee Relations Study (WERS) 2013

The Workplace Employment Relations Study (WERS) is a national survey of people at work in Britain. It is considered to be the flagship survey of employment relations in the country, collecting data from employers, employee representatives and employees in a representative sample of workplaces. It has been active since 1980 and is co-sponsored by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and is historically collected every six to eight years.

The most recent government report records perceptions of the workplace in its current guise and suggests changes that are becoming apparent. WERS (2013) made many suggestions as to what those changes to the workplace were during the 'shadow of the recession'. Colley (2012) suggests that austerity does not only create change within industry, but also many other 'knock-on' changes through amended work practices or processes (WERS, 2013). Some of the most notable areas are those that engage an employee. Suggestions within the report highlight that, even with fewer staff members, engagement had actually risen since 2004, with a notable increase in methods being implemented to increase involvement and commitment within the workplace. WERS (2013) also examines the issue of increased working hours, with 29% of employees suggesting an increase in workload due to recruitment freezes and redundancies, and thus adding to the increased hours.

During the period 2004 to 2011, a notable proportion of employees felt committed and involved, and this in turn has increased engagement. It has been suggested by WERS (2013) that an increase in communication has contributed to this increase of engagement. As a result, according to WERS (2013), it could be assumed that employees also feel that their views are being translated better into their everyday decision-making process. But WERS (2013) contradicts itself in this matter, by suggesting that over half of the participants who took part

in their study were not satisfied with their actual involvement in the decision-making process at work. It could be assumed that communication has improved since 2004, but when decisions are made, though staff might be consulted, it seems that their views are considered as 'paper talk', given that they are not reflected in decisions within their organisations. Given the assumption that work intensification has been rising over the previous years, according to WERS (2013), Thompson (2011), Hassard et al (2009), Thompson (2003) and CIPD (2013), it is timely to approach the other themes explored within the project.

One final thought regarding how companies have historically dealt with a recession (Geroski and Gregg, 1997 cit al Vaitilingam, 2010) examined the experience of 600 companies following the 1990 UK recession. They suggested that companies had reviewed their approach and focus, which resulted in the majority of companies adjusting their management methods. From there, it is timely to approach the priori themes explored within the project.

At this stage, the researcher introduces the Skills and Employment Survey (2012), which also aims to gain insights into the current workforce among many different sectors. The data collected was almost a year after the WERS (2013) initial study. This enables the reader to gain an insight into the worsening perception of the workplace over the GFC.

Skills and Employment Survey (2012)

The Skills and Employment Survey (SES) was co-funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES). It was carried out across Britain in 2012, covering people between the ages of 20 and 65, who were within paid employment. The co-funded ESRC (2015) study suggests that the survey

focused upon the kind of work people do, and how the nature of that work has changed over time, building upon previous studies. From this study, six short reports have been produced, namely: Skills at Work in Britain; Training in Britain; Job Control in Britain; Fear at Work in Britain; Work Intensification in Britain; and Job-Related Wellbeing in Britain Gallie et al (2013), Inanc et al (2013), Green et al (2013a), Felstead et al (2013a), Green et al (2013b) and Felstead, et al (2013b) and these reports will be examined.

Within the Skills at Work in Britain report, Gallie et al (2013), there appeared to be an understanding that a large amount of resource needed to be directed towards training staff for both the organisation and the wider economy to prosper. Even entry jobs requiring a degree were on the increase in 2012. It is argued in Gallie et al (2013) that this need for a degree and 'over-qualification' for the work required was actually falling by 2012, highlighting the ability of workers to achieve a sufficient level of knowledge and ability without a degree. With this in mind, the process of improved training would have continued. But according to Gallie et al (2013), despite some evidence for upskilling, the actual availability of training was varied, training opportunities were reduced, the amount of training duration, versus what had previously been recorded, and some aspects of general training.

When examining the key themes with the Job Control in Britain, Inanc et al (2013), there is further evidence of a reduction in training. In particular, this appeared to hamper women in the workplace more than their male counterparts. What was also suggested by Inanc et al (2013) was that, where employees had received previous higher level education or training, it appeared as though they were more likely to receive additional training. Finally, Inanc et al (2013) go on to suggest in their findings that there also appeared to be an increase in demand from employees for work-based training across all levels of education.

Training in Britain was another mini report which was produced in conjunction with the wider SES (2012) Report. Inanc et al (2013) proposed that the training opportunities were crucial the development of the workforce. It was discussed by Inanc et al (2013) that training opportunities had got steadily worse from 2006-2012 and that the days which were dedicated to training had reduced over the GFC. Finally Inanc et al (2013) suggests that the quality of training was seen as being too low and was required to improve workforce skills.

Fear at Work in Britain, initially highlighted by WERS (2013), and examined more closely by Gallie et al (2013). Identified an understanding that fear at work could take a number of guises, from the fear of losing employment and unfair treatment in the workplace, through to the loss of status within an organisation. When examining WERS (2013), it had been suggested that, at the start of the GFC, there was a perception of job losses. Gallie et al (2013) also cited signs of a sharp increase of fear of job losses amongst both men and women at the start of the GFC. There also appeared to be an increase in fear regarding unfair treatment in the workplace, a trend that has increased since 2012, with Gallie et al (2013) noting an increased fear that employees would be treated unfairly, including loss of status in an organisation.

The fifth short report of interest to the current study was Work Intensification in Britain, Felstead et al (2013b), where it is suggested that working hours have been cut, while the intensity of work has increased. This supports Hassard et al (2009), from the perspective that employees are facing demands of 'more for less', with the expectation that more work will be completed for less pay. In essence, the short report suggests that work intensification has been on the rise. Felstead et al (2013b) proposes that there are precedents for this trend of work intensification, specifically in the early 1990s, but in this case, the trend appeared to reach some level of stability soon after. Felstead et al (2013b) suggests that this resurgence of work intensification in Britain is shown in the reduced time to produce work, via ever-shorter

deadlines (with 'crunch-time' delivery particularly visible in newer industries such as software development), with the prevalence of increasing deadline pressure at a record high. Within the short report, Felstead et al (2013b) also suggest that the increase in work intensification could be somewhat to blame for the recession. According to Felstead et al (2013b), this is a conflicting view to some initial thoughts that work intensification was not interlinked with downsizing.

The final short report – Job-Related Wellbeing in Britain – produced by Green et al (2013a), showed how happiness and contentment in the workplace was impacted by the GFC. When measuring wellbeing, Green et al (2013a) decided to examine two separate areas, with the view that happiness at work is perceived as an important ingredient of national wellbeing. The two areas examined by Green et al (2013a), were the level of enthusiasm for work, and contentment within the job. The short report highlights that both enthusiasm and contentment within the workplace decreased, in both aspects, between 2006 and 2012. While a small drop was recorded in the enthusiasm scale, a sharp fall in job contentment was evident. Green et al (2013a) suggested a notable rise in job stress, with a correlated fall in job satisfaction. This, presumably, could be linked, with a lack of contentment within the job, leading to a lack of enthusiasm to undertake the work being requested.

When examining Hassard et al (2009) and using the two previously discussed studies WERS (2013), SES (2012) and pilot study Keeble - Ramsey et al (2014), it appeared that there were a number of clear sub-themes that require a more pronounced investigation (see page 15). This led to the development of the template used in the current study, informed using the work of Hassard et al (2009), and finally testing the initial template on a sample group to refine it.

In summary the literature reviewed (Marx, 1867, Weber, 1907, Ford, 1918, Taylor, 1911, Braverman 1976, Thompson, 2003, Hassard et al, 2009, The Work Place Employee Relations Study, 2011 and Skills and Employment Survey, 2012) within the previous sections has led to a historical summary. The thesis has a focus on employee perceptions, with a recognition of the GFC impact on the nature of work within East Anglia. The reasoning behind the three literature chapters was to offer the reader a more linear understanding of what has gone before and how management practices have adapted/changed over time. In exploring Hassard et al (2009) the number of pre-GFC investigations was limited. There was a clear relationship and involvement of LPT on Hassard et al (2009) research. This was used as a springboard into the research and also provided the current context of this research. Furthermore, organizational theorists generally agree that history does matter and a historical context is important for assisting understanding (Rowlinson et al, 2014 cit al Brown & Härtel, 2011). The history then informs the initial and developed conceptual framework, in regards of the study undertaken.

Exploring further, The Baby Ceiling Pilot (2014) further informed the research questions and the conceptual framework through the data collected and helped shape the research questions by allowing and understanding the contextual issues. This also provides an illustration of a previously highlighted issue, by supporting a number of themes highlighted by (Hassard et al, 2009).

Finally, the work of Hassard et al (2009) assists within the inclusion strategy of the literature used. The reasoning was for the researcher to stay as close to the investigation of Hassard et al (2009) as possible. The identified sources were included to allow the reader to gain a starting point for the study, whilst providing history and context for the study. This then

informed the initial conceptual framework, by including the historical theory and the one predominately utilised Labour Process Theory (LPT).

Chapter 4

The Global Financial Context: The Work Context

Contextual Literature

Within the final part of the review of supporting literature, the researcher will attempt to provide a justification of the work of Braverman (1974) and LPT, exploring how these works coincide with the rise in work intensification and other themes. Assessment of the two previously discussed studies, WERS (2013) and SES (2012), provided an understanding that some additional literature could assist in further informing the study. Supportive additional literature, including Kelliher and Anderson (2010), CIPD (2014), CIPD (2013), CIPD (2012), McCann, (2014), Thompson (2007) and Roche and Teague (2014), have been used to help draw some more developed conclusions about the current workplace.

A concern of Braverman (1974) was that many manual workers are equally subject to examination in the context of LPT, based on the Taylorist (1911) methods of repetitive tasks they perform. The result is the 'de-skilling' of their work and knowledge, whereby labour is reduced to that of a repetitive task, thus leading to work intensification and changes in working practices. There does appear to have been a trend visible in reviewing relevant literature of a further 'financialisation' of the workplace, with (Burnham, 2010 op cit Cushen and Thompson, 2016) proposing that wealth/financialisation appears separate and that there appears to be very little connection to that of living labour. This can be further examined through Cushen and Thompson, (2016) with their understanding that the commitments made to management have led to various interventions and a further focus on financialisation. This, in turn, has affected employee status, leading to greater outsourcing, headcount reduction, centralisation and reward insecurity. This can also be further supported via analysis by (Bryan et al 2009 op cit Cushen and Thompson, 2016) that market pressures to preserve the asset prices of a product

have, at the same time, created additional pressures on labour as a form of flexible capital. This provides the researcher with a justifiable reason to use LPT as a lens by which to discuss the findings.

Braverman (1974) concentrates on two particular aspects – de-skilling and management control. In the current context within today's working environment, it could be assumed that not only is de-skilling an issue for work intensification, but that a trend of up-skilling could actually lead to further intensification in the work process. Harvey (1995) further suggests that the representation of up-skilling means that, for example, normal tasks that would usually be carried out by doctors, are now being carried out by nurses/midwives as a consequence of being up-skilled. By this means, relevant work is kept within the responsibility of the medical profession, but the remainder is delegated to other staff groups whose time may already be stretched.

Since 2000, there has been an intensification of the level and velocity of downsizing in the UK (Hassard et al, 2009; Thompson 2003). The perceptions of global competition, to including the exploitation of cheaper labour rates purchasable in other countries, has further contributed to further corporate downsizing, with King and Rueda (2008) suggesting that the UK and US utilise cheap labour – and indeed that most industrialised countries depend on cheap labour of some kind. King and Rueda (2008) also propose that, in addition to the lower costs to employ workers, most economies will rely on the domestic labour force, with flexible, temporary and 'zero hour' contracts used to boost the importance of the cheaper labour market, thereby increasing downward pressure on wages.

Work practices in the UK and globally, pre-2008, of re-structuring, down-sizing and work intensification have been driven by short-term financial goals and the amount of work expected has been documented (Hassard et al, 2009). Work intensification was an issue prior to 2008 (Green, 2001, 2004a; Macky and Boxall, 2008; Green, 2004b; Burke, 2009). The financial credit crunch is a new phenomenon and thus, initially, we look to understand the various issues that preceded it. For instance, does productivity improve when work is intensified? And what have been the impacts of work intensification on the work force? Datta, Guthrie, Basuil and Pandey (2010) proposed that there will be reduced commitment from workers, and thus less direct productivity. Moving forward around the GFC and employment, Roche and Teague (2014) suggest that there are two differing views that dictate the literature, regarding the impact of recessions on employment. One view is that recessions increase focus on employment systems, delineating a time during which firms try to change existing employment models. The alternative perspective is that firms, constrained mostly by economic forces, seek to alleviate short-term pressures. (Gallie, 2005 op cit Russell and McGinnity, 2014) suggests that pressure does not measure the demands of a job or work, but does encompasses employees' capacity to meet the demands requested and that the recession preserves the established nature of the employment relationship. Within the discussion chapter the researcher can categorise which views, if any, that the participating organisations have followed.

Work intensification appears to be a key issue covered in UK literature (Hassard et al 2009; Thompson 2003; Thompson 2011; WERS 2013; CIPD 2013). The author understands that suggestions were already being made into recommendations about how it would be possible to motivate the workforce and thereby improve productivity. Green (2004) suggested that, in the UK, the average working hours per employee increased more quickly compared with other industrialised countries up until the mid-1990s. This covers a period from the early 1980s through to 1997, when the analysis of work intensification was established using various

methodologies (Green, 2004). The suggestion therefore is that this view of work intensification was new, to some extent helping us to understand why there is so little literature around the subject before 1980.

The increase of work intensification continued, with Green (2009) commenting that the skill requirements of careers were likely to rise, a process that had been increasing with the intensification of global competition, technological improvements and organisational changes. This further intensification of work effort, according to Green (2009), has been coupled with a decline in autonomy and trust. While this decline in autonomy within the current decade has levelled off, there remains very little sign of a reversal or improvement. This can be further supported by evidence from CIPD (2014), which suggests that the proportion of employees experiencing excessive pressure within the workplace was consistent in 2014 with the same period in 2013.

It could be argued that the concept of work intensification was established before 1980, but that the perception of it evolved gradually over time. The researcher has found very few documents that specifically focus on the concept of work intensification before 1980, but Groh (1978) is one such example. However, it is understood through research into the subject that work intensification as a concept was established during the 1980s and most, if not all, key literature appeared after 1980.

The GFC led to profound and significant changes within the UK economy, post-2008, due in part to the recession that followed. Prior to the GFC, it seemed that an over-emphasis on capitalistic factors led to a focus on cutting costs within UK organisations, often through work intensification practices (Thompson 2003). Post-GFC, the recession appeared to affect how

people were being managed (Colley 2012; Kamp *et al* 2011; Thompson 2003). It was evident that changes within the economic environment were affecting the dynamic between employee, employer and the organisation (Metz, *et al*, 2012). When looking at employee relations, it appears that the response to the crisis has been something of a process of 'trial and error'; both irregular and uneven (Marchington and Kynighou, 2012). Any worsening of the employment relationship seems to be only within those activities actually affected by the GFC (Metz *et al* 2012).

During the GFC the UK has been going through changes that have affected the way in which people are managed (Colley, 2012; Kamp *et al* 2011; Thompson, 2003). It is assumed by Kamp *et al* (2011) that work was becoming more flexible, with task orientation being key and that keeping to deadlines has become an even greater imperative, rather than being measured in time spent in the work place. It is possible to draw links to the economic austerity measures, adopted by the UK government (2010), which seem to have resulted in a number of knock-on effects. Colley (2012) suggests that additional pressure was applied to successfully achieve deadlines in this Big Society (2010), a leading policy which was introduced following the election of the Conservative Party in May 2010. The GFC and the austerity measures, it could be argued has led the workplace environment to have worsened. This is supported by Lowndes and Pratchett (2011), who suggest that the 'Big Society' concept would be likely lead to an increased form of elite pluralism, in which 'the town can be as oppressive as the city', with organisations outside central regions just as manipulative, oppressive and damaging as any of those situated close to the heart of central government. McDonnell *et al* (2013) propose that following major events such as the GFC, there is a concentration on reducing cost around the labour required.

There has also been greater focus on firms to become 'leaner', and cutting their cloth accordingly during recent years. Thompson (2003) brings forward the suggestion that, in becoming more lean, work-related tasks have become increasingly fragmented, with higher work intensification, with those workers sidelined or undervalued being increasingly less co-operative with their employer.

During the GFC there has been an increase in downsizing in many US and European companies. Van Dierendonck and Jacobs (2012) argue that there are many reasons for this, ranging from the increase in global competition to the availability of cheaper labour in other countries, which has led to downsizing in domestic operations. Following this suggestion, it does appear that these downsizing measures could result in reduced commitment within the remaining employees, with a consequent negative impact on productivity (Datta et al 2010).

Since the Conservative-led coalition government took power, following the onset of the global credit crunch, there have been significant changes to the working environment. Colley (2012) suggests that austerity does not only lead to changes within industry, but that those changes are introduced through management practice. This conclusion is supported by WERS (2013), with their evidence suggesting a trend of 'more work with less pay', and pay freezes affecting most sectors. CIPD (2013) suggested that employees are working harder than previously, with WERS (2013) claiming that the trend of intensification has risen from 27% in 2004 to 34% in 2011 – a rise of seven per cent over the reported period. The conclusion drawn from previous research is that intensification has been rising since 2001, with a particularly noticeable increase since the onset of the GFC (CIPD 2013; CIPD 2012; Kelliher and Anderson 2010). This can be further supported by Macky and Boxall (2008) who argue that intensification leads to an environment where productivity is hampered, the consequence being longer working

hours and employees beginning to feel overloaded. Many employees have been expected to work longer hours without any positive adjustment to their pay levels, a point which has been further suggested across multiple pieces of literature (Bevan, 2012; Burke, Singh and Fiksenbaum, 2010; CIPD 2013; CIPD 2012).

There are a number of critiques that deal with the concepts of work intensification and the health and wellbeing of the workforce (Kets de Vriers and Balazs, 1997 op cit Kelliher and Anderson, 2010) and Green (2001). It can be assumed evidentially, using the previous research, that the intensification of work can have a negative effect on employees and their productivity, and that this leads to a potentially demotivated work force.

Kersley et al, (2006) op cit Kelliher and Anderson (2010) suggest that a growing number of organisations have offered more flexible part-time working opportunities, which has given parents, carers and disabled people the right to improve their effectiveness in work. The issue of flexible working, particularly for parents, is interesting, given that it is an area that appears to have somewhat limited coverage across the research offered thus far.

As previously stated, due to the recent credit crunch, a fall in the number of people employed has led to greater work intensification, without any reduction in the volume of work covered. The CIPD (2013) argues that evidence of this increase in work intensification can be seen during the years between 2004 and 2011. One consequence of this process of intensification is the potential for added work-related stress, caused by the change in mind-set about job security, during a period when redundancies have been seen and potentially related to the austerity policy adopted by the Government (Colley, 2012). This then brings forward the issues

regarding 'survivor syndrome' and how the employees who avoid redundancy react to recent changes within the workplace.

'Survivor syndrome' is termed as:

"a generic term that describes a set of attitudes, feelings and perceptions that occur in employees who remain in organisational systems following involuntary employee reductions" (Noer, 1993).

Noer (1993) examines productivity after a team has been depleted and acknowledges the importance of managing any change correctly for the team to continue to be productive, as well as motivated. Brown (2012) suggests that there have been combined pressures from technological improvement, downsizing and job insecurity due to the increase in work intensification, factors that link closely to those analysed through the lens of Braverman's (1974) LPT theory.

Organisations have increased the amount of work they expect from their employees in recent years. Historically, evidence suggests that this is not sustainable for the workforce, pushing demands beyond healthy limits, relative to the amount of work which can be expected from an employee (Green 2001). Moving through the priori themes, the research examines the current work around one of the sub-themes of communication within the work place and what has been discussed regarding how perceptions of this may have changed since the start of the GFC. The process of communication was highlighted as a key theme during the investigations of Hassard et al (2009). In particular, it was felt that how management communicated to employees might have changed over this period and if so, it was worth

understanding if this came at the detriment of the workforce. WERS (2013) recognised that communication had improved over the previous decade, since 2004, with growth in the methods used for the communication of information, knowledge and requests (for example, via improvements in technology).

During the period spanning 2004 to 2011, presented within the WERS (2013) study, a proportion of employees experienced an increase in commitment, reflected in an upturn in engagement. At a superficial level, the knock-on effect suggests that employees feel that their views are being included in the everyday decision-making process at work. But further examination of the WERS (2013) study reveals that this initial assessment may be incorrect. WERS (2013) goes on to suggest that over half of those employees who took part in the study were not satisfied at work, particularly with regards to their involvement in the decision-making process within the workplace. So, in essence, this suggests that employees are being listened to, but that the knowledge or ideas suggested in those discussions are not being utilised – qualifying them as quintessentially ‘paper talk’.

The issue of job security, another of the sub-themes, seems to have been a common theme throughout the GFC; one that has not been seen in a positive light. Gallie et al (2013) suggests that we could be in a new era of insecurity at work, with a quarter of those participants in the SES (2012) fearing that they may have faced losing their job and becoming unemployed in 2012 – a figure that is higher than in any other year. It could be argued that the issue of job security was not solely due to the GFC. However Gallie et al (2013) presumed that the timing of the rise in employment insecurity strongly suggests that the recent recession, and what has continued after, were indeed important factors which have increased the levels of fear at work.

To further support the issue of job insecurity, in recent work by Cushen and Thompson (2016), the discussion progresses onto the impact of continuous restructuring and unremitting disturbance. Cushen and Thompson (2016) suggest that this affects labour and the labour process and these conclusions are supported evidentially by ACAS (2012), which suggests that most organisations, in both the private and public sector, have undergone major organisational restructuring.

(Kalleberg (2013) and (Lazonick 2013 cit al Cushen and Thompson, 2016) suggest that employees can experience intensified employment insecurity, due to a higher emphasis on organisational restructuring. Furthermore, Cushen and Thompson (2016) go on to suggest that the reduction in internal investment and the uninterrupted organisational upheaval, lead in turn, leads to further work intensification. This consequently results in reduced headcount, more zero-hour contracts, as well as reduced training and development opportunities in the changing work environment.

Training and Career Management was also a sub-theme covered within the earlier work of Hassard, McCann and Morris (2009), with the suggestion being that employees are the first to be affected by training budget cuts. Training opportunities early in a worker's career are, as suggested by Adda et al (2013), the most essential, given that the potential for wage increases over a career are at their highest during this period. But young workers can be among those most at risk during periods of economic shock.

Training is also an interesting point to cover when considering career management. Adda et al (2013) suggest that it should be seen as a useful investment, as early development could have a positive effect on the long-term potential for a worker's future career. At the start of the

recession, CIPD (2009) examined the reason for employees wanting to take ownership of their career progression. Among the primary reasons most UK employees consider changing their jobs are to find a role with increased job satisfaction (57% of participants considered this an important factor), to experience a different type of work (43%), or to achieve better pay (39%).

Employee engagement has long been seen as a useful process to help improve productivity in the workplace. Bakker and Schaufeli (2008) suggest that, if an organisation can attract and retain inspired, devoted and successful employees, then the organisation has a greater likelihood of succeeding. Historically, organisations would attempt to engage their employees via their work as the primary route to improve their performance. Macey and Schneider (2008) suggest that with increased engagement comes profitability and higher sales. The literature review will endeavour to understand how organisations have attempted to make employees engage more with their work, and to evaluate the potential issues they may face with the current economic climate – with an emphasis placed on employee engagement during this time (2008-2014).

With the constant drive for improvement throughout the GFC, there has been a focus on methods to help keep the work force engaged. Hewitt (2012) suggests that the consequences of an engaged workforce are significant and that a previous study highlighted that if there was a 5% increase in employee engagement there appeared to be a 3% increase in revenue in the following year, but this raises the question whether engagement alone is enough to drive sustainable performance. To fully understand to what level an employee is engaged in their work, there has to be clarity about both 'how' it can be measured, and 'what' is being measured. The CIPD (2012) suggests that employee engagement is an employee's relationship with both an organisation and its brand alignment. It can be difficult to assess how

engagement can be accurately measured, and it is hard to overlook that employee engagement could equally be interpreted as a development of the worker's relationship with a company over the period of employment.

To assess these findings, it is important to clarify what is meant by 'employee engagement'. Macey and Schneider (2008) describe it as ambiguous, with academics and researchers referring to psychological states, traits and various behaviours looking to measure each element to determine levels of engagement. However, Shuck and Wollard (2010) argue that there appears to be a gap in knowledge around what organisations need and the actual ability of the employee to respond and go on to suggest that employee engagement could be a passing fad. This comment could be supported by Gruman and Saks (2011), who suggest that organisations are starting to focus on performance management to help improve job performance, with the aim that this will in turn promote employee engagement. So, following 2008, there does appear to be an increased focus on improving employee engagement. Within the current economic climate, performance management, along with employee engagement, with the aim of improved productivity has become more of a priority (CIPD, 2013; Gruman and Saks, 2011; Macey and Schneider, 2008; Shuck and Wollard, 2010).

Macey and Schneider (2008) also struggled somewhat with the notion of engagement, suggesting that the concept was layered with inconsistent interpretations as to its meaning. This has been addressed by Wollard and Shuck (2011) pg 429, who offered a clear definition of engagement as "An individual employee's cognitive, emotional, and behavioural state directed toward desired organizational outcomes". Ulrich (1997) argues that HR-focused thinking can be seen in text books, and suggests that how HR is perceived and delivered could

be re-assessed. Ulrich (1997) suggests that an improvement in HR processes could in turn make organisations improve competitiveness within their market.

Ulrich (1997) also discusses productivity and ways to keep people within the company connected to the organisation. The author suggests that, in order for productivity to improve, employees need to be connected, or 'engaged' with the organisation. Thus a psychological contract between employees and the company evolves. Leading on from this point, Ulrich (1997) argues that employee contribution is a critical business issue, as trying to improve productivity with reduced employee input is difficult. In Ulrich's (1997) view, companies should attempt to engage with every employee to help maximise the potential for higher productivity. There are a number of challenges to this. Macey and Schneider (2008) suggest that factors such as autonomy, challenge, and variety within the workplace and seem to have the biggest effect on productivity. Adding value can be difficult, especially when, as Ulrich (1997) argues, employees are asked to achieve a lot more with fewer resources, less opportunities for personal development or advancement, and lower job security. Ulrich (1997) suggests that this should help HR representatives to understand what role HR can play to help a business gain a competitive advantage. In essence, Ulrich (1997) feels that the HR part of an organisation should add value to the organisation.

Engagement is linked to job satisfaction and Locke (1976) was one of the first to try and understand what job satisfaction really was. It provides an initial view of employee engagement, and not just in terms of job satisfaction. Locke (1976) reports that research into job satisfaction only began in the 1930s, but that attitudes in the work place were covered in previous research before that time. The earlier research into this area is focused more on motivational theories, such as Mayo & Taylor, Taylor and ME (n.d.), Taylor and Weiss (1972), Mayo (1949) and (2003), documented in Locke (1976). Locke (1976) understood that there

are many factors that can affect job satisfaction and suggests that addressing factors such as fatigue, monotony, working conditions and supervision, could help to enhance job satisfaction and engagement (Locke, 1976). With Mayo (1933), there seems to be some attempt to discredit the work of Taylor (1911) some 20 years earlier, by attempting to apply some understanding of how environment, team functioning and sympathetic management may have a positive effect on employees in the workplace.

Locke (1976) states that, at the time of publishing, there were over 3,300 studies on job satisfaction – the earlier studies tended to focus on areas such as physical conditions and fatigue. It was after the Hawthorne studies in the 1930s that researchers were prompted to examine more social factors. Locke (1976) also suggests that it was not until the 1950s that studies were conducted that examined the work itself with relevance to employee attitudes. This information suggests that the concepts of job satisfaction and employee engagement have changed over time, whether through the language used or the factors being measured or assessed. Locke (1976) felt that many researchers examining job satisfaction had relied too much on rating scales and not enough on qualitative data. The suggestion is that, prior to this seminal work being published, research should have logical validity. But Locke (1976) argues that the topic could benefit from further interviews and studies. It could be assumed that with previous research failing to provide a view of the whole experience of employment, Locke (1976) was merely suggesting another form of collection in order to offer a broader, and therefore more accurate, view of the experience.

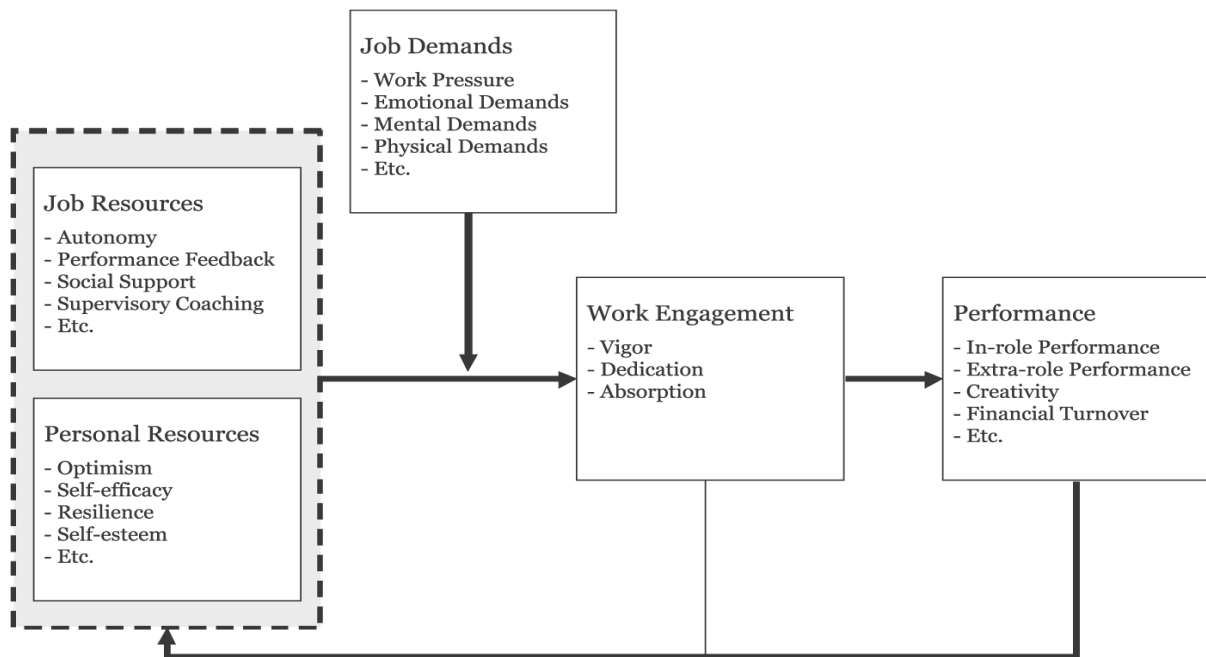
There are a number of issues from this that can be linked to engagement. As mentioned before, performance factors could be a good way of measuring engagement, but this does not fully cover the level or depth of engagement. Rather, it only deals with one side of engagement, without comprehending the wellbeing of the worker. When reviewing the literature CIPD (2013)

Gruman and Saks (2011) Macey and Schneider (2008) and Shuck and Wollard (2010) with Macey and Schneider (2008) suggesting that the indications are that companies have established a convincing and resounding partnership between engagement and profitability, reflected in higher productivity, more sales, customer satisfaction, and employee retention. Looking at productivity and engagement, there have been a number of issues discussed within the literature (Gruman and Saks, 2011; Macey and Schneider, 2008; Shuck and Wollard, 2010). There does not, however, appear to be a framework in which engagement can be measured within management science. The researcher did, however, find a framework within the field of psychology (Bakker and Demerouti, 2008).

Psychologists have defined the concept of engagement very rigidly and have created the Utrecht work engagement scale (Schaufeli, Bakker and Salanova, 2006). Bakker and Demerouti, (2008) suggest that there are four major reasons why an engaged employee performs better, namely: positive emotions; good health; ability to mobilize resources; and crossover engagement.

With this in mind, a model (The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale) JD-R model of work engagement, (see model 1) has been created to explain the different methods of engagement and what is required for employees to improve the process. The model represents a psychologist's approach to engagement. It has been recognised from the literature that a model in management is not readily available, owing to the fluctuating factors by which to manage people. When reviewing model 1 it covers a multitude of engagement factors, but it has been noted that there is a lack of motivation factors and environmental factors for this to be able to fit more cleanly in measuring engagement within a management setting.

(JD-R model of work engagement: Model 1)



Source: Based on Bakker & Demerouti (2007)

Bakker and Demerouti (2008) also suggest that if an employee is engaged with their work, they will create further resources, which will increase the engagement in others and thus create a 'positive gain spiral' for the employees to work within and actually offers a scale as to how it is to be measured. This is somewhat different to the way engagement is perceived in management, where the main measure, it can be assumed, is economic value or productivity. Kahn (1990) described engagement as a motivational concept that gathers an employee's physical, cognitive and emotional energies within the work role and how it is to be performed. What could be useful would be for both the psychological method and management frame of mind to be manipulated so that a measure could be used to gather the levels of engagement and how you could attempt to improve a joint economic target (Kahn, 1990; Bakker and Demerouti, 2008; Rich, Lepine and Crawford, 2010; Bakker and Schaufeli, 2008; Macey and Schneider, 2008; Shuck and Wollard, 2010).

Braverman (1974) has been critical of the studies of Mayo and Hawthorne (1933), suggesting that it yielded little to management, in terms of actual tangible results. In the view of Braverman (1974), the studies spanned the economic downturn and depression of the 1930s in the US, which affected their results, and that their conclusions neither fitted with the Weberian model of bureaucratic formal organisations, nor those suggested by Mayo's (1933) informal group relations. Braverman's (1974) conclusions came as a blow for those wanting to use behavioural sciences as a tool to manipulate the workforce. Hassard (2012) was also critical of the timeliness of the Hawthorne studies (1933), suggesting that less consideration was given to the broader social and political issues that could have affected the workforce at the time of the study.

Semler (1989) suggests that leaders do not need to be selected, rather that they will emerge over time as a natural process when people are put into groups. He suggests that this not the 'luck' of structure, but rather the 'lack' of structure imposed on the group. As a consequence of his management strategy, productivity improved as the employees were given a goal, involvement in the ownership of a task, and were thus motivated to get the job done. The key suggestion is that increased autonomy came with greater engagement and, ultimately, higher productivity. Semler (1989) offers an example: when producing a series of machines that slice meat: the production process had come to a halt, due to the lack of a supplier for the motors. After a series of phone calls that failed to resolve the problem, two employees took it upon themselves to meet with external providers to discuss what was needed the need to finish the project. The motors were delivered and the employees worked through the night to get the work completed. From that time on, flexible time was introduced so that jobs could get done when needed.

Semler (1994) suggests that employees working for a flexible organisation benefit from being given control of their work, with a share of the profits from that work providing them with a reason to do it better. His ideas, however do not appear to be used in general practice. A study conducted by Benders, Huijgen and Pekruhl (2001) highlighted that the majority of participants who were questioned felt they had limited group decision rights, with a clear hierarchy of topics, and in turn they were unable to take the decisions.

During recent times with the GFC, it has been suggested that there is shortfall of qualified and competent workers (Metz et al, 2012). It has been suggested that in order to retain skilled staff, companies should look to keep their employees engaged (De Lange, De Witte and Notelaers, 2008). This statement seems to be undermined by the current UK employment figures, which suggest that there are more people than there are jobs available (therefore placing greater power in the hands of employers). The BBC (2013) stated that the unemployment rate in 2013, was 7.7%, according to the Office for National Statistics. With approximately 300,000 people graduating from university each year (BBC, 2009) this would suggest that, rather than a lack of competent workers, there is not enough work available, with employers slowly beginning to realise that it is an employer's job market. This, in turn leads to the possibility that, rather than keeping the current workforce engaged, perhaps management might think that finding new employees is a better option.

The use of fixed-term and 'zero-hour' contracts provide a good example of how power in the workplace has shifted towards the employer. Managers can get the people they want on temporary contracts, without having to worry about whether they are engaged, or the costs associated with pension schemes and healthcare, among other benefits, as they could be released at any time. Fixed term contracts provide a further example where employers will recruit 'flexible' workers in line with perceptions of demand, while limiting the level of avoidable

expenditure. It is also suggested that with the introduction of more zero hour contracts, this will increase the wage differential between the better off and the poor (Kruppe et al 2013). Fixed-term contracts, with a date for termination, Genda et al (2010) also seem to be a trend that has emerged in Japan, previously a country where jobs were seen as 'for life'.

Next, we will examine work practices and how they might have changed over the period 2008-2014, whilst also attempting to provide an examination of work practices prior to 2008 and the link between engagement as well as the changes within work practices. Initially, the researcher will attempt to give an overview of work practices pre-2008 and discuss the work regarding the various practices, with an historical understanding of the evolution of work practices. The researcher will aim to gain a real understanding of the current issues in today's work place. Work practices have changed throughout the years and specifically at post- 2008 and how the financial credit crunch has affected work practices and how organisations have moved to change them. Work practices have become intensive with McCann et al (2010) suggesting that owing to the sizable volume of work, staff need on average in excess of 50 hours a week to complete it, due to work intensification.

It is understood by Worrall et al (2000) that during the past ten years, redundancy has become more of an issue and been more prevalent. In addition, Worrall, et al (2000) conclude that redundancy is a key driver in restructuring within organisations and suggests that there will automatically be survivors from this process. The term survivor syndrome has been argued over previous years and is even called a myth, with some suggesting that the empirical findings signifying this, did not even exist within their findings (Baruch and Hind 2000).

When observing the literature concerning work practice it is best to give an overview of what occurred before the global credit crisis. Huselid (1995) suggests that within their study they are attempting to achieve and evaluate a link between high performance working and

performance of the organisation. Huselid (1995) is also of the same belief that if you are able to improve individual performance then that will in turn improve performance for the organisation and thus offer a competitive advantage that can be problematic for competitors to reproduce.

Inspecting the work of Huselid (1995), it would appear that much of the research carried out before 1995 was predominately based around three key themes: firstly, turnover of staff and the effect that could have on the organisation (Baysinger and Mobley, 1982; Arnold and Feldman, 1982; Sheridan, 1992; McEvoy and Cascio, 1985). There has been further evidence that the issue of employee turnover Guthrie (2001) and Cotton & Tuttle (1986) needs further inspection and academics are spotting a gap in the literature. Secondly, productivity and the impact of HRM decisions and practice on productivity was being researched heavily at the time when Huselid (1995) produced their work (Cutcher-Gershenfeld, 1990; Katz et al., 1987; Katz, Kochan and Weber, 1985). Many academics are still interested in this theme and there is research being published (Koch and McGrath, 1996; Stavrou et al 2010; Guest, 2011; Guthrie, 2001; Bevan, 2012).

Finally, the study will examine corporate financial performance and the way in which academics have attempted to find links between HRM actions through to actual financial performance. This was also being researched extensively before Huselid (1995) Cascio (1991) Flamholtz (1999) and Terpstra & Rozell (1993) published their work and is to this day a continuing issue, (Hassard, et al, 2009; Koch and McGrath, 1996 and CIPD, 2012). There is much that can be gathered from the work of Huselid (1995). It has supported and provided evidence for the interpretation that high performance work practices do actually reflect positively in an organisation's performance (Huselid, 1995). Also this body of work considers

the limitations of the use of cross sectional data and suggests that drawing conclusions would be difficult.

The study from Huselid (1995) seems to make a good contribution to the issues being researched, and appears to be relevant to today's world. There are other concerns to consider, most notably the global credit crunch, which might suggest different factors at play in the data than initially first expected. Given the unique nature of the GFC, there is room for additional investigation into some of the factors affecting the workplace. It is interesting to note that much of the historical research within this study could still be useful in today's setting. Increasing work intensity may have made some work practices unsustainable, on a long-term basis, in the present environment.

This study looks to examine some of the issues surrounding work practices since 2008, whilst drawing on previous work. Bevan (2012) suggests that High Performance Work Systems (HPWS) can increase an organisation's performance, working life quality and commitment among employees. Bevan (2012) goes on to suggest that, should an organisation adopt HPWS, it will be better able to react constructively to rapid technological change, while also dealing with external pressures.

The period following 2008 saw the GFC lead to wider ramifications for work practices, which will be considered in more detail later. These changes in work practices may be reflected in the response seen in the UK market place following the coalition government's use of 'austerity measures'. Hassard et al (2009) had already observed that work practices in the period following the year 2000 had become more intensive, with sizeable increases in the volume of work leading to long hours (in excess of 50 hours a week in the UK, compared to the European

average 35 hours). This is partly attributable to corporate efforts to meet the challenges of an increasingly competitive globalising market, and a 'race to the bottom', as organisations made efforts to cut costs and limit expenditure.

Work during the period of the GFC appears to have changed steadily, with Kamp et al (2010) suggesting that, in the period directly preceding the GFC, 'work without boundaries' characterised the process whereby mobile technology has made people contactable at all times. Kamp et al (2010) considers the nature of this as 'overwhelming', since rapid communication was required to meet the increasing challenges of a more competitive world. With technological advances, improved use of communication has been required to keep pace, with invasive and pervasive consequences in terms of the nature of work since 2008. Brown (2012) is of the impression that these multiple pressures from technological improvement, downsizing and job insecurity have driven further increases in work intensification. Organisations have attempted to intensify the amount of work they expect from an employee in response to financial challenges. It is suggested, however, that increasing workloads through work intensification is simply not sustainable for the work force as a long-term approach. There are limits to the amount that can be expected from healthy employees (Green, 2001). Therefore, it can be assumed that the intensification of work could have a negative effect upon employees and their productivity, and thus could lead to a de-motivated workforce. As such, a number of critics have emerged concerning work intensification and the health and wellbeing of the workforce (Kets et al, 1997; Green, 2001; Kelliher and Anderson, 2010).

Greater employee engagement, as a key component leading towards greater profitability has been projected as a 'holy grail' of people management thinking. However, engagement relates to how 'connected' employees feel towards their employer. Where employees feel engaged

in their work, there have been direct benefits in improved customer service and resulting sales clearly show this (Smith et al, 2012). Despite the claims that they can add value to stakeholders, the limited adoption of alternative 'high road' approaches is disappointing (Hague et al, 2003). This might have limited any promotion of commitment to the workforce by the employer to the point that employees felt they were defined by financial and career insecurity. The question of why uptake is limited, must be investigated. It could be assumed that the answer perhaps can lie within the 'western-style' financialisation of firms, which has led to a capitalistic disconnect. This suggests that any aspirations towards 'high road' strategic human resource management work practices (Strategic Human Resource Management – SHRM) are undermined by short term/'low road' managerial imperatives (Thompson, 2003).

When considering arguments that recognise that 'high road' initiatives could facilitate a conceptual change towards an organisation's focus, indications are that they should move away from a short term focus on 'low road'-style low cost approaches to people management that we have seen within the 21st century workplace in the UK. Over the past 20 years, the UK has adopted more respectable high commitment/high involvement HR-based approaches, but these have been restrained owing to ongoing austerity measures. The use of a low cost or 'low road' approach, Thompson (2011), suggests that reducing the sustainability of aspirations could be hindering the UK's economic recovery.

Social exchange and higher commitment have appeared to be essential, with McClean and Collins (2011) suggesting that high commitment HR practices are important within organisations. They propose that social exchanges that incorporate employees leads to an environment where workers are more likely to be co-operative when they feel as though an organisation values them and invests in them through HR practices. McClean and Collins (2011), through their research, have also concluded that if an organisation invests more in

their frontline staff, then they could potentially receive returns in performance. It was also found that, in these circumstances, employee's efforts increased, a factor that is closely linked to high performance.

Moving through analysing current trends within working practices, it is interesting to note the work of Teague and Roche (2014) who have investigated the way in which Ireland has reacted through recession. This could well link to the current UK labour market culture, as the UK's recession-growth model has been observed in Ireland as well. Teague and Roche (2014) also identified further problems with the financialisation of the workplace, specifically that where individuals in the workforce have enjoyed increased reward, this does not in turn result in improvement for the wider workforce (Arestis et al, 2013). This is supported by research across the period 2010-2015, with regards to work intensification and the cost focus, which Tweedie (2013) suggests might provide indications as to how the work force are coping with the insecurity of a changing work environment.

Work practices have evolved as a result of the financial crisis and are in need of updating, due to changes in the global economic environment. The fact is that employees require further direction and improved management, in order to be able to accept this new paradigm. Recently Anderton & Beven (2014), suggested that, with financial constraints, a change in employer attitudes to reflect the demand for maximum production, is essential to realise the short-term survival of the organisation and a change in working practices.

In conclusion, given the evolution of the workplace, employees need to accept that change is happening, either moving on with their careers or becoming survivors within their organisation following a process of de-layering and redundancies (Braverman, 1974). When examining this

subject matter, it would be of benefit to examine the workplace in a specific context, helping to understand the issues with the current environment (Keeble- Ramsey et al, 2014). This has been termed the Post 2008 - Baby Ceiling Pilot Study (2013).

Summary of the Literature

On reflection, there does appear to be a large quantity of literature around management (Marx, 1867; Ford, 1918; Taylor, 1911; Braverman, 1974; Thompson, 2003; Hassard et al, 2009; The Work Place Employee Relations Study, 2011; Skills and Employment Survey; 2012. However there does appear to be areas where information is lacking, within the current context. Examining the literature collected, it can be understood that parts Taylor (1911), Braverman (1974) and Hassard et al (2009) fit within the conceptual framework of Braverman's (1974) LPT. It becomes more apparent that this could therefore be a useful tool with which to analyse the current workforce, a point also highlighted by (Hassard, et al, 2009).

To fully understand the beginnings of the Labour Process Theory, one has to look to Marx (1993) and the Labour Theory of Value. Also, from examining the Labour Process Theory, it could be assumed that it needs updating to fit the current work paradigm. It has been criticised as outdated in its approach. Littler and Salaman (1982) suggest some of the limitations facing LPT and argue that some are the result from certain readings of Marx (1867) that neglect crucial Marxian characteristics, meaning they have resulted from weaknesses and uncertainties in Marxian theory. That being said, it is seen as a useful theory by which to analyse data (Hassard et al, 2009).

Existing literature allowed the reader to gain a firm starting point, by providing a history and context for the study. Moving onto the current body of literature around the recession, and then through to investigations that look at the current work demographic, it could be argued

that employment practices have been affected by the change in economic circumstance. The available literature has enabled the researcher to develop a clear timeline (pg 29) of the development of management over the past 120 years, assessing the huge amount of change in work practices and different management thinking. The work of Hassard et al, (2009) has been used as a starting point for the current research and thus an investigation was required to assess the findings against the broader current workplace, rather than merely focusing on middle management. To further reiterate the reasons why the work of Hassard, McCann and Morris (2009) has been utilised, the fact that the timeliness of the study so close to the onset of the GFC makes it an important work. Finally, the work then discussed the literature available within the data collection timeframe and highlighted pertinent issues. This has enabled the researcher to base the research fully on existing theory.

The literature discussed highlights of the historical development of management practices and has allowed the reader to understand how they are interlinked. Finally, the literature has gone on to highlight a number of the primary issues apparent in the context of the investigation. As discussed, the emergent nature of this study will also allow for new ones to emerge. Section Two allows the reader to gain an overview of some of the current factors affecting the workplace, and provides a snapshot of what has been investigated previously.

The project goes some way to address the gaps in knowledge, while understanding that there are limitations to the scale of the study proposed. It is felt that the collection of empirical material will lead to further conclusions around the experiences of participant employees, which will be a valuable contribution to our current understandings around the management of employees over the GFC.

Initial Conceptual Framework

The data collected as part of this research has been used to inform the conceptual framework. The initial parts of the framework are shown on the following page, discussing the historical elements that have informed the initial concepts of the work. The conceptual framework has been split into two separate components. Following the discussion chapter, after the new data has been analysed, this is then used to address the previous framework, and lead the final conceptual framework for the study. The justification for this is that it allows the conceptual framework of the study to be informed by the data collected, following analysis. When building the conceptual framework, the researcher has included the historical factors, outlined previously, within the literature to initially embed it within the existing framework of (Hassard, et al, 2009). When building the conceptual framework, the researcher felt it was an important point for the reader to fully understand the history on which this project was looking to build, as it is a key factor used by the researcher when providing context for this project. The existing framework of Hassard, McCann and Morris (2009) has been used as a starting point to explore the research question at hand. The full framework is available at the end of the discussion chapter on page 264 and the initial framework will also be shown to enable the reader to see the development of the framework following analysis of the data.

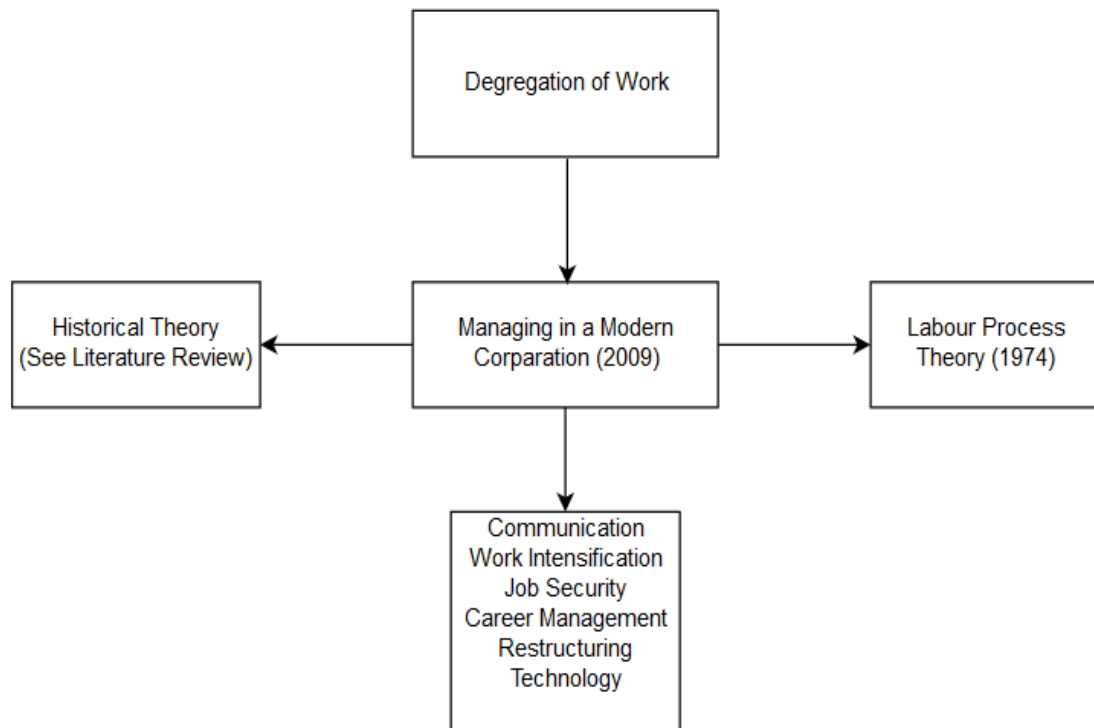


Figure 2 Initial Conceptual Framework

Gaps within the Literature

There appears to be an abundance of key literature and information that was available prior to the financial crisis, but it could be argued that publication providing analysis of management over the GFC appears to have slowed significantly. Research that covered the perspective of the employee was also somewhat lacking. This would suggest that this project can contribute to the knowledge base within the latter area. An examination of how employees perceive their work, should lead to new perceptions that could shed light onto one of the most damaging economic crises our contemporary world has experienced. Conway and Monks (2009) advises that there is a need to examine employees' experiences of HR practices, to assess how they respond to HR involvement within their work. Questions have also had to be asked around

why it is that coverage of how employees perceive their management has been so under-researched. The timeliness of the study is also crucial. This will provide an up-to-date review of current factors, placed against the framework of existing literature. The author believes that there is much to learn regarding the impact of the GFC on the workplace, and that this cannot be done successfully without an in-depth view of both management and employees.

As discussed briefly in the conclusion, the gaps identified within previous literature indicate, that there is a lack of available data covering the period between 2008 and 2014. The Irish study completed by Teague and Roche (2014) provides some insight, but there does appear to be missing literature for the UK coverage, which leaves researchers heavily reliant on such works as the WERS (2013) CIPD 2012-2014 Skills and Employment Survey (2012), which was assessed at the beginning of the study. Since the start of this study, however, further literature has slowly become available to provide context for the current time frame.

Another point of interest and something which appeared to have been lacking was the employees' perspective within organisations, a point that was also supported by Conway and Monks (2009) during their study. There appear to be gaps within the current understanding of how employees have been managed and how companies have reacted or failed to react to the GFC. There appears to be some understanding within the Irish setting, by Teague and Roche, (2014) and the way they have attempted to examine the effects on the workplace over the GFC. In essence this still continues to be an under-researched area, but incorporates a new context and sampling group. To provide a more homogeneous insight into the three organisations within the study, this project thereby makes a contribution to the knowledge around the GFC and extends the work of (Hassard, et al, 2009).

Pilot Study: Post 2008 - Baby Ceiling Pilot Study (2014)

The thesis now moves forward to develop the overall study via the use of a pilot study. This was completed during the PhD process to provide a snapshot of the experiences of women within the workplace once they returned to work after having a child. This is useful in order to highlight any relevant issues they experienced within the workplace during a period of significant transition in their working life. This pilot study assisted the development of the questions used within the later interviews, and further develops the thesis by providing a clear understanding of a key issue experienced in the workplace. This also provides an illustration of a previously highlighted issue, supported some themes highlighted by (Hassard et al, 2009).

By examining the various opinions and views from the pilot study of women with caring commitments, it appeared that there was clear evidence that management were not paying attention to relevant factors, and that they were following blanket decision policy. UK employees perceptions since Conway and Monks (2009) identify criticism that management were not focusing upon employee needs, or recognising employees' viewpoints.

Glass Ceiling: *Glass ceiling effects are implied that gender (or other) disadvantages are more prominent at the top of the chain of command than at lower levels and these disadvantages will become worse later in an employee's career (Cotter et al, 2001).*

Baby/Nappy Ceiling: *When women return from maternity leave, and any changes in their working practices given potential for links to the changing economic landscape, barriers to their careers, which the impact career advancement (Keeble-Ramsey et al, 2014).*

The number of women in the workplace has increased over the past 50 years, following the post-war period where fewer men were available to fill roles. The Economist, (2009) suggests that the empowerment of women employees across the developed world can be seen as a remarkable post-war uprising and is notable due to the fact that millions of women, who had once been dependent on men, were now able to take control of their own future, with the 'glass ceiling' being a recognised phenomenon. The development of a 'baby ceiling' or 'nappy ceiling' has been recorded as a phenomenon only since 2008 (Mail Online, 2012). This idea appears to have occurred both before and after the GFC, and could be linked to the resultant changes in attitudes within the workplace.

It is difficult to comprehend the impact that the GFC might have had on working mothers within the workforce. There does appear to have been a shift where employers moved the burden of risk towards their employees as the landscape becomes more perilous for the employee (Teague and Roche, 2014b). Thompson (2011) suggested that 'low road' lower cost, short-term Human Resource Department (HRD) had emerged and the financialisation of capitalistic management approaches have led to employees being affected by so-called 'work bargains'. The studies by Hassard et al (2009) studies McCann et al (2004), (2010) Morris et al (2006), (2008) and Hassard et al (2009) were conducted prior to the start of the GFC in 2008, recognising that organisational change had led to the intensification of work and increased workplace stress. Hassard et al (2009) remarked that there appeared to be degradation of work, post 2000, within the context of multi-national industries, meaning that any down-sized or restructured workforce could encounter issues, including unpleasant conditions and limited workplace power for employees. Weaker financial settings post-2008 might have led to changing – and potentially deteriorating – working conditions for those with maternal or caring obligations.

Whilst the glass ceiling has been recognised as a cause for a number of issues of certain demographics within the workplace, the number of women in the workplace increased post-Second World War, and Forbes (2014) suggests that this has been one of the most notable changes in the workplace over the past 50 years. The latter emergence of a 'baby ceiling' was reported in the Mail Online in 2012 and the issue remains grouped under the 'glass ceiling' issue. This could reflect the fact that the 'baby ceiling' first emerged after the GFC had begun, and might suggest a link between the GFC and resulting changes within the workplace, with regards to attitudes around the 'baby ceiling'. Hassard et al (2009) discussed the degradation of work within multi-national companies, proposing that any down-sized or restructured workforce could face a reduction in workplace power.

Some respondents wanted free childcare, with research from Nowak, Naude and Thomas (2013) suggesting that 50% of those employees who responded, expected childcare to be provided by the family, and only 15% planned to use an external childcare supplier. This could assume that it was more affordable to use family, with a large percentage simply unable to afford the costs associated with childcare provided by a third party. The exploratory study by Keeble- Ramsey et al (2014), suggests that childcare costs were a factor when returning to the work place, influencing the mode of work that women choose to return (i.e. part-time or full-time) and also felt that childcare was disrupted by local management decisions. Women have, through time, expressed anxiety about returning to the job and fulfilling the role in the manner had done previously. Cassell (1998) goes on to discuss what their findings from research on women doctors. Female General Practitioners (GPs) felt anxiety about returning to their job and questioned if they were able to fulfil the requirements after their career break. If these issues are not addressed at an early stage on when returning to the work place, this could have a negative effect on self-esteem.

With regards to full and part-time work, employees suggested that their professional commitment had not changed (Keeble- Ramsey et al, 2014). This is supported by Davey et al (2005), who suggest that the amount of hours worked had very little impact on the commitment that nurses had to their work or to their career. This implies that, in order to optimise the performance of employees, employers should consider a greater use of flexible working hours.

In recent times it has been suggested by Hurn (2013) Mentes (2013) Whiteside and Hardin (2013) that the glass ceiling has improved at a boardroom level. Hurn (2013) notes that the 2013 'Women On Boards report' figure of 15.6% improved on the 2012 figure of 12.5%. However, Hurn (2013) goes on to suggest that the majority of those women appointed were given non- executive positions, rather than executive roles. This could suggest there are issues yet to be resolved and through the recent pilot study, the baby ceiling does appear to be a factor that organisations appear to not yet fully understand. They display reactive behaviour, rather than preventative, thus allowing it to escalate and potentially affect wellbeing among employees.

The study considered whether there was some evidence of a change in the 'glass ceiling' towards what has been referred to as the 'baby/nappy ceiling'. The objective was also to observe any impact from the current economic climate with regards to the 'baby ceiling'. According to the pilot data, there appears to be a distinct change from being solely an employee to becoming a parent, with regards to a change in priorities. Despite some of the prior evidence that changes within the workplace were the result of market forces, Teague et al (2013) Thompson (2011) and Hassard et al (2009) note, that the perceptions of participants towards rapid change is challenging to determine, particularly when considering whether that change is wholly caused by the uncertain economic climate. It could, in part, be argued that the psychological strains upon those employees who return from maternity leave could result

in workplace change being greater. Contributing factors to this include the additional stress of change within each individual's personal situation, and the change in relationships with work colleagues (and role) (Almer and Kaplan, 2002).

Whilst attempting to gain some awareness of issues for working parents, when reviewing the pilot study data, there appeared to be some limitations to parental working arrangements, specifically that of working hours. There was a sense of appreciation that legislation and policy has changed through time, which has initially enabled more flexible working. It appears that this has been harnessed as a tool by management, with a sense that low road tactics adopted by employers (Thompson, 2011) has limited the opportunities for working parents. If this could be further understood, it could lead to a better appreciation of the experience, with hopefully a consequent improvement to legislation to protect the parental worker during the process of returning to work.

A limitation of the pilot study was that it only really provided insights into potential issues that were experienced. As this was not a primary focus of the researcher's project, it was decided that gaining insights into the current context should be seen solely as useful information for the current study, as well as potentially informative for further studies in the future. The researcher would also suggest that there is room to extend the study to cover more participants and other organisations. Additional research opportunities also emerged whilst conducting the research: for instance, as outlined, the impact upon the role of women with caring commitments; not only parental caring commitments, but also those that include caring for an elderly relative or disabled family member. What was also of interest was the investigation not only of women, but also men within the study. The impact of the changing economic climate could provide insights into the nature of any 'baby/nappy ceiling' (where

applicable to both sexes) while extending it beyond just children into the development of a 'caring ceiling'.

Auto-ethnography was the subject chosen to help explore the personal experiences of participants in the study. This method helps to connect the narrative story of the project to that of the wider cultural and political situation, whilst also providing social insight, using the personal experiences of individuals contributing to the study. Auto-ethnography seeks to keep in mind participants' memories of previous challenges, thereby giving detail and context to their personal experiences. Bann (2009) suggests that the 'lived' experiences of entrepreneurs in their individual organisations was an effective tool by which to learn what it is like be an entrepreneur, to gain insight into how they perceive their experiences and interactions. By analysing the data collected through an ethnographic lens, the researcher wanted to understand how others may feel within similar situations, a concept supported by (Gedro, et al 2013). When considering the possible sweeping/generalised nature of the data collected, Ellis (2004) has suggested that auto-ethnographic research does seek to provide a broader view, not only from the participants, but also by bridging across to include the views of readers.

There are problematic criticisms of auto-ethnography, with Méndez (2013) proposing that a primary problem is that auto ethnography places too strong an emphasis on self. There appears to be a fundamental struggle (Atkinson (1997) and (Coffey 1999; op cit Méndez, 2013) to accept auto ethnography as a valued research method. Bearing this criticism in mind, it was recognised that the stories collected from different participants could provide further insights into any further contributions to the knowledge around the 'Baby Ceiling' / 'Nappy Ceiling'. In essence, the researchers chose not to present life histories or their memories as retroactive field notes (Gedro et al, 2013), but instead focused on selected auto-ethnographic

interviews. The researcher considered that auto ethnography would provide a sample of rich data and felt other methods could also limit the findings.

This study represents a convenience sample of 12 participants following an announcement in a local Women's Network meeting, usually held within the organisation on a regular basis. The participants were asked to volunteer, meaning the participants were self-selecting. The data was collected inductively and this has allowed the researcher the opportunity to draw some conclusions. Participants were asked to discuss and examine their experiences in relation to their return to work from maternity leave, including a focus on their experiences post 2008. From the accounts, a number of perspectives were identified and discussed. Participants outlined their experiences and provided their perceptions of the challenges facing mothers in the current workplace. Subsequently, a key issue that emerged was that participants were concerned that the cost of childcare may hamper mothers from actually returning to work, having instead to stay at home and look after their children, rather than progressing with their career. Investigation into this issue appears to offer up new areas of friction that were not initially considered, such as childcare costs, flexibility and career progression. The perception was that there was fear that it could become a binary choice between parenthood and a working future. The historical context gathered during this study, however, suggested that more mothers now expected to return to work, rather than stay at home and bring up their children. Also, the historical context showed further understanding that management were more flexible and understanding than previously (Keeble- Ramsey et al, 2014).

The previously recognised 'glass ceiling' constrictions to careers for women have improved (Hurn, 2013, Mentes, (2013) and Whiteside and Hardin, 2013), yet despite further changes in legislation, a newer issue of a 'baby or nappy ceiling' appears to have emerged (Woods, 2012). The sample contained a mixed group, from women who had recently had a child,

through to women whose children had left home, who provided an historical context for the researcher's findings. The intentions of the study was not to provide generalisations, but initial insights into the perceptions of a 'baby/nappy ceiling'. Individual's constructs are dependent upon their personal identities and experiences, further research into the 'baby/nappy ceiling' can shed more light on the issues raised and to help inform the current study.

Insights Gained

The study did not set out to provide any generalisations, but merely initial insights into the perceptions of a baby/nappy ceiling. What emerged was that there were further issues that need to be addressed to inform highlighted problems. Findings which have been examined within the initial Baby Ceiling study, have been used to assist in determining the prior themes within the main study. This pilot study, however has given the reader some broader insight into just one current issue that impacts on the current project. This pilot study has enabled the researcher to apply the work of Hassard et al (2009) to new research, informing a number of the themes used to build the initial template for data collection. Work intensification was also confirmed as a factor that has not simply vanished from the work environment, with those employed on a flexible working arrangement expected to do the same amount of work, but within a smaller timescale. Career development was also highlighted as being very limited after having a child and there was an issue about how these problems were addressed with staff. As previously mentioned, a stigma is attached to what has been labelled as the 'Baby Ceiling'. The pilot study has gone some way to inform the methodological stance for the current research project. The thesis now moves to examine the methodology of how this project will collect the data and how the researcher will position themselves within the research.

Chapter 5

Methodology

Introduction

The methodology highlights the research questions and how the researcher is going to answer them. Themes were collected from Hassard et al (2009) in order to understand the issues pre-GFC and then use them to repeat a number of sub-themes and understand the perceptions and reactions.

The three research questions look to establish an understanding of the perception of how organisations have reacted and provides a snap shot of how the organisations reacted to the GFC. Using Hassard et al, (2009) has allowed the researcher the opportunity to see how management historically communicated with their employees and how technology may has been utilised in that process. There are a number of broad themes linked with this research, but to concentrate the reader, the researcher has used them in conjunction with Hassard et al (2009) and examines the themes much like Hassard et al (2009) in their previous publication. By investigating the three organisations within the East Anglia, with an opportunity to understand how these contrasting organisations may have either reacted or adapted to their changing economic environment in which they are working. In this chapter, the researcher discusses the approaches that have been taken into account before the creation of the research design.

There have been a number of areas reviewed within the previous chapters and the justification of the methods and world views adopted. After much deliberation, the researcher came to the conclusion that a critical realist assumption was to be used within the project which is further

discussed below on pg 117. The researcher will discuss other methods and philosophies which could have been adopted, but the use of critical realist assumption was the best fit for the study at hand.

The researcher has suggested within this chapter the theoretical stance of their research and includes its application to the data collection method. The importance of a realist philosophy to the present study will be explored: Braverman's (1976) Labour Process Theory (LPT) uses the realist assumption, and this will be echoed in the use of template analysis, which is consistent with the realist assumption. The research diary enables the reader to have an understanding of the data collection process and gives full consideration of the data collection phase. Finally, this chapter moves on to discuss the methods which were utilised to gather the data for the project, including an understanding of Smith's (2014) interpretation of Labour Process Theory LPT and how that may be used in conjunction with Hassard et al (2009) helping to provide an 'interpretive lens' through which to view the data.

Creswell (2013) identifies that there are three main types of approach to conducting research: qualitative, quantitative and mixed method. The researcher has chosen the qualitative approach, as it permits the opportunity to explore the three research questions discussed and offers an understanding of the meaning of a problem, which groups or individuals experience. An understanding of the experience is required from the three organisations, with Attride-Stirling (2001) suggesting that qualitative methods are a methodological approach of research which shows a deeper understanding of social phenomena, which will assist in answering the three proposed questions.

When choosing the approach, it has been suggested that qualitative research supports a more inductive approach (Creswell, 2013) for example the specific themes have been collected

allowing the researcher to offer some broader generalisations about the companies. In essence, the researcher will be starting with a conceptual model empirically extracted from previous research, rather than one which has been derived from a more standard, critical literature review. Taking the critical realist perspective that portrays that the themes asked during Hassard et al (2009) are still noteworthy within the current paradigm. The conceptual model was to be used to inform the current research project. The researcher used an empirical process by which one set of literature, Hassard et al (2009), has been examined. Themes from the Hassard et al (2009) work were extracted using King's (2004) template analysis, to create the first interview template for the data collection phase of the present study. An initial smaller pilot study was conducted as a way to test the initial template (this being a mini version of a full-scale study) and to focus the initial themes within the template. Pilot studies as proposed by van Teijlingen and Hundley (2002) can also be termed a feasibility study, as well as pre-testing an actual research instrument. The main study is iterative in its basis, allowing for more flexibility and the evolving nature of the initial template, which as the study progresses, grows to incorporate new themes.

From the outset it was important to understand what was fully required within the methodology chapter. The researcher looked to Denzin and Lincoln (2008) (see Table 3) to define the key themes.

(Table 1)

Ontology	What assumptions about the nature of reality are made during the gathering and analysis of data?
Epistemology	How will new information revealed by the research project be assessed and organized in relation to existing knowledge?
Methodology	What techniques will be used to gather and analyse data in the research project, and how can these be justified in terms of its research questions and the practical constraints faced?
Axiology	What role will the researcher's own views and experiences play in the research project?

Adapted from (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008); Miller and Dingwall, 1997)

Table 1 gives a holistic view of various ways in which to approach qualitative research and goes some way to explain the basic stages covered within the methodology, required for this research project. The thesis has divided the methodology into sections in order to guide the reader. This includes how the methodology will enable the researcher to address the research questions, how the data will be collected, and the philosophy and tools used to complete this. The researcher will detail their ontological perspective, which is the study of being, and the view of reality used within the study. It is also clear that there is a need to discuss and examine the epistemology within the thesis, which highlights the way in which one views and understands knowledge. The methodology, reflects on the ways in which we acquire knowledge about the world in which we live. Finally, the methods and axiology are the tools which will be utilised to collect the information and the researcher's own experiences within

the research project. Table 2 sets out the information collected to aid the understanding of the research philosophy.

Research philosophies

Ontology is the philosophical study of existence. Gomm (2009) describes ontology as the 'theory of being' and discusses what is meant by existence. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2004) also confirm ontology as the study of the nature of what is 'real' and what can be known about it. In essence the work has looked to understand the perceptions of the reality of work practices post-GFC. The Neo-Labour Process Lens provides a Lens by which to examine impacts upon working practices, yet critical management studies attempt to bring together critical theory and post-structuralist writings to think about experiences (Macky and Boxall, 2008). As detailed within the literature review over the last decade, it has been further observed by Hassard et al (2009), McCann et al (2008), Thompson (2003) and WERS (2013) that there has been a regression in the workplace due in part to work intensification and the trend towards a tightening of management control. Thompson (2003) argues that, during the classic phase of globalisation in the 1990s, firms had become leaner through downsizing, restructuring and delayering, having 'cut their cloth' accordingly in response to perceived increased global competition, with multi-nationals engaging in a 'race to the bottom' in terms of lowering cost bases.

It is now expected that the way in which the researcher views the world is an assumption called the paradigm (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2004) goes onto suggest that a paradigm could be viewed as a set of beliefs, that it represents a 'worldview' and how a researcher may, in turn, view the world during the research process. From the beginning of the project, it was felt that the researcher should examine paradigms using qualitative research, as there are a number of paradigms of enquiry which are potentially complex. Four paradigms are predominantly associated with qualitative research with Hesse-

Biber and Leavy (2004) also suggesting that the four areas compete to be the paradigm / worldview of choice.

(Table 2)

Item	Positivism	Post Positivism	Critical Theory et al	Constructivism
Ontology	Naïve realism	Critical realism	Virtual reality	Constructed realities
		Reality but only imperfectly	Crystallized over time	Relativism
Epistemology	Objectivist	Modified objectivist	Transactional	Transactional
	Findings true	Findings probably true	Subjectivist	Subjectivist
Methodology	Mainly quantitative in its method	Could include qualitative methods	Participation in dialogue	Text interpretation
			Exchange of logical arguments	Exchange of logical arguments

(Adapted from Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2004)

It was felt that the research would be best suited to the critical realist approach. To get an understanding of critical realism, the researcher ascertained the origins of the methodology from Graeber (2014) who suggests that Bhasker (1978) has argued that the two understandings that have been separated are positivists, who accept that since the world does exist, we should at some time be able to have an exact and predictive knowledge of it; and postmodernists, who understand that we cannot have such knowledge and are different versions of the same essential error. In the obituary of Bhasker (2014), Graeber (2014) put forward that most philosophers have understood the questions “does the world exist?” and “can we prove the world exists?” similarly it could be understood that the world might also exist and could not actually prove it and not be able to secure absolute knowledge of everything in it. Graeber (2014) proposes that Bhasker (1978) argued that as positivists had assumed that the world does exist, we should at some point be able to ascertain and predict knowledge of it and that as postmodernists believed that we are not able to have such knowledge, we are

not able to understand reality and are just purely practicing altered descriptions of essentially the same error. At this stage the researcher found it timely to review the various philosophies.

Creswell's (2012) interpretive frameworks were examined to inform the chosen option to assist the selection for the current study using a qualitative approach. Below is a further explanation of the options and the justification as to why the chosen methodology had been selected.

Positivism: Creswell (2012) suggests that positivists believe in a strict 'cause and effect'. Schrag (1992) offers an example advising that a statistical evaluation of the results of the data collected aims at understanding whether a difference from the results between groups within the experiment could be caused by chance or might be explained by introducing another factor or variable. The basic reasoning as highlighted by Crossan (2003) suggests that positivists believe that objective reality exists external to social reality and therefore is not a creation of the mind. (Al-Hamdan and Anthony, 2010; Ramlo and Newman, 2011) propose that positivism is principally the belief that the social world can be considered in the same way as the physical world is examined, for example, science being the only way to discover knowledge, but must be done in a value-free style. Al-Hamdan and Anthony (2010) and Crossan (2003) have proposed that a major criticism of positivism is that the approach does not examine behaviour in an in-depth way. It does not seem to be the most effective research philosophy to follow for the current project.

Post-positivism: Creswell (2003) proposes that post-positivists hold a deterministic philosophy which contends that the cause of the problem will potentially affect the outcome and thus the researcher will need to access and identify the issues which have caused the final outcome, through experiments. Kennedy and Lingard (2006) propose that post-positivism

can hold the understanding of a single reality, but claim that it can never be fully understood and is a small step away from positivism. Creswell and Miller (2000) suggest that the post-positivist researcher could undertake qualitative research consisting of a method which could also be seen as systematic forms of enquiry. Researchers who adopt this position would recognise and support validity and would intensely use measures for establishing validity using those specific practices. Furthermore, Ramlo and Newman (2011) goes on to suggest that the post-positivist paradigm indicates that the post-positivist's goal is to uphold as much objectivity in the research project as possible and this is where the current research has looked at other options owing to the subjective nature of using Hassard et al (2009) who appear to be analysing through a LPT lens (Braverman, 1974).

Pragmatism: Creswell (2012) proposes that pragmatists are not committed to any one system of reality and focus on the outcome of the research, the researcher being free to choose between paradigms to best meet the needs of the research. Creswell (2013) suggests that pragmatism is suited to mixed methods research as it 'opens the door' to multiple methods and different forms of data collection. The research would suggest that there are some links between this worldview and the one chosen for the current research project. Cherryholmes (1992) examines pragmatism in conjunction with scientific realism and suggests that pragmatists make the assumption that we are historically and socially situated and not sure if we are interpreting the real world or one created by ourselves, and scientific realists say it is possible to discover the real world, by analysing the layers of reality.

Critical Theory: Creswell (2012) suggests this is a research approach with a highly engaged axiology, in which researchers are concerned with empowering research participants in their struggle against something that might be hampering them: for example race, gender, alienation or social struggles. Bunniss and Kelly (2010) propose that reality could be objective,

but the truth is repeatedly challenged by opposing groups. Bunniss and Kelly (2010) recommends that within critical theory, knowledge would be co-constructed between individuals and groups and that knowledge is facilitated by power and is constantly under revision.

Social Constructivism: Creswell (2003) suggests that social constructivists presume individuals will want to seek an understanding of the world in which they live and work, and will develop subjective meanings based on what they have experienced. When understanding the environment, Turnbull (2002) proposed that, for social constructivism researchers, the main aim is not to uncover a truth or reality, but in essence to create an understanding of what people perceive within their everyday lives. Social constructivism assumes that consideration and significance is established not on one's own, but in conjunction with others. The researcher was initially drawn to the ontological perspective of social constructivism, as this seemed to offer the best chance of understanding the participants' real lived experience, and fully understanding their individual viewpoints.

Creswell (2003) suggests that the researcher with a 'strong' social constructivist worldview would hold the assumption that people seek to understand their world in a subjective way, and that completely 'open ended' questions would therefore be the predominant means by which survey data should be gathered. The researcher considered that the phenomena under consideration, are moveable social constructions rather than factual information, and that therefore they could be amenable to change (Hood, et al, 1999).

When examining context, Kim (2001) proposed that social constructivism was emphasizing the importance of the culture and context while understanding what actually occurs within

society and then creating a knowledge based on that understanding. People naturally engage with the world to make better sense of it, with Creswell (2003) stating that meanings are constructed, as they live within the 'environment' in which phenomena are studied and so a researcher will gain a fuller understanding by investigating the context of the phenomena as well as the phenomena themselves. Creswell (2012) suggests that, in social constructivism, what participants say will be negotiated both socially and historically, meaning that they are not 'imprinted' with a certain impression, but that it is formed through historic and cultural factors present within one's own life. The social constructivist researcher's principal task is therefore to interpret information from the respondents (Creswell, 2012). Social constructivism would assume that consideration and significance is established, not on your own, but in conjunction with others. Criticism of potentially using social constructivism within the current project is that reality cannot be discovered, as it does not exist prior to its social creation (Kim, 2001). It is understood that a critical realist assumption advocates that the social constructed and the real (tangible) world exist but they are intertwined, although there are some considerable overlaps.

Critical realists: retain an ontological realism Maxwell (2012) that a 'real world' exists in spite of perceptions and constructions. The world is built / constructed from our own experiences and therefore fits within multiple perspectives. The view of the world as constructivist and relativist, with the inability to create a correct acceptance of the world without interference was explored by Maxwell (2012). Within the current study the researcher has chosen the approach of Critical Realism owing to the study taking a view that there is a real (tangible) world that does exist, for example: the GFC and the reduction of available monies within an organisation. Then individuals / senior management will also develop another interpretation which is on top / intertwined with the world that is perceived as real. This in turn impacts upon data collection and thus the need for a flexible data instrument, which is supported by the adoption of template analysis as it enables the evolution of new themes. With this understanding of the layered

worlds, the researcher will critique the current situation of the workplace in order to understand the real experience of the GFC and the constructed perception of the situation, from the data collected. The philosophy fits within the current work and has been adopted as the philosophy of the current project, further supported by Thompson and Vincent (2010) with the suggestion that critical realism with its layered ontology, could help to answer and decide some long-standing questions with regards to LPT, the lens by which the collected data will be analysed. This also reinforces the decision to use an understanding of LPT and Hassard (2009) by which to understand the data presented.

Ontology & Epistemology

A phenomenology study was initially considered and Goulding (2005) suggests that the methodology of phenomenology has just one source of data which is the views and experiences are of the participant. With this in mind, Goulding (2005) also suggests that the participant's view is "fact" and true having experienced the situation in order to partake in the study. Thus, sampling is advisable, to ensure accurate representation of a particular research population. It was felt by the researcher that a more flexible approach was required, owing to the continuing development of the questions which were initially derived from the themes of the monograph (Hassard et al, 2009).

The philosophical paradigm of the present study is that of Critical Realism, and Cresswell (2012) describes the realist ontology as perceiving a 'real' world that exists separately from one's beliefs. This is augmented by the partially subjective ability to construct subjective meaning from 'real' perceptual objects. With that in mind, Cresswell (2012) proposes that there are only partial descriptions of the epistemology owing to several epistemological frameworks being available, offering a sense of opinion within critical realism.

When considering the options for the chosen theoretical stance, the researcher would consider the participants as individuals, having differing histories. Goulding (2005) suggests that this phenomenological stance is thought to have its own characteristics and philosophy, compared to the other methodologies on offer and could have offered a positive view in relation to theory building and based more around lived experiences. Moving through the doctorate journey of selection, it was then felt that ethnographic concepts could be used by the researcher electing to work within the company for a two week period to understand the context of the chosen companies and thus adding a different dimension to the research. This experience could add extra findings to the data collected, enabling the researcher to cross reference the observations with how the participants have responded to the semi-structured interviews, but this was abandoned owing to the lack of required access to the chosen companies.

The ontological stance of Critical Realism as it fitted within the research objectives was examined when looking back into the history of Critical Realism. Bhasker (1979) was beginning to highlight points of disagreement with empiricism and positivism, and stated that science was not only about recording continuous coincidences of witnessed events, but could be about objects, entities and structures that exist, but are possibly not observable, and can generate the situations that we do in turn observe, for instance within a constructed world of an individual. Critical Realism makes a distinction of our ontology and epistemology and the assumption of the social world (McLachlan and Garcia, 2015). The researcher understands that there is a natural world which exists, along with a world that interacts with our individual interpretations, also supported by Maxwell (2012). Critical realism within qualitative research shows how a realist perspective can provide a useful way of approaching problems and can also generate important insights into social phenomena (Maxwell, 2012).

However, the present study incorporates methodological aspects that raise questions about the suitability of a 'strong' social constructivist ontology. Access to the real 'lived experience' of the participants is certainly desirable, but the aim of initially repeating themes derived from Hassard, et al (2009) actually requires a degree of conceptual continuity. We may therefore presume that under the guise of Critical Realism, concepts extracted from these earlier studies have the same ontic weight in 2014 as they did in the pre-crisis milieu from where they originated. With this in mind, there appears to be a need for ontological compromise between a fully constructed reality that is characteristic of the context of the current study's participants, and the requirement that ideas taken from previous research contexts should remain meaningful. It is suggested that this compromise might be provided by a critical realist ontology. According to Creswell (2012), critical realism speculates a world that exists independently of individuals' beliefs or constructions and was useful for this study to maintain a base from which perceptions can be drawn.

It was understood by the researcher that a critical realist ontology was to be adopted. From Maxwell's (2012) view of critical realism is one in which a 'real' world exists separate from our perception and constructions, although we still construct versions of this reality based on our own experiences. Critical realist ontology allows not only a limited possibility of objectivity, but also a dynamic relationship between ontology and epistemology, in which what we know (ontology) informs our practices for obtaining and organising knowledge (epistemology) and vice-versa (Mingers, 2004). This is also particularly appropriate to the critical conceptual repetition inherent in the present study's method. Thompson and Vincent (2010) also proposes the potential usefulness that critical realism has, suggesting that the formations of a layered ontology could be of use to address and decide some of the issues about the range and character of LPT.

A critical realist researcher must demonstrate that the knowledge he has acquired is reliable. Krefting (1991) suggests that in quantitative studies this can be achieved by using statistics critically and will be suggested by documentation. That is not just in order to accept or reject hypotheses. Easton (2010) proposes that social phenomena such as actions, texts and institutions are concepts and the researcher does not only have to explain their production and material effects, but also has to understand or interpret what they mean and represent. It can be also be used to establish the validity of a conceptual model and the reliability of its data instruments. This is the tricky part of choosing this ontological position, as it may require the researcher to consider the impact of his or her own beliefs, values and preconceptions. In qualitative studies, the role of verifying reliability and validity is taken by the critical faculty of the researcher, with Agar (1986) proposing that a different kind of language was needed for qualitative research, one that would replace reliability and validity terminology of credibility, with truth of representation.

When looking at the various world views in which to approach the research, the researcher has come to the conclusion that the research does not appear to fit cleanly within any paradigm or worldview (Cresswell, 2013). There is an inability for critical realism to clearly be 'positioned' into an individual worldview. This has been further detailed by Carlsson (2006) with suggestions that critical realism argues that the real world is ontologically different and that the real world consists of structures that generate events that can occur and not occur. Furthermore, Carlsson (2006) proposes that from an epistemological perspective concerning the nature of knowledge, the realist approach is non-positivistic and means that values and facts are intertwined and difficult to disentangle and can therefore not be pigeon-holed into that individual worldview. Finally, Carlsson's (2006) proposal has recognised that critical realism is non-paradigmatic in the Kuhnian sense and it was felt that the research would be best suited to the critical realist assumption and not via paradigms.

The research appears to fit within multiple realities and this suggests that it does not fit rigidly within a single 'traditional' worldview. As previously mentioned, the research was in a sense paradigmatic, not fitting cleanly into any of the above paradigms, but multiple paradigms through the research as also highlighted by Maxwell (2012) who suggested that it fits within multiple perspectives and does not cleanly sit all the time within a specific worldview. When examining Cresswell (2013), the initial ontology position was that of post positivist, on the assumption that there are two measurable worlds, which bear resonance with critical realism and the study. Following that, it appeared to also fit within constructivism / interpretive paradigms, becoming more pronounced once the data has been collected as the researcher will build on what they have interpreted from the data collected.

There is an opinion that organisations and capitalism have their own language and Fleetwood (2009) proposes that capitalism is something that exists outside of semantics and text, even if it is only through language that this existence is communicated. Fleetwood (2009) favours a more critical view, and argues a more post-structural approach. This involves the research being a self-critical, multi-disciplinary exploration of the political, economic, psychological and existential processes that combine in the practices of the labour process. Maxwell (2012) proposes that, given the world is built/constructed from our own experiences and perspectives, this view of the world as constructivist and relativist, with the inability to create a correct acceptance of the world without interference, can also go some way to explain the reasons why critical realism does not fit neatly into a paradigm. There appears to be a mistaken belief, as Fleetwood (2005) argues, that there is a misconception amongst those choosing critical realism owing to the prevalent conviction of being whatever realism is. Fleetwood (2005) continues that it has to be associated with positivism – other discourses being scientism, empiricism, science, scientific objectivity, structuralism, structural functionalism, foundationalism with many more, and this simply is not the case.

Fleetwood (2005) identifies a positive belief that critical realism, particularly in the ontological sense, offers a considerable amount to the analysis of organisation and management. Critical realists retain an ontological realism Maxwell (2012) and within this study a 'real world' exists in the form of the GFC in spite of an individual's perceptions and constructions. Adopting the critical realist perception of a relationship between 'real' objects and their construction by individuals has a significant impact on methodology: in particular, the need for a flexible instrument in the collection of data.

This suggested enquiry relates more to critical theory, with the choice of ontology being that of a critical realist. Attempts to replicate/repeat a study which had been undertaken by Hassard et al (2009) will examine the data through their critical lens. Critical realism does not regard different methodologies as being philosophically incompatible and appears to be a good fit for the current research, as critical realism does not have to fit into constructed norms. This can be supported by Fleetwood (2005) as critical realism has provided a viable ontology of organisations and management, by allowing positivism and its observed realist ontology to be abandoned and not having to accept a social constructionist ontology. The data has been analysed, and the researcher will attempt to interpret the data through a Labour Process Lens. Braverman's (1976) Labour Process Theory LPT, from his publication *Labour and Monopoly Capital*, was a significant influence on Hassard et al (2009) in considering the data within their findings. The researcher will also use the lens to interpret the new data from the current context of the study.

Below is the Critical Realist (CR) understanding which has been adapted from the work of (Sayer, 1992 cit al Easton, 2010) and the researcher is suggesting that this justifies the reasoning for CR to be used within the study.

Critical Realist approach

Critical Realism (CR) was the most relevant approach for the current project and as a doctoral student this philosophy also appealed as McLachlan and Garcia (2015) established CR as an attractive option for doctoral students, because it is perceived to have a middle ground status. With this middle ground being suggested, McLachlan and Garcia (2015) go onto suggest that CR became attractive to researchers as two opposing philosophical arguments which are extreme positivism and extreme constructionism (McLachlan and Garcia, 2015 op cit Contu and Willmott, 2005) and the two will consider both an ontological realism and epistemological relativism. The CR approach which has been adopted for the current project has been detailed below in conjunction with the work of (Sayer, 1992 cit al Easton, 2010).

1. The world exists independently of our knowledge of it.

The research presented believes in two co-existing worlds which exist independently from one another, but are affected by each other. The researcher has taken the view that there is a real (tangible) world which exists, for example, structured organisation and policies and there is also a constructed world. For example, the individual perception of work practices on top of the initial world and thus working as two circles resting on top of another, has been supported by (Maxwell, 2012, Sayer, 1992 cit al Easton, 2010). The view of two contextual worlds is also of benefit to this study owing to the individual interviews which will have an individual perception attached to their fixed reality. This in turn allows the research to be paradynamic within the approach.

2. Our knowledge of the world is fallible and theory-laden. Concepts of truth and falsity fail to provide a coherent view of the relationship between knowledge and its object. Nevertheless, knowledge is not immune to empirical check and its effectiveness in informing and explaining successful material practice is not mere accident.

This follows the opinion of there being two worlds working within the knowledge of there being one world and the real (tangible) or object world being the other. However it is fully understood that knowledge world or constructed world will need to be checked and supported within the project. The project will endeavour to empirically check its findings by accessing and testing the findings against senior members of the interview process and reviewed on a step by step process in line with the template analysis method. King (2016) suggests that there will be new themes which are defined and organised into an initial template, undertaken after initial coding of a first set of the data. King (2016) continues by suggesting an example of this is achieved by reading through and initially coding the first three of fifteen interviews within a study. By allowing the interviews to develop, saturation is reached, then using the final involved template on senior management, thus supporting the empirical checking of data collected.

3. Knowledge develops neither wholly continuously, as the steady accumulation of facts within a stable conceptual framework, nor discontinuously, through simultaneous and universal changes in concepts.

Within this project, knowledge has been collected at varying points, from the literature review to inform and justify knowledge and has been collected from the participants, also justifying the information gathered. The interviews were conducted within differing contexts in the organisations and at different organisations and time frames, and there has been a steady gathering of facts and knowledge over the in 2014 when new data has been captured. With this in mind, the data was cross referenced across the organisation and offered a holistic approach to this research.

4. There is necessity in the world; objects—whether natural or social—necessarily have particular powers or ways of acting and particular susceptibilities.

Through this project, the researcher has understood that companies may have reacted to the GFC and also may have reacted differently and has also understood that objects or knowledge may have been inclined or susceptible to act in certain ways throughout the GFC and the project. Through completing the research it was understood that organisations needed to react to their particular external environment, with Burnham (2010) suggesting that the current crisis GFC has exposed much of the fragility of both the globalisation processes and of the economic models which have been implemented around the globe. Of interest to the researcher was how the economic environment has led to this change and how has the employees' reaction been perceived at the varying levels within the GFC.

5. The world is differentiated and stratified, consisting not only of events, but objects, including structures, which have powers and liabilities capable of generating events. These structures may be present even where, as in the social world and much of the natural world, they do not generate regular patterns of events.

The researcher understands that only the GFC was able to build new events within the organisation and that governments and work organisations can potentially hamper or improve a situation. Following this, managers can improve or hamper an environment situation and how it might be managed and so there are consequences from the initial event. This can be clearly seen within Roche and Teague (2014) where there is a suggestion that studies of how recessions affect work and employment then in turn create new events from their actions, by established employment models new models altogether. It is understood that it is how one goes about dealing with that issue with external factors present. Different senior managers will act in different ways when having to deal with differing problems and thus may not generate regular events and outcomes.

6. Social phenomena such as actions, texts and institutions are context dependent. We not only have to explain their production and material effects but to understand, read or interpret what they mean. Although they have to be interpreted by starting from the researcher's own frames of meaning, by and large they exist regardless of researchers' interpretation of them. A qualified version of 1 therefore applies to the social world. In view of 4 –6, the methods of social science and natural science have both differences and similarities.

When understanding and explaining the research, the researcher has attempted to understand the two separate worlds and how they interact with one another to create a Critical Realist understanding of the world. This will be achieved when collecting information from participants and also when adding to the evolving template which is being used to inform the collection of data. The immersive nature of template analysis enables this to be done intuitively from the data which has been collected and allows the template to grow coherently from what has gone before, within the study.

7. Science or the production of any kind of knowledge is a social practice. For better or worse (not just worse) the conditions and social relations of the production of knowledge influence its content. Knowledge is also largely, though not exclusively linguistic, and the nature of language and the way we communicate are not incidental to what is known and communicated. Awareness of these relationships is vital in evaluating knowledge.

This research looks to endorse the relationship of the knowledge as being integral to the adjoining worlds, and the perception which emerges only goes to enhance the relationship between the two co-joining worlds. When evaluating the information collected, it has been important to fully understand the knock on effect of each of the two co – joining worlds and an awareness has enabled a better understanding of the participant's information. The content / data given has been used in conjunction with the GFC and adds to the reasons why there may

have been changes. An understanding of the situation of the participating organisation has also assisted in the understanding of the viewpoints.

8. Social science must be critical of its object. In order to be able to explain and understand social phenomena we have to evaluate them critically (Sayer, 1992).

With the critical understanding of the world, the research will look to compare and contrast the knowledge and objects from all the participating interviews and examine them critically and thus gather the social phenomena of the context of the GFC paradigm. The information collected will enable the researcher to offer an explanation as to why the perception from the three varying levels within the organisation may be different. Their social construct / interpretation to the critical object of the GFC would be different and so critical realism is well placed for the research.

Adapted from (Sayer, 1992 cit al Easton, 2010)

The detailed justification of the Critical Realist approach was warranted to enable the reader to fully understand the process and offer a clear definition. The segmented and developmental way the critical realist paradigm allows the study to be flexible replicates the previous study of Hassard et al (2009) and enables the researcher to use some priori themes, whilst allowing some to emerge. Furthermore, Kempter & Parry (2011) support this by suggesting that critical realist researchers allow for flexibility regarding the interpretation of the data whilst not being constrained by the data. Researchers can accept that respondents might not consciously be aware of or be able to describe or appreciate social processes that shape leadership manifestation. In essence, the template is rooted in the work of Hassard et al (2009) and the real world could be conceived as the workplace which has been going through the GFC. The constructed nature of the enquiry comes from the constructed world and perceptions from the participants on top of the current workplace and how each organisation has reacted to the GFC.

Axiology

Creswell (2013) suggested that axiology is just another word for values, but within qualitative research the researchers will acknowledge their own values and how they position themselves in a particular study. In this case, the researcher will lay out the values in respect of the current study and will communicate the position from which he will interpret the participants' information. In essence, the researcher's values are contained within the information given previously in the literature review, thus showing a slight preference or bias in attempting to find the common problems. With this particular project, there will be an obvious value base as the work will be viewed through a LPT lens using previous research themes from Hassard et al (2009) and with that developing, template questions will evolve. It can be suggested that the chosen solution to the challenge of the conceptual foundations of the repeat study lie within a monograph of the original study.

This method has been shown to express the values of the authors much more freely in the peer-reviewed journals. The axiology also reflects one's values of the research and how one's own values could affect the results, but with Ponterotto (2005) highlighting that within an axiology. The researcher can carefully contain their values (biases) which are naturally reflected in the study and can acknowledge them at the outset. Within this current study, Hassard et al (2009) values have affected the initial results which the researcher is using as a springboard into the research and the priori themes collected.

The researcher felt it was important to express any values / experiences they may have encountered, to acknowledge them as it would be of interest for the reader to understand the axiology from which this work is written. The researcher has gone through a process of redundancy and also experienced the work place over the previous 10 years in differing jobs and thus a personal perception has also been built. The general perception of the work place

has been a good one, but an empirical understanding of the work place over the current context has also been understood and the worsening of intensity has been experienced. It would be interesting to see how these perceptions or understandings could be reflected in the data collected and it is felt that in exploring these values and how they could affect the knowledge collected, it was important for the reader to understand where the reflexivity and axiology could be based. It is anticipated that the experiences mentioned will not be pronounced within the data collected, but they should be acknowledged in order for the reader to gain a holistic view of the research conducted. CR offers the middle ground in conjunction and template analysis based on Hassard (2009) provides a degree of objectivity to the 'real' world.

Good Qualitative Research

A number of criteria were adopted by Lincoln and Guba (1985) who asked, "How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences that the research findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to" (pg 290). In essence, Lincoln and Guba (1985) were asking if the the data had been collected rigorously and robustly. The researcher has chosen to explore eight key markers of quality in qualitative research 'big tent' Tracey (2010) which includes worthy topic, rich rigour, sincerity, credibility, resonance, significant contribution, ethics, and meaningful coherence. The current research looked to use the 'big tent' to ensure 'good' qualitative research.

Worthy topic

The study is relevant and timely owing to the changing context of the environment within which the companies are working. During this time period of Global Financial Crisis (GFC) (2009–2014) there appeared to be much upheaval. O'Reilly et al (2011) suggest that the scale of the crisis was beyond imagination. It had gripped the world with the idea that there was the prospect of a financial 'Armageddon'.

Rich rigour

30 interviews collected (10 in each company) through a convenience sample, using Template Analysis King (2014) and Thematic Analysis. Interviews were completed via telephone as participants could express their perceptions in a time limited / confidential environment.

Sincerity

The approach was undertaken with the sincere intention of the researcher to engage in a study based as contextually 'realistic' to capture that environment. The work has been reflexive and has also given a historical context with the researcher detailing any biases which may exist. Furthermore, King (2014) template analysis involves stages of reflection on the research and data collected, upon which to address new and emerging sub-themes.

Credibility

The researcher has used 'descriptions' to support what has been highlighted. The themes which were initially discussed at the start of the template were work intensification, communication, technology, career management and change, which had been drawn from (Hassard et al, 2009).

Resonance

The aim of the research was to establish employees' non-generalizable perceptions of their work between 2008 and 2014, taking in the timeframe of the GFC with reference to (Hassard et al, 2009).

Significant Contribution

The intention of the study was to examine three levels of the organisation, with an employee focus, thereby extending the work of (Hassard et al, 2009). Engagement appears to have been hampered by the rapid change in management, and the consequent lack of communication, with this disconnect (and increased uncertainty) linking to the 'low road' reactions to the GFC. It would be of benefit to further understand the potentially 'low road'

responses that have been acknowledged. The contribution was to recognise the differing perceptions at different levels of the organisation relative to responses to the Global Financial Crisis (GFC). As such the originality found here was that, despite expectations of the interpretation of the GFC at every level, the translation of the environment or perceptions of reality at each level took were dependent upon their position in the organisation rather than the wider societal expectations.

Ethics

Anglia Ruskin University is aligned with a number of organisations when establishing their ethics policy, for example Association of Research Ethics Committees, British Psychological Society Code of Conduct and UK Research Integrity Office. A full list can be found on the Anglia Ruskin University website Anglia Ethics (2016). When conducting research the researcher has to be able to acknowledge all the ethical considerations with regards to the research and also those concerning the participants. The findings will be presented to the individual companies.

Meaningful Coherence.

The study sets out and answers the research questions posed and also highlights areas for future research. It was clear that the GFC has had a considerable effect on all three organisations. By drawing on the historical studies pre-2008 of Hassard et al (2009) to gain insights and methods used suitably assisted in the completion of the study, in the consideration of the impact upon each company researched.

(Adapted from Tracey, 2010)

This method has also been supported by Gordon & Patterson (2013) who conclude that the 8 criteria are useful as they are not fixed and they build on each category and specifically ethics as a predominant framework.

Reflexivity

Qualitative interviewing on a regular basis requires a review of King (2014) template analysis which involves stages of reflection on the research and data collected upon which to address new and emerging sub-themes. Reflexivity is the opportunity to examine the relationship between the researcher and the research and potential biases towards certain situations due to the researcher's experience are detailed below. Previous experience appears to play a role with Holland (1999) suggesting that within social science reflexivity occurs when the researcher considers how the collection and analysis of data might be affected by their own previous experiences and personal perceptions. With this in mind, the researcher will attempt to consider how his personal experiences could affect the research process. With the researcher having had experience of redundancy, the delayering in previous roles will have to be considered so that the researcher's personal experience will not hamper the data collection. Bearing this in mind the researcher feels fit to explain their working history as it could be relevant to the study. The researcher has gone through three rounds of delayering and reorganisation and has been involved in one round of voluntary redundancy before going back to study. It could therefore be argued that the researcher will have an influenced view when examining the evidence, which is something that the researcher is aware of and has acknowledged and will attempt to stop an influenced opinion from occurring.

It has been highlighted by King (2014) that qualitative research requires some reflexivity. The researcher will need to reflect on their involvement with the nature of the research and the way in which King (2014) axiology has affected the outcome. As previously highlighted King (2014) considers that reflexivity is essential throughout this research process, for example, when trying to acknowledge the researcher's own assumptions and how they might contribute to the researcher answering the research question. There are techniques for quality checking, with King (2014) proposing independent scrutiny of analysis, setting up of audit trails and

respondent feedback of results after the analysis. This has been attempted by the supervisor and critical mentor.

Research Design

At this stage, the researcher would like to provide an overview of the research design as with any project, it can be complicated to see and understand how the methods chosen can relate to one another. It was felt the most appropriate way to show the journey of the researcher was to provide a detailed timetable that allows the reader to see the stages adopted within the project, fully in a clear detailed quasi – timeline, providing a useful tool to illustrate the process adopted (see page 138). The first phase was to send out letters and discussions with CIPD members and to approach companies. The sequential design of the project relates to phases 1-6, and phases 7-9 relate to the growth of the template and the template analysis. It can be seen how the research was designed and that each phase is in numerical order. It should be mentioned that the Baby Ceiling project (see page 103) is not incorporated in the current research design as it was achieved within the early stages of the project and has led to informing the research questions and give an overview of current issues.

Research Design (Figure 3)

1. Initial Phases

Send out letters to EADT (2014) top 100 companies and also a discussion with the CIPD network to see if they would be interested to take part within the study. (Baby Ceiling pilot was completed prior to this).

2. Discussion Phase

There was strong interest from 4 companies. Following the initial contact and phone conversations, face to face meetings were arranged, with 3 of the organisations.

3. Pilot Stage

An initial smaller pilot study was conducted as a way to test the initial template (this being a mini version of a full-scale study) to focus the initial themes within the template and to condense the larger theme set.

4. Acceptance Phase

After meeting face to face with the organisations, it was decided to base the research around these organisations, owing to the diverse spread of the three organisations. Ethics forms approval were sent at this phase.

5. Interview Schedule Phase

Interviewees were selected via interview schedule sent to the HR department, this was filled with a selection of requested staff and then the researcher followed the interview schedule.



9. Analysis Phase

The data was then transcribed from the audio data, following this they were then thematically coded, which reinforces the evolving and chosen themes.

8. Confirmation Phase

The final interview template was then tested on senior management as the final template contained the new and evolved sub themes.

7. Evolving Phase

The template was allowed to evolve with the initial analysis allowing for the inclusion of any themes after interview template was initially analysed.

6. Interview Phase

Interviews were conducted following the set schedule. Participants were phoned at a selected time and a quiet room was set up to receive the call away from their work space.

Methods

The methodology chosen is based within critical realism and template analysis. This methodology was adopted as it was felt that it provided a more 'real life' analysis of the theories, providing a more elastic template that could be adapted to fit into different contexts and timeframes. Creswell (2013) explains that this form of research is based on gaining the personal insight of individuals who have experienced certain phenomena. Ethnographic approaches were one of the initial considerations, but it was felt that the researcher did not have the access to organisations for the extended timescale that Creswell (2013) suggested is necessary to make ethnography a suitable source of insight. It was also felt that, owing to the flexible nature of the study, template analysis allowed for an emergent nature and also a structure on which to develop an evolving template to examine the required time frame.

Focus groups were considered a useful tool, with Kitzinger (1995) suggesting that they represent a sort of 'group interview', with communication enabling research participants to provide a developed and contextualised insight into the questions addressed. Kitzinger (1995) continues by suggesting that group interviews can be a simple, quick and useful tool, and a convenient way of collecting information from a number of participants at one time. From this point the researcher could then apply thematic analysis to the results. It was considered that would then allow for a comparison between the data gathered to assess whether the perception of managers/employees matches the reality of what is happening. It was initially thought to be a positive idea, but the access arrangements agreed with the organisation did not allow a larger group of employees' to be out of the office at one time. It was also decided that interviewing individuals separately could enable them to be more open and honest about their views, with Cassell and Symon (2004) suggesting it allows participants the opportunity to either discuss their work or just highlight issues without risk of recourse of recrimination –

an opportunity rarely offered in the professional world. It was finally decided that, on reflection, the initial template analysis interviews would be more than capable of providing insight into the current post-global financial crisis labour process. The initial aim to utilise focus groups was found to be problematic when attempting to organise these within the participating companies. King's (2014) template analysis was used as the basis upon which to build on the themes previously identified by Hassard et al (2009) and was determined to be best placed to cover the emerging nature of the current research.

Information was collected using semi-structured interviews, based on the initial questions set out by Hassard et al, (2009). The need to use the monograph to draw out themes was acknowledged. Creswell (2012) suggests that this will help provide supporting evidence and shed further light onto the perspective of the participants. Creswell (2012) also goes on to suggest that triangulating data from differing sources will add further validity to the findings, so a number of methods were considered to gather the information from participants. The themes were collected from the initial work of Hassard et al (2009), using a method of content analysis. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) suggest that qualitative content analysis is subject to interpretation of the content, but will assist in identifying themes. The researcher applied the content analysis method by extracting regularly discussed themes, enabling the researcher to input them into the prior formed template on which the question were based – see appendix 1. The themes captured were tested on a pilot study to enable the more rigorous construction of the template, making room for the emergence of previously unknown themes.

Template Analysis

After identifying themes from the original text Hassard et al (2009) the researcher started to develop questions around those themes. The researcher felt the questions could be developed further through template analysis. On examining King (2014), it was decided that this was a good fit for the current research project. There are a number of reasons for this, primarily that

it provided a flexible template, addressing historical themes identified by Hassard et al (2009). Additionally, it was felt that the flexible nature of the template left room for the identification of new developing themes. Finally, the template was tested on senior management to ascertain if there is a difference in opinion between middle management and their employees. An initial smaller pilot study was conducted to test the initial template. Van Teijlingen and Hundley (2002) proposed this as a mini-version of a full-scale study, also termed a feasibility study, as well as the pre-testing of a usable research instrument.

Due to the varying influences that impact upon a repeat study such as this, it was necessary to utilise an evolving template to provide a qualitative model suitable for a repeat study to assess any new themes that emerged within this project. Symon and Cassell (2012) suggest that template analysis approach is more flexible, with fewer procedures than the alternatives, thereby allowing the researcher to tailor it to the individual project. In contrast, having a more controlled repeat study, using an inflexible approach, could restrict the power of the present study, due to its inability to identify the evolving perceptions of participants' personal experiences. Symon and Cassell (2012) propose that there are three main deciding factors when choosing template analysis: with these being flexible coding structure, using a priori themes leading to development of the initial template. Template analysis was selected as it was deemed the most suitable option for the research, owing to the potential flexibility of the interview template.

King (2014) suggests that 'template analysis' relates to the thematic analysis of qualitative data, and that, while the data normally used is in the form of interview transcripts, the method could also be applied to any kind of textual data. King (2014) believes that template analysis enables the identification of themes. Categorised coding is highlighted, using broad themes to encompass a successively narrower scope. Analysis often starts with a priori codes, which in

the present case were obtained from Hassard et al, (2009). These codes were revised, with King (2014) suggesting that they could be modified or dispensed with if they were not useful or suitable.

Analysis of the data began with the identification and marking of any segments that appeared relevant to the research question. In line with King (2014), the researcher utilised the 'read through and code' method after the first three interviews, enabling new themes to be included in the initial interview template after they were discovered. The evolved template was then applied to the existing participants, modified in the light of the new information, until 'saturation' was achieved. King (2004) suggests that once all templates have been coded, the final template will serve as a basis for the researcher's interpretations when writing up their findings. This was seen as beneficial to the current research project, with a flexible 'plastic' method of analysis following each interview used until exhaustion was met. The researcher added validity to this data by going back to senior management to test that exhaustion had been reached from the data sample and responses.

In essence, there were three stages to ensure that the data had been collected correctly. Saunders and Lewis (2012) propose that validity is achieved if the findings fit with the subject matter. Hence, the researcher used the following phases to check that the data had been collected correctly. Interviews were conducted via telephone (see page 149), transcribed (see appendix 2 and findings section) and finally analysed. After every three interviews, the interviews were sequentially coded and enhanced, with King (2014) supporting this by suggesting that once the initial template has been developed, the task is to develop it further until it is felt that it provides a good representation of the themes. This has been done, following every three interviews and modifying or increasing new and appropriate themes, if there appeared to be new material relevant to the research question which the template did not yet

adequately cover. King (2014) goes on to suggest that this iterative process of coding, modifying the template and re-coding could 'in theory' go on indefinitely, but interviews need to come to a natural end and are time-limited.

Given that the theory of Critical Realism (CR) was applied to the interviews, it might be interesting to highlight how that affected the process. CR affects the 'whats' and 'hows' of the process, with McLachlan and Garcia (2015) suggesting that an understanding of the content being investigated (ontological) and how the interaction within the interview in turn creates the data / knowledge (epistemology). This process also allows the participants to express and base themselves within the framework being investigated, and to export these factors to an interview setting, according to McLachlan and Garcia (2015).

It is usually not too difficult to apply a law of diminishing returns, whereby you recognise that the small gain in the quality of your analysis is not worth the cost of yet further revision to the template. It is easier to make this decision when you are not working on your own, and can discuss it with a colleague or supervisor. In this circumstance, it is beneficial to confirm you have reached a point of saturation, but that should also be highlighted by the data collected. This may be a stage where a formal quality check is useful, visiting the quality checks and reflexivity section for further information. The template has been developed from pre-existing data from the work of Hassard et al (2009) and throughout the interview process the template is informed by the data collected. In some circumstances within organisations, the data has attempted to highlight themes which are not currently noted as priori themes of issues around work. The end result is three new working templates, which have evolved from the initial work of Hassard et al (2009) and go on to identify any new dimensions of work, becoming more pronounced and this is discussed within chapter 8/9.

Reflection of the Interviews

The researcher started out with a pilot study with two HR professionals, to understand which six themes appeared to be the most current topics, in addition to the work completed on the baby ceiling, and then six priori themes were chosen in discussion with the pilot interview participants. Once this was completed, the researcher was able to create the template with the themes selected and with added initial questions. As they were semi-structured, this allowed for an emergence of new themes, which could be reflected within the discussion.

The initial phase of the interview process involved contacting the three organisations who agreed to take part in the research. All three companies were given a brief, suggesting that predominately non-supervisory employees were required, along with a number of middle management and the CEO or President within the organisation, to test the final template. That appeared to run smoothly with the companies each putting forward ten members of staff, with the main interviewees being non-supervisory employees. After agreeing with the companies that interviews would take place by telephone, this was met by most as convenient and the best method to collect data as it was not intrusive and an interview schedule was devised. The interviews were conducted with one company at a time to complete the iterative analysis and add to the 'plastic template' and allowing it to grow for each organisation individually. The initial phase moved effectively forward, with only the occasional breakdown in communication. One of the companies offered more middle to senior managers for interview, which was addressed and more non-supervisory employees were recruited. In all, it took about two months to collect 30 interviews from the three participating groups.

The manufacturing organisation was investigated first and this was the initial organisation in which the researcher conducted interviews within this process and the company appeared very open in what they had to say, bringing both positives and negatives regarding the

perception of management regarding the effect the GFC had on them during the time period. The first interviews were with of non-supervisory employees, moving up to middle management through to senior management, finishing by interviewing the CEO of each organisation. Within the first organisation it was felt that the research revealed some useful insights, and initial findings were presented at the University Forum Human Resource Development (2015).

During the initial phase with the second organisation, a retailer requested that the researcher could start with conducting interviews. The researcher found this company somewhat more closed in their answers and this was also reflected in the duration of the interviews offered. When the participants opened up it appeared to be a rich source of data, but it was also interesting to listen back to the interviews to consider why they had been shorter, containing many one word answers and not being particularly engaged. All in all, the second company was of interest because of what was not said was valuable, but the researcher was frustrated with the lack of engagement with the study.

Finally, the last company was a food and drink supplier who wanted the interviews completed in a shorter timeframe than the others due to encountering a busy time of the year. This was an intense two-week period in which two interviews in each company were performed and then analysed on an almost on a simultaneous schedule, thus allowing the short turnaround time for the company. The interviews went well and rich data had been collected, the companies which took part were willing to be involved in future studies. The research delivery was as flexible as possible within the three organisations as the researcher was aware that at times the organisations were moving into busy times of the year. The researcher was also aware that the level of access granted to these organisations would be promising for the present study and wanted to collect the data correctly.

Population and Sampling

The researcher found gaining access to the participants somewhat complex owing to the lack of access, thus offering to complete the interviews with the participants via telephone. With access to the participants being problematic, it was decided that the researcher would contact the local East Anglian Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) branch to ascertain if they would be interested in taking part. An email was sent to the chairperson with a brief explanation of the research and a brief descriptor about the researcher. After that initial contact, a request was made to attend one of the CIPD branch meetings where the researcher could explain the project and begin to build up some participants for the future research. From this initial meeting, a small number of organisations offered to help with the research process. The researcher felt that the CIPD was an interesting group to explore as the human resource departments were often the initial vehicle for change and getting the overall perception of the changing environment from this sample group could prove to be an interesting and a valuable contribution derived from current knowledge.

It was felt that the data received could then lead to a discussion amongst both sets of information; from the initial response suggested by the managers, via what was perceived as being requested by the management, and finally through to the employees themselves. It was anticipated that there would be access, either through contact with CIPD or through letters, email and telephone calls, and there was interest in the research. Having approached the CIPD, they had also suggested that they could promote the research online via one of their subsidiary companies, but this yielded very little. Access to organisations has not been easy with letters sent, to the top 100 companies in the East Anglian region to enquire if they would be interested in participating in the proposed research. It was hoped that from this initial introduction a number of companies would be interested and willing to participate.

The initial exercise identified twelve leads after being invited to participate by letter and the researcher built on these relationships so that they were willing to take part in the study. It was decided that three of the most suitable organisations were chosen (Food and Beverage Company, Manufacturing Company and Retail Company) to take part, owing to a number of reasons, one of which was that after meeting the organisations it was felt they were best suited to participate in the study. The second reason was they were able to take part in the timescale of the study, and finally they were all roughly of equal size and they all offered the required access. It was ascertained that each organisation was willing to allow 10 participants to be involved, although it is impossible to predict the point at which data exhaustion would occur, but this has been confirmed following the write up.

During the initial discussions with the participating organisations, 10 interviews were agreed owing to the lack of access and time the organisations had to offer, but this was sufficient to answer the research questions. Following on from the researcher gaining access to the organisation, it was decided to request the interviews would be completed within the three previously mentioned levels of the organisation in an attempt to ascertain any differences in perceptions. Focus was on the non-supervisory employees with a suggestion of 5 being put forward by each organisation. The next level examined was the middle managers within the organisations of which there was a suggestion of 3 within each organisation. Finally, senior management and there were 2 within each organisation on which to test the final template consisting of the CEO and Head of HR. Saturation was reached early amongst all three organisations, the researcher felt it important to collect added data as access to the organisation was beneficial. The final template was tested on senior management to confirm and highlight any disparity amongst levels in the organisation. The participants were a mix of male and female at varying ages amongst the three interviewed organisations.

Using semi-structured interviews from the themes (see appendix 1) which Hassard et al (2009) identified during their studies, and employing template analysis to interrogate the data set, the researcher created questions around this initial template which will extend further. Using this method of developing from pre-existing themes with a view to examining a different context in the future, will add to the knowledge of Hassard et al (2009) and will also offer a contribution of knowledge to the current context of the work place, with King (2014) suggesting that the account is structured around the main themes which have been identified and drawn from the transcripts.

The sample was defined as a convenience sample and Marshall (1996) suggests that convenience sampling is the method of involving the most accessible participants for the researcher as the access offered by each organisation was that they were willing to offer 10 employees to be interviewed over the three employment levels. With this in mind, the organisational research could be deemed as purposive sampling and this can be known as judgmental, selective or subjective sampling with Tongco (2007) suggesting that purposive sampling can be used with qualitative studies and essential preference of the method can contribute to its efficiency, with Tongco (2007) going on to suggest that the method stays vigorous when tested against other random probability methods. Due to the access issue the researcher did, however, stipulate the need for 5 employees, 3 middle managers and 2 senior managers to be interviewed. An interview schedule was sent to the HR departments along with all ethics documentation. Once all the ethics documents had been returned back, the interviews on the participants pre-selected by the organisations were conducted.

A caveat to the organisations putting employees forward for the interviews is that it could be argued that there could have been an opportunity for the companies to bias the data by picking employees who would suggest positives or who had been trained. From the data collected,

this does not appear to have been the case within two of the participating companies, but as suggested in the previous section, one of the companies provided replies to questions which were somewhat limited and the interviews were markedly shorter, but still yielded useful insights.

Telephone Interviews

When reviewing the use of the telephone interview, there appeared to be limited literature within its use in the business qualitative environment. However, there did appear to be more of a discussion within the health and social care discipline regarding the telephone interview tool. The researcher found it to be the best tool for the current study over other forms of electronic capture, for instance online surveys such as Survey Monkey. To provide some understanding as to why the researcher chose not to use Survey Monkey or another like-minded tool is that 'Survey Monkey does provide a quick data in which to store and organize the results acquired' (Smith et al, 2011). There is the option to collect qualitative and quantitative feedback, but it was felt that having to fill in a survey with lots of free speech options would not be an option owing to the participants being away from their work for an extended period. The researcher felt that the most beneficial tool for collecting data was that of telephone interviews as participants could express their perceptions in a time limited / confidential environment. Many reasons support the use of a qualitative methodology being appropriate for this study, because the empirical research in the new context is at its infancy (Treviño et al, 2003).

There was a multitude of reasons why telephone interviews were chosen to collect the data, including the amount of travel required for each interview and the availability of the participants. It appeared to fit cleanly within the organisations' availability and did not take members of staff away from their work environment. This is supported by Novick (2008) where they discuss the various advantages of telephone interviews suggesting that it can decrease

the cost of travel secondly it enables the researcher to reach problematic areas to travel via public transport and also interviewer safety. When trying to find a tool to contact the interviewees it was felt that the telephone was the best for this project even though Novick (2008) acknowledges from their review of the use of telephone interviews within qualitative research, that there appeared to be an opinion that telephone interviews were seen to be poorer than face-to-face interviews for qualitative research. This opinion that telephone interviews are sub-standard is argued by Novick (2008) who suggests that the assumption that face-to-face interviews are better than telephone interviews could stem from genuine apprehensions of the lack of any visual cues, which could in turn lead to lost data. Novick (2008), however, suggests that there is little evidence that data loss occurs or that the quality of findings is affected when interview data is collected by way of telephone.

When considering telephone interviews for the collection of qualitative data and in support of Novick (2008) from the previous paragraph (Tausig and Freeman, 1988 cit al Sturges and Hanrahan, 2004) suggests that telephone interviewing provides an opportunity to gather data from participants who are unwilling to participate in face-to-face interviews or from individuals who are challenging to access in person, because of location, cost or the themes being addressed. It is also important to discuss the practicalities of how the telephone interviews were conducted. The time of day the interviews were collected was within the working hours of 9:00-17:00 across all organisations and the interview time was arranged either by the researcher or by the gate keeper who would present a schedule, after times of availability were agreed. The interviews were conducted in a private room within the workplace and consent was also discussed at the start of each interview.

The interviews were on average 30 minutes in duration and were electronically recorded via the phone connection. Participants were informed again of the ethics guidelines, that they

were able to leave the study at any time and the information provided would be confidential. Finally it must be noted that no participants left the study at any stage within this project.

Analysis

As soon as the interviews had been completed in an identified data collection method, narrative discourse or critical discourse analyses were considered. Although the data instrument was cross-sectional with respect to time, it was necessary to ask respondents about their past experiences. It was felt that narrative discourse analysis would not be used within this project to help to establish the account of events which were usually in the past. The researcher would have looked to analyse the way in which the accounts were delivered and would need to note verbs that were spoken as a focal point of the data collected. After coming to the conclusion that narrative analysis was not the 'right tool' for the analysis, the researcher then started to explore other avenues. The reason for not choosing narrative analysis is because of the familiarity with template analysis, King (2014) states that it is important to highlight themes in qualitative research and they arise from analysing the transcripts, as the researcher is attempting to answer the research questions. Bamberg (2005) suggests that narrative analysis is used to identity research as it is interested in the inconsistencies and contradictions that arise from the interactions.

Critical discourse was not chosen, but was considered to analyse the data collected and it was decided that this tool would not be used to analyse the data collected. Critical discourse analysis is an approach to the study of the discourse of language from different contexts or cultures and how it is mimicked in text and communications. Fairclough and Wodak (2005) propose that discourse does concern the way in which language works within our engagements with the world. Our communications with one another can create and shape the social, political and cultural world. It was, however, felt that in order to understand the added and existing themes that King (2014) template analysis, a form of thematic analysis should be

used. In order to add continuation to what had previously been adopted in earlier stages and leads to highlighting and confirming new and existing themes and using narrative description in the findings and discussion chapter only leads to further justification of the themes.

It was decided after much consideration of King (2014) that template analysis would be used to analyse the initial data received from the semi-structured interviews and to develop themes and questions which could then be given to those who participated in the semi-structured interviews. King (2014) proposes that one method of analysing the data using template analysis, would be to create an account built around the main themes which could draw on the templates. King (2014) also proposes a number of pros and cons and states that a positive element would be a clear overview from template analysis findings and that a negative element was that it could encourage generalisation.

The term template analysis which has been chosen to analyse the data response refers to a way of thematically analysing qualitative data. The data involved is usually interview transcripts, but can be any kind of data (King, 2014). Template analysis involves the development of a template which can summarise various themes from the response received and allows the researcher to identify areas which may be of use and can be built upon. Within template analysis there are a number of advantages and disadvantages. One of the main disadvantages would be the of lack of literature about this technique compared to other techniques (Cassell and Symon, 2004). There are a number of advantages, with Cassell and Symon (2004) suggesting that the advantage of using template analysis is the fact that it is flexible in its approach and can be changed according to the needs of the study. Cassell and Symon (2004) also suggest that being made to produce a template gives the researcher a well-structured way of handling the data and in turn should be of benefit in producing an organised final account of the study.

The method adopted, it could be argued, bears some relevance to Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2008) and their work around demonstrating rigour with thematic analysis. Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2008) suggest that their chosen method of analysis was a hybrid approach, which included the data-driven inductive approach of (Boyatzis, 1998 op cit Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2008). In the current project, that data-driven literature was by Hassard et al (2009) and the deductive approach was also used to create the priori template from the work of Hassard et al (2009) after content analysis of their monograph.

Coding

When coding the data collected, the researcher decided to take a manual approach to coding the data. Getting the coding correct is imperative, as Basit (2003) describes this stage as one of the substantial steps which is taken to analyse, establish and make sense of the data provided. The researcher chose to manually code the data collected having decided to immerse themselves into the data to attempt to find links within it. Basit (2003) suggests that coding can often be tedious and time-consuming when carried out manually, but that it can take a number of weeks to fully understand a software package with which to code qualitative data electronically. The researcher did attend a training session where it was concluded that electronic methods, for example Nvivo, was not perceived to be the most relevant for the project. There have long been arguments about which method appeared to be more effective for coding data. John and Johnson (2000) suggest that the researcher needs to establish a full understanding of what a computer package is able to offer and if time is not available to train with that package, it could be argued it would not be beneficial to use.

By taking a manual approach, the researcher attempted to re-engage with the data provided, having stepped away from the data and worked on other chapters. The immersion of data by completing manually also allows for contextual nuances to be discovered that could have been missed by using a software system. The coding process took around three months and was

recoded many times due to the manual nature of the work that was involved. It was important within the coding phase for the research to have an open category, so not to miss anything like Boyatzis (1998) suggesting that recognizing or seeing is crucial and prior to the interpretation. To allow themes to emerge that can then be discussed within the findings and discussion category under section emerging. Please see Appendix 2, for an example of a coded page, in which the reader will be able to gain an insight into the way in which the transcript has been coded. During the process the initial coding was checked with the supervisor, to confirm it was being achieved correctly.

Conceptual Lens

When discussing the findings, it has been considered that one way to view the data was that of Braverman's (1974) Labour Process Theory LPT and, as previously mentioned, utilising Smith (2014) with their proposed nine key concepts to LPT when looking through an LPT lens. It has been proposed by Jaros (2005) that the emphasis of LPT might be developed as Jaros (2005) that during the late 1990s and the early 2000s, Academics (Smith, Knights and Willmott, 1991; Jermier, Knights and Nord, 1994; Warhurst and Thompson, 1998 op cit Jaros, 2005) who have been working in the arena of the LPT concept, were of the understanding that an emphasis was required that described how capital labour undercurrents were revealed in a variety of specific workplaces and unrelated labour processes. Adding to this, the work of Hassard et al (2009) as discussed on pg 64 will also considerably contribute to the conceptual lens.

Labour Process Theory (1974) and Hassard (2009)

The 9 key concepts of LPT appear to be valuable in the analysis and discussion chapter, as a lens through which to review what has been established. This guided the template and the following data interpretation. The 9 concept model which Smith (2014) proposed was:

1. Labour power: for example, what is sold and for how long.
2. Control, and what is the reason for the capitalistic labour process.
3. The actual labour process, which fits neatly with the fourth, the work regimes of the employees and workers.
4. The work regimes of the employees and workers.
5. The division of labour and the migration of the work or worker
6. The potential conflict which could exist within the labour process.
7. Capitalism itself and the various trends and dynamics of capitalism
8. The labour market and the structure of the organisation.
9. Employment relations within the organisation.

The justification of using the enhanced lens of Smith (2014) in conjunction with (Cushen and Thompson, 2016) interpretation of LPT is that their interpretation allows for the current data to be interpreted through the literature and allows the reader to see how the researcher has interpreted information from participants within the present study. This evolved outlook it could be argued, could be linked with the suggestion by Jaros (2005) that the new emphasis is represented as a break from LPT past. Also, when reviewing the conceptual lens, Jaros (2005) continues that LPT was initially focused in the 1980s which incorporated the use of historical, cultural, and economic data which then attempted to link together labour-capital undercurrents at the point of production and this is pronounced with the changing shift where the emphasis described how capital labour undercurrents are revealed in a variety of specific workplaces and unrelated labour processes previously mentioned. In essence the evolved LPT lens developed by Smith (2014) and further understanding from Cushen and Thompson (2016) will be used to structure the data collected and used as a lens through which to view the information.

When analysing the work of Hassard et al (2009) it must be noted the lack of attention devoted to LPT which has been highlighted as a criticism of the work. To support this criticism Hales (2010) proposes that a fuller declaration was required on the theoretical framework, of the initial study of the Neo – Marxist LPT and that it had been redundant within (Hassard et al, 2009). This raises the question as to why LPT is the focus of this current study, which leads to future study of Hassard et al (2009) as to why it was felt that a Neo – Marxist LPT was not highlighted more heavily within the discussion. Hassard et al (2009) does go some way to suggest is it a useful theoretical lens through which to explore the changing times within organisations and Hassard et al (2009) suggest that data collected shows strong support that enables LPT interpretation of an organisational restructure. The work of Adler (2007) also goes some way to also confirm the researcher's initial thoughts of the need to utilise LPT in a different way owing to a changing work environment. It could be argued that this may be one reason why Hassard et al (2009) chose not to highlight the theoretical lens as it was different from that highlighted by (Adler 2007 op cit Hassard et al 2009). This highlighted the quality of the work systems which have improved from the traditional LPT.

Constraints

There were a number of limitations within the study, not least gaining access to interview the employees of the organisation. Conway and Monks (2009) identify criticisms that by not concentrating upon employees or organisations the study can fail to recognise the employee's perspective of their workplace. There were limited studies in Human Resource Management (HRM) as their access to the sample was complex.

Access had been an issue within this project, but on completion it had been resolved due to the cooperation of the three organisations who were willing to take part. The issue of access appears to be a common issue with Shenton and Hayter (2004) suggesting that one of the

key areas is gaining access and involves both securing entry to the organisations and then also ensuring that the participants, such as employees, can hopefully serve as informants.

The Pygmalion Effect proposed by White (2000) generally means that establishing the leader expectations for an employee's performance can subconsciously impact the leader behaviour and the employee's performance. The limitation within this study could be a Pygmalion approach which might be adopted by the employee as they want to give the researcher the response they presume is expected. Bezuijen et al (2009) proposes that the Pygmalion Effect appears to have focused on different employee outcomes, such as performance, attitudes and employee engagement in learning activities. The Pygmalion Effect means that within the concept of the research rather than the experience being that of the natural setting, the setting is disturbed by the presence of others, both from the organisation and of the researcher. Eden and Shani (1982) goes on to propose that the persistent influences of relational expectations of behaviour in a situation, are a self-fulfilling prophecy. Rather than the observation of participants behaving as they would do in their natural environment, the presence of the researcher means they could change their behaviour in their responses so that they attempt to meet the expectations of the researcher's needs.

Ethical Considerations

The initial meeting was to gain gatekeeper approval and was an informal, informative discussion for the study and was not included within the interview data collected. The proposed research seeks to investigate the relationship between managerial employee/workforce perceptions of their activities in relation to current work practices, and the ways in which such practices are perceived. The conceptual background to the research will be contributed by the investigation by Hassard et al (2009) into how the working lives of managers have been subjected to major disruption, involving work intensification and reduced opportunities for career progression. This study was completed before the global

downturn of 2008, and it is timely to revisit its findings given the very different external contexts in which work organizations find themselves. Employees (rather than management) were given little voice within the Hassard et al (2009) study as it focussed upon managers. It had been communicated within the study, verbally and through ethical paper work that the participant had the right to withdraw consent to participate during the research process by communicating by email, or in person, to the researcher within 2 weeks of the interview/focus group.

Should any participant identify distress then they may be referred to university counselling service if appropriate, however the semi-structured questions are posed to limit the opportunities for such an occurrence. All data will be secured and data security is assured through password protection and appropriate IT backup activities. There was limited access to the data, to the researcher and research team only. Material was not printed out which could facilitate identification of participants outside the knowledge of the research team.

Anglia Ruskin University ethical clearance was submitted after the proposal had been accepted by the university. After completing the documentation it was submitted along with the ethics checklist, and was returned as an 'amber' risk category, due to the studies involvement of interviewing people. Amber risk Anglia Ethics (2015) category means it was medium risk and was required to be reviewed under the departmental research ethics panel (DREP) before the research could be started. Below is Anglia Ruskin University's stand point in (2015) on the need for ethical clearance.

'All research – whatever the subject of investigation – has the potential to contribute to or challenge academic knowledge; however, it also has the potential to impact on

society at large, for instance, through the development of new knowledge or informing the development of professional practice. Public confidence in research can be seriously harmed where there is doubt about researchers' integrity or honesty. Anglia Ruskin University is therefore committed to ensuring that all research undertaken in its name is carried out to the highest level of ethical standards, is fully compliant with relevant legislation and policy requirements, and informed by overarching principles of integrity and honest'. (Anglia, 2015)

Anglia Ruskin University is aligned with a number of organisations when establishing their ethics policy, for example Association of Research Ethics Committees, British Psychological Society Code of Conduct, UK Research Integrity Office, and a full list can be found on the Anglia Ruskin University website Anglia Ethics (2016). When conducting research, the researcher has to be able to acknowledge all the ethical considerations with regards to the research and those concerning you participants. In the initial phases the participants were invited to participate in the research activity, but were advised that they had the right to withdraw their consent to participate.

Questions were not probing from a personal perspective, which might cause concern or leave a participant feeling exposed within a peer group. Participating should not compromise their legal rights. The researcher ensured that interviews were conducted on official premises (ie university), during office hours, via telephone. Ensuring the procedures and schedule for interview considers the risks to researchers. There was limited access to the data and this was restricted to researcher and research team only. The information was transcribed and analysis carried out on the data.

The researcher informed participants of the proposed value of the study by initially meeting with the CEO/Chairman of the organisation, then if accepted by sending information to participants about the study, with reference to the ethical paperwork.

Chapter 6

Findings

Process

Within this section the researcher will discuss the findings from the three organisations surveyed in order to confirm or reject themes from the work of Hassard et al (2009) but also to allow the emergence of any new themes. The researcher has used 'descriptions' as previously stated to support what has been highlighted. The themes which were initially discussed at the start of the template were Work Intensification, Communication, Technology, Career Management and Change, which had been drawn from (Hassard et al, 2009). As previously mentioned the template would develop over time and new themes would emerge. Some themes became more prominent than others, thus allowing for the development for a final template to be tested on senior management.

When presenting the data collected, the researcher examined the information on an individual level first, but then looked at all the participating organisations, holistically. When examining the organisations individually, the researcher was able to engross themselves within the individual data sets and really understand the perceptions of specific levels with the individual company. The initial discussion allows the reader to look at the individual themes and the various levels investigated. The discussion then progressed to examine the data collectively and attempts to compare and contrast, whilst detailing where particular areas have been affected, and also linking to previous literature discussed within the literature review. If there were abnormalities within the data between some of the organisations, this has also been discussed in more depth, to justify whether this may be a new anomaly or if the information

disclosed is new within the context of the economic environment and this is also highlighted in the Findings and Discussion chapters.

There were three companies who participated in the research, each coming from different sectors, one being a manufacturing company, the second a retail company and finally a food and beverage company. Each of the companies were listed in the East Anglia Daily Times (EADT) (2014) top 100 within companies in the East Anglian region in 2014. As previously highlighted (see Chapter 5), there were issues around access and how it has impacted, positively or negatively, on the diverse nature of the organisations utilised within the research. This did however raise the issue of the potential lack of general data, as this study was an initial exploratory study, which sought to gain insights into the post-GFC context and provide perceptions of currently adopted work practices.

Each company has been broken into 3 distinct levels: employee, middle management and senior management, and the findings are discussed within each differing level. This was designed to understand whether perceptions were different or coherent throughout the organisation or if there was a difference of perception and if so, why. The aim was to add to the existing body of knowledge around perceptions of management over the recession and this investigation includes the 3 perspectives of staff and offers insights into an under-researched area.

Each telephone interview lasted approximately 30 minutes and as previously highlighted the subjects were drawn from a collection of non-supervisory employees, with a minimum of 5 participants being put forward by each organisation. The next level were the middle managers of whom there were three participants within each organisation. Finally, two members of senior management within each organisation were asked to test the final template, consisting of the

CEO and Head of HR. Due to the non-sector specific nature and ethical requirements, the researcher is unable to elaborate on specific roles owing to the requirement to maintain anonymity. During the interview cycle an initial review was undertaken every 2-3 completed interviews to ascertain emerging themes. After the interviews, the researcher then transcribed and thematically coded the interviews. During this phase the level of the descriptions are clearly shown and whether the participant was an operational employee, middle manager or senior management.

The researcher attempted to capture a snapshot of the perceptions of workers, expressed as their co-construction of experienced reality. The summaries reflect narratives collected from participants in 2014 to provide insights which were gained from their expressed comments as part of semi-structured interview form. The interviews only provided insights and a wider scale research project of the three companies with suggestions are presented within this empirical study. It attempts to capture evidence of the changing nature of organisations towards their work processes in the post-GFC period compared to what had been suggested within (Hassard et al, 2009). Some excerpts from the interviews are used to demonstrate some of the extractions of the participants' discourse on the themes identified.

This confirmed the themes from the previous Hassard et al (2009) study, in conjunction with the current research regarding the case companies in East Anglia and the current nature of the workplace. Having used the themes developed from Hassard et al (2009) there does appear to be an increase of work intensification at the middle management level.

Company 1

Company 1 is a large well-established manufacturing company based within East Anglia. They produce a variety of different products and have been working in the sector for a number of

years. It has been stated by Company 1 (2016) that they started their iron-foundry business in the early 1800s with a small amount of money providing superior equipment to customers all over the world. The collected themes of Work Intensification, Career Management, Technology, Communication and Change in the broadest sense have acted as informed themes for Hassard et al (2009) within the creation of the interview template, the questions and the semi - structured nature of the interviews and were used throughout all three companies. As previously mentioned, these themes had been drawn from an index analysis and were further concentrated after a focus group had chosen their most prominent themes, in the current context of 2014. The reader will be able to source an example page of the collected transcripts Appendix 2. Also supplied to the reader is an example of a thematic exert available within Appendix 1. Data was collected from 5 employees, 3 middle managers and 2 senior managers.

Below is how the findings have been coded into the Findings section.

Table 3: Key for Descriptions:

Company 1,2 or 3	Employee (E)	Participant Number
	Middle Management (MM)	
	Senior Management (SM)	

Work Intensification

Employees

Having understood that Hassard et al (2009) only looked at middle managers, the fact that this current work also looks at the shop floor employees and senior managers adds a

significant contribution. It does appear that in reviewing the three levels, work intensification was pronounced within the shop floor/factory level, with employees stating:

1E1 *“My workload was exactly the same as before I went away and I have now actually been given additional duties.”*

1E1 *“I’ve got to backtrack and start catching up again.”*

1E2 *“the amount of work I have to do in the time has increased.”*

With the statements from employees being supported by Anderton and Beven (2014) there appears to be minimal variety and autonomy in low skill jobs and this can be regarded as a barrier to job enrichment, job quality, high performance and the further development of the engaged culture of work being required. With this in mind, it also links closely with the prominence of a Taylorism (1911) form of working. It does appear that employees have been worried about their jobs, especially during the first part of the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) with Anderton & Beven (2014) suggesting that employees in 2012 were concerned about at least one aspect of unfair treatment at work, from threats to job quality through to dismissal. This also reflects the problem of financialisation which has been referred to on a number of occasions throughout the data collection, with employees making statements such as:

1E6 *“You had a lot of experienced people leave the company, though various people leave the company through various reasons, mainly retirement. People that are coming through are very young and very inexperienced... you seem to be left with a load or a few experienced people sort of who are plugging the gap.”*

The evidence of the description above can be clearly be supported by Anderton and Bevan (2014) with the suggestion of financial constraints and employer attitudes, on top of the requirement for maximum production, which are necessary to realise the short term survival

of the organisations. This financialised focus seems to be a common issue amongst the entire organisation, with the other two layers also mentioning this as being an ongoing problem, with it still continuing within the work place and not only within the middle management level with senior managers suggesting that:

1MM1 “There’s a lot more expected from everybody and there’s a lot more pressure on every individual... certainly regarding if anyone’s on holiday then basically we do struggle.”

The workforce at times feels disengaged with their work, especially when managers state that:

1MM1 “I find I’m letting people down, not because I want to let them down because I can’t please everybody all the time.”

For example, this point was also highlighted by Hassard et al (2009), with the intensification of work experienced by middle managers and this appears to be a continuing theme amongst employees within this organisation. Employee engagement was identified as somewhat limited, owing to increased work intensification and the greater emphasis on targets. The feeling of a target-driven workplace and the increased focus on financialisation as the main process appears to have prompted employee’ to state:

1E5 “I have to do that work up and above my other work.”

1E2 “Not necessarily the complexity of the tasks but it’s just the volume of work has increased.”

Thus moving the study forward, there is an understanding that there has been large scale work intensification amongst employees and a clear perception that this has increased over the GFC and up to 2014.

Middle Management

During the interviews of middle management there appeared to have been signs of increased pressure during the GFC which has in turn been connected to increased work intensification.

1MM1 "There's a lot more expected from everybody and there's a lot more pressure on every individual... certainly regarding if anyone's on holiday then basically we do struggle very badly because we just haven't got the extra resource."

1MM1 "More pressure to make sure you meet those targets."

This pressure appeared to be coupled with the understanding that they had let customers down owing to the workload being stretched and targets in a sense not being achievable with a reduced number of staff. This has been reiterated by Russell and McGinnity (2014) by suggesting that work pressure does not measure the demands of a job or work, but can also encompass employees' capacity to meet the demands, which will be influenced by their experience and skill (Gallie, 2005 op cit Russell and McGinnity, 2014).

1MM1 "But I find I'm letting people down, not because I want to let them down because I can't please everybody all the time".

1MM2 "Well, it can cause stress in your own role because you are trying to achieve some much of your ordinary, everyday job and then of course this is all extra work that's on top of your normal working day. So, yeah it can... it has been stressful this year, not so much in the last three, four years but certainly this year, 2014."

1MM1 'There's a lot more targets put on everybody'.

The understanding that the role of middle managers has been stretched clearly links to the work of Hassard et al (2009) and the perspective of 'more for less' as their hours have decreased, but the work has not gone and yet they are still expected to complete it for less pay. With this being considered, it assumes that if this is the case then middle managers would feel more stretched and would experience increased pressure.

1MM2 "That's really stretched my role as a [REDACTED] manager."

1MM2 "I would say that has stretched my role, yes."

Middle management have certainly stated that they are feeling more pressure, but interestingly, there did not appear to be a perception of stress, which is often linked with pressure. With the increase in work pressure, Russell and McGinnity (2014) propose that high demand combined with low control and less support can be predicted to lead to increased stress, but does that imply good control, which could be perceived as being negative. This then moves us towards examining work intensification for senior management.

Senior Management

The interviews with senior management also produced evidence of an increase in work intensification, but it appears that there is an international perspective with regards to this intensification, stating:

1SM3 "I certainly find more in Europe, the expectation nowadays is that very much immediate responses to most problems."

1SM2 *“This is not so much to the current climate, but generally, there has been some reorganisation, budgetary constraints, meaning that this has to have been new initiative ways of working”.*

There appears to be a perception that the globalised environment expects things to be achieved immediately. There are perceptions of global competition ranging from the existence of cheaper labour rates which can be sourced from other countries, which add to the current downsizing within those countries. There are a number of similarities between Hassard et al (2009) and Teague and Roche (2014) and the perceptions of Company 1 with regards to the continued work intensification and degradation within the organisation. Senior managers also acknowledge that intensification has affected employees:

1SM2 *“Quite rightly efficiencies have been realised, in others there have been some mistakes made where workers intensified and it’s had a negative spiral.”*

Being alert to it and acting upon it are very different things, and senior management appear to be aware of the fact, with others stating:

1SM3 *“These days because you’ve got such a barrage of everyday stuff that needs to be handled by fewer and fewer people.”*

There did appear to be a perception by senior management that continued cuts would be in order to generate greater profits and thus lead to further work intensification in the workplace, unless it can be assumed the economy is to improve. For example, Felstead et al (2013) proposed that considering the harshness of the 2008 recession, and the reaction to this and the way it affected the economy, it could be expected that a further rise in work intensification could result if jobs are reorganised and if new technologies lead to an increase of intensification. A caveat to this is when Felstead et al (2013) suggests that this could change

and work intensity could decrease, if employers hold onto excess labour despite the lack of demand. There were a number of themes which emerged from the participants, one of which was the lack of engagement, which approximately half of the employees picked up on, a point which did not seem to be acknowledged by the senior management. There were clear and consistent indications towards the erosion of work practices through work intensification and constant changes in management with a further supporting statement of:

1SM2 “Over the last couple of years we’ve now got three or four semi-senior heads of department and too many chiefs and not enough Indians!.”

If increasing work intensification continues through the post-GFC era as a response to the demands of the market place in the pursuit of profit, this could lead to the degradation of the workforce (Cushen 2013, Cushen and Thompson, 2012 and Thompson, 2013) and their subsequent output levels.

There appeared to be few examples of positive effects perceived in the post - GFC period within Company 1. This could mean either that the perceptions of the workforce are that there is a focus on financialisation, resulting in increased demand upon the workforce, or that certain managers are treating employees better than others and this is where occasional positive factors have been noted.

1SM3 “I think we’re being a bit more proactive, I think we’re looking at doing, we’re trying to work smarter, we’re not as reactive.”

1SM1 “There is definitely been restrictions that have been placed on numbers of heads. So if you take out direct workforce for example, we retain a ratio of temporary employees to permanent employees of roughly let’s call it 1 in 5 of direct workers to temporary.”

There were also a number of references to part-time workers in 2014, and it appeared that the workplace was in a sense reliant upon agency workers to sustain the business and at times

kept agency workers for over two years, but also they were regarded as expendable and would be the 'first to go'. Temporary and agency staff appeared to be a highlighted point with Ward, et al (2001) suggesting that it is recorded as far back as 2001 that temporary work accounted for an increasing amount of new employment within the UK's labour market and that temporary agencies represented a significant role for entry into organisations. The impairment of part-time workers could perhaps further demonstrate the destruction of any sustainable employment organisation emerging in the post-GFC period (Buchanan et al, 2013). At the forefront of the economic downturn, the downsizing of the workforce appears to be an accepted activity by its effect upon performance.

This may leave the organisation short-staffed and has often been undertaken despite recognition that policies for pay reduction might better resolve financial constraints without affecting organisational performance (Luan, Tien and Chi, 2013). However, within the Company 1 there was a round of pay reductions at the very beginning of the GFC, but this did not appear to have continued throughout the time period. On reflection, employee engagement had been affected with regard to the three themes mentioned and had been identified as being a negative influence on the workplace during 2008-2014. The next stage is to review the discussion around career management.

Career Management

Employees

Following on from the discussion around part-time workers, the researcher moves towards the theme of career management within Company 1. There appeared to be a mixed understanding with some levels suggesting career management was very good, particularly at the employee level, stating that:

1E2 *"I think they are the opportunities out there and I think it's a lot better than it used to be' and It has in the past, it's promoted from within, yes definitely but I*

think as an individual you have to seek the opportunities they're certainly not handed to you."

But even when examining the positives suggested, some employees were still appearing to struggle to gain the opportunity either to move or to develop through further training, with some stating that:

1E4 *"Some people I have known being temporary here for five, six, seven years."*

1E1 *"There seems to be groups of people that just are promised things perhaps, it never happens and it never happens and it never happens but then you see some groups of people that seem to be given the world."*

In essence there is positive dialogue about the company with regards to career management but this does not always mean that it is actually happening in reality. The positive understanding does appear to be replicated amongst all levels, but within the employee level it appears to be hampered the most. Many participants understand what should be happening in reality, with what is happening, with employees stating that:

1E1 *"To see if there's anybody suitable, but very rarely will anybody internally get a role."*

1E1 *"They kind of push internal career progression but actually I don't see an awful lot of it' and 'you sort of you get to a grade and then you don't go any further."*

This suggested employees did recognise that career progression was on the agenda but the company was somewhat failing in providing this opportunity. Moving forward, how might this compare with the middle management's perception?

Middle Management

Middle management appeared somewhat disconnected with this theme, which could have been for a number of reasons, for example, this could have been due to them actually thinking that this was not a problem over this GFC time frame, but within all three narrative descriptions there has been an element of doubt was expressed:

1MM1 “So if you want... if you’re that sort of person where you wanted to sort of work in a different country, there’s the opportunity for you. Whether you’d get it or not, I don’t know.”

The next description from middle management goes onto suggest that opportunities have been sparse at best during the GFC and that opportunities have sometimes been overlooked or have been offered to an external candidate. This statement goes against the findings of Bidwell and Mollick (2015) with their assumption that the interest in boundaryless careers found something very different and that internal and external mobility play very different roles, in that upward mobility is still happening significantly within organizations:

1MM1 “Because other employees have come in above my level and obviously I wasn’t considered for the role and I’ve kind of been not pushed to one side is perhaps a bit harsh but certainly.”

Finally, one middle manager suggested that they were unable to even apply for a more senior position and it was perceived that the role had been changed so that the middle manager could not apply for the position and they felt somewhat put out:

1MM1 *"No, I wasn't able to apply for it. They advertised outside really and it was advertised to start with as a [REDACTED] manager and then they actually changed it to [REDACTED] manager."*

There appeared to have been some unrest, with the middle management having spoken to senior management regarding career progression and opportunities offered or available. How might this compare to senior management. Furthermore it does appear there is confusion with how this particular position was initially advertised and rushed to market.

Senior Management

Finally, moving forward to examine the senior manager's perception of career management, there did indeed appear to be a disconnect with the majority of what was suggested contradicts what was stated earlier by the other two levels examined stating that:

1SM1 *"So, if you're good enough, you've got opportunity, that's for sure' and that 'It's got a very interesting dynamic in terms of how long people worked here."*

1SM3 *"We're very big on training, we monitor the number of training hours per month and we have targets for that. So, vocational training absolutely that happens a lot."*

This contradicts what had been suggested by the other levels within the organisation, particularly that employees had perceived that others had come into roles, which they were unaware were available. So either the information is being lost in communication or they are looking at the organisation and thinking employees are staying with this company for an extended time and thus this is not an issue which needs to be addressed, but from the data collected, it has been revealed as an issue. There have undoubtedly been areas of change over this period for senior management, but their impression seems to be somewhat different from that of the employees.

1SM3 “Fair to say that destabilising people generally causes stress. We tend not to overly restructure the company.”

In terms of the employee perception, there has been change, not only in restructuring, but also in terms of the way the company hires employees, and the target demographic for the employees hired (university graduates) has led to some discontent. Also, the point was made that senior management felt it was a positive choice to take employees out of their comfort zone.

1SM3 “Disrupting people’s comfort patterns is generally a beneficial thing.”

Waves of change are seen as beneficial by management, but this is countered by WERS (2013) proposing that changes to the nature of work, such as the reorganisation of tasks, increases in workload and this, coupled with a change of policy in hiring graduates, could be suggested to have gone some way to destabilising the workforce.

Communication

Employees

When examining communication WERS (2013) recognises that communication has improved over the recent years since 2004, with the suggestion that there has been a growth in the methods used for providing information. During the aforementioned period of 2004 to 2011 WERS (2013) suggests that employees have felt increasingly committed and in turn have felt an upturn in engagement. So, as a knock-on effect, it could be assumed that employees feel that their views are being interpreted into the everyday decision-making process. However, this does not appear to be the case, as the current context communication appears to be failing with comments such as:

1E2 *“We don’t know what our new boss is doing or even where he is. He doesn’t say where he’s going or how long he is going.”*

This is discussed by WERS (2013) who also acknowledged that over half of the participants who took part in study were not satisfied with their level of involvement in the decision-making process within their place of employment and this has been supported by a worsening perception of not being kept in the ‘loop’. There did appear to be a breakdown of communication with regards to what senior management were achieving and failing to communicate it fully with suggestions such as:

1E1 *“We all almost look a bit silly and we had to say whoops, sorry [REDACTED] hasn’t told us that. Sorry about that. So, definite lack of communication there.”*

1E1 *“A little bit of disorganisation between me and you and there is a bit of a lack of communication again.”*

This confirmed the impression that communication was failing to keep employees informed within the case study company, with the perception that a communication was disorganisation and was an area for improvement.

Middle Management

There was a positive reaction to communication from the middle managers interviewed with some stating that:

1MM2 *“Communication is the best I’ve ever seen it’ and ‘communication from the President of our company down to my managerial level and I communicate with my team on a daily basis.”*

1MM1 “If you do a good job, as much as you expect to be doing and you get told off and you know not as though you do a bad job on purpose but sometimes you know.”

In essence, at the managerial level there appears to be an abundance of good communication and the middle managers appear to see that as a positive, but the question has to be asked, why does this not appear to permeate down to the level of the employees. Anderton & Beven (2014) propose that through empowerment and effective communication of the organisational goals, employees can begin to identify their role and the contribution they are able to make to the organisation, which can in turn lead to further ownership, pride and an interest, which can promote further engagement within their work. With regards to their work, there appears to be a perception that communication has at times been used as demotivation when work has been completed.

However, at the middle management level within Company 1, communication did not appear to be a coherent theme as it was only mentioned with a positive paradigm. Middle management also discussed the positives of communication within the organisation, with the participants stating:

1MM2 “I communicate with my team on a daily basis.”

From the middle management perception there has also been an understanding that senior management generally communicate well with their management level:

1MM2 “Communication from the President of our company down to my managerial level.”

From the statement above, there appears to be a perception that communication is filtered down from the president of the company to middle management. This in turn does not appear to be filtered down to the employee level (see previous section).

Senior Management

What was fascinating to note was the point that senior management acknowledge that:

1SM2 “I’ve yet to find any organisation where communication is perfect.”

This was a realisation that there are issues with regards to communication. The senior managers have highlighted that it has become easier to communicate through improvements in technology and they also mention that it is possible to have too much communication. With regard to the intensification of communication, the use of email was highlighted as an issue:

1SM2 “If I wanted to send an e-mail, it could be picked up at any moment.”

A disciplined approach to e-mail was required where people start to consider whether everybody needs to be copied in on a message and also challenging the over-use of email. The interesting point is that employees felt they could still be better communicated with in order to feel more informed. Anderton and Bevan (2014) suggest that the development of communication channels differ between the various levels of staff and this could lead to a more highly engaged workforce:

1SM2 “Communication needs to happen when... probably a more structured approach is always best in my view.”

1SM3 *“I could half the e-mail intake but several attempts down the road, I still haven’t managed to get people to do it.”*

Finally, at senior management level, there appears to be the perception that communication could improve and that there are areas for improvement with a potentially more structured approach. This highlights an understanding from senior management that messages are not being heard throughout the company.

Technology

Employees

The impact of technology was also examined as a priori theme from the work of Hassard et al (2009) and it appeared to be the least relevant theme which was examined within the company. This could have been due to the ‘make do’ attitude which has been suggested by Williamson and Zeng (2015) where they suggest, instead of investigating into a new cutting edge technology or potentially developing functions on the new equipment, developers have attempted to work on existing machinery during this economic time frame. One employee in particular did appear to be somewhat annoyed towards technology, suggesting that:

1E5 *“They call robot worlds and that work would not be completed under this form to the highest quality and work would have to be repeated.”*

1E5 *“Check it and obviously that will miss-weld and misplaced welds.”*

1E3 *“They’re going for a more mechanical.”*

There did appear to be a perception that the new technology which has been adopted in a mechanical world is not as good and employees have highlighted issues of replication of tasks or remedial work that was not achieved at an acceptable standard.

Middle Management

This has also been an area for concern for middle managers with middle managers stating that:

1MM2 “Experimental process, I think has slipped.”

This was stated when being questioned about the influence of technology, suggesting it had been detrimental, which could be supported by the lack of investment, with Szabo et al (2013) detailing companies which are still recovering from the financial crisis and whether public and private sector resources have had a substantial impact on any further developments. There does appear to be a multitude of emails being sent and received in most large organisations, but is email the best form of communication, or does it take away the interpersonal element of communication:

1MM1 “There’s always e-mails flying around because we’re such a large organisation.”

Finally, a middle manager suggested that the first time they received communication about something was when it would appear on a noticeboard, which could imply a weakness in communication as they have to relay that information to their employees:

1MM1 “At first you would hear is if there was a notice on the internal notice board.”

It would appear that middle management also struggle somewhat with communication within the company with an understanding that it has reduced over this time period of the GFC.

Senior Management

Senior management seem to have taken a somewhat different view by suggesting that technology has seen many changes within the company and was discussed and highlighted a lot more. Senior management suggested that:

1SM2 “There are constraints where we are because of the age of the facility but yes, within the facilities we have, technology has certainly improved.”

1SM2 “I’m thinking in some of the departments there’s been more automation, technologies have come in which have effectively led to less face-to-face and manual processing and again, more automation.”

The feeling which some of the existing employees experienced towards some of these new technologies could have resonated in some of the issues already discussed around training and career management and therefore not discussed greatly within the all levels within Company 1:

1SM3 “We’ve invested in better lasers, laser cutters. We’ve invested in new equipment, stuff that’s really eliminates a bunch of skilled operator jobs but we do still need to employ skilled programmers”.

1SM3 “Technology has improved manufacturing capability.”

There was an understanding that technology has moved forward over this time and the company needed to keep pace with the change and not get left behind. This was the least discussed section which might suggest it was an area the company chose to not focus on.

Summary of Company 1

In reference to the data collected, there does appear to be a consensus amongst all the levels which participated within Company 1 that there was an increase in work intensification over this period:

1MM1 *“You’re not getting the service you are expecting. Not because they’re trying to let you down but because again, they’ve probably got everyone shouting at them all at once and you can’t deal with every single query all at the same time, you can only deal with one at a time.”*

1MM1 *“There’s obviously less people to go through to get, you know information from one person to another. So we tend to work a lot closer, we have a lot more... yeah, a lot more.”*

This reduction in staffing levels has appeared to put increased pressure on the middle management of Company 1, which could also be linked to the perceived reduction in quality which is examined further below. Communication was highlighted at the employee level as being an issue over this time, but this appeared not to be replicated throughout the organisation. There appeared to have been a positive perception of career management, with the company championing this theme, but on exploring the theme further, it appeared that there had been a number of growing concerns of potential stagnation.

The perception of change was highlighted in two ways, the first of which being the increase in part time workers and how that might impact existing employees. Ward, et al (2001) supported this as it is recorded as far back as 2001 and temporary work accounted for an increasing amount of new employment. This study has confirmed Ward, et al (2001) who states that

temporary agencies represented a significant role for entry into organisations within the UK's labour market. The second perception of change was the reference to changing management and in a sense the destabilisation of the workforce:

1E1 *"It was better years ago in what they were taking on probably they've still got over these last few years, a lot of people have gone or they get rid of them but they do get rid of some good people but they have to because of the headcount's got to go down."*

Finally what appeared to be clear was that there was a more financialisation focus and a pressure for products to enter the market, with a perception from employees that the quality was not being what it used to be. This mentioned pressure was intensified by the company attempting to get their product to market first and thus quality to be perceived to be slipping. The company as a whole seemed to highlight a number of the same issues during the timeframe, and these slightly changing perceptions could be called a disconnect of management, who could be attempting to see these issues through different lenses and contexts, which would link to that work of Martin (1985) and the existence of sub-cultures, thus leading to the differing perceptions.

Quality appears to have been another emerging theme from interviews within Company 1, where there was a perception that it was not the organisation's primary concern. This could also be of detriment to the company as Favaro et al (2015) suggests that consumers would buy from / visit a retailer less often than their competitors, if quality was seen to be diminishing and thus making the organisation potentially less profitable. However what appeared to bear some resonance for employees, but not for senior management was that there was no perception that getting the product to market was of more an importance over this period, with suggestions of:

1E5 *“I think that they harp on about quality but to me that becomes secondary in the amount”.*

1SM1 *“The quality metrics have improved.”*

1E5 *“but as I say, as far as quality go, I’d say less.”*

This theme was not targeted specifically and emerged naturally through the themes which have been discussed and can be supported by Quelch and Jocz (2015). When suggesting that the message should be supported by actions which demonstrate that the organisation is on the consumer’s side and if the sales are dropping, the last thing to do is take that out on the consumer, by reducing the quality of product whilst increasing prices. This appears to have been the opposite of the perception of employees who appear to have noted a reduction in the quality of product being produced, due to market factors.

Middle management also appear to mention the financialised focus on the business and attempt to look at it from a differing angle, from an external viewpoint by suggesting:

1E3 *“Companies who didn’t want to know us before, you know the financial you know, crisis, you know we weren’t big enough for them you know we were like, you know we weren’t a big enough spend.”*

1MM1 *“We’d send them enquiries, no, sorry you don’t buy enough, we aren’t interested... as soon as the recession kicks in, they lose some of their big customers, suddenly they want to know us again.”*

This appeared to be of interest to the middle management, owing to the pressure on external business partners, who did not want to conduct business pre-recession with the organisation but are now supposedly reaching out to develop a new relationship owing to financial pressures. With this added pressure of new customers and the need to get products to market, there appeared to be an undertone of deadlines:

1MM2 “Because we’ll miss the market if we didn’t have the product ready and the deadline was: get the product ready, get it to market.”

When linking this with what employees are suggesting, this process appears to have impacted upon quality and compounded the financial focus of the organisation. This perception is supported by Crowley and Hodson (2014) who suggest that in the current era of financialisation and the importance of stakeholder profits, organisations have chosen to want more control over what they produce, whilst eliminating waste, and utilising their resources. This could be linked back to Taylor (1911) and to further support this (Davis, 2009 cit al Crowley and Hodson 2014) suggests that organisations aim to review manufacture approaches and through this will be exposing employees to more reorganisations and change and even surveillance.

Senior management appeared to have a positive outlook on the company and it was challenging to observe any new themes, as they appeared to not disagree with the themes presented and attempted to openly discuss these themes. However, it was understood that within the company there was a margin of disconnection from the perception at each level interviewed and with the suggestion that certain things were not in fact happening anymore. When reviewing this, it appears to be supported by Martin (1985) with suggestions that the different and perspective links to culture could indicate the existence of differing subcultures

which co-exist with each other. It has also been interpreted that the data sets are seeing situations differently are presented in a differing contexts and perceptions.

Further study is required to explore the issues raised to aid the in-depth understanding of the reasons why these issues are happening. The insights have proved valuable in the production of this project. As the data collection has progressed it has offered the chance to show some understanding of the lived experience, which leads on to the second company.

Company 2

As with the previous company, the researcher has attempted to capture a snapshot of the perceptions of workers, expressed as their co-construction of experienced reality. Using template analysis of King (2004) to construct the relevant questions, it attempts to capture evidence of the changing nature of organisations towards their work processes in the post-GFC period (Hassard et al, 2009). Many of the interview excerpts have been used to demonstrate some of the extracts of the participants' discourse on the themes which have been identified.

The first thing that was clearly noted was that with this company the length of interviews was somewhat shorter than the other two companies and in two of the interviews there appeared to be a large amount of one word answers. This made it difficult to gather the information, even though the access to the participants appeared one of the best.

Company 2 is a large and well-established retail company which is also based within East Anglia. They sell a variety of products and have been working in the sector for a number of years. Company 2 (2016) suggests it was established in the late 1800s and operates in a number of areas within the East of England. The company went on to suggest that they are

dedicated to the development and training of their employees and the scope of positions offered within the company.

Work Intensification

Employees

Work intensification was highlighted as one of the themes which had been gathered from the work of (Hassard et al, 2009). This appeared to be an issue at the time of collection with the employees stating things like:

2E1 *“Last 18 months and we’ve become a lot busier.”*

2E3 *“Before it used to be sort of simple we would see customers in, customers out and then not really have too much else to do in between.”*

With this in mind, there does appear to be an area of work intensification as the work place appears to have got progressively busy but it also highlights the area of up-skilling in the work place and this can be seen to be supported by WERS (2013) with the suggestion of increased work intensification and Modestino et al (2014) suggesting that up-skilling is prevalent, owing to a higher skilled workforce being available.

It was also worth noting that a number of sales employees had mentioned stress during the data collection and that they felt this was in turn linked to being successful, so in essence there did appear to be a perception that stress and success go hand in hand:

2E1 *“The more successful you are, the more deals you do, the busier you are, the more stressed you are.”*

2E1 *“You do get more stressed but it’s... you’re rewarded for that.”*

Within Company 2, It was interesting to note that increased pressure had been highlighted as a positive point which can be supported by Menkes (2011). With this in mind, is this a sustainable motivator? It has been highlighted by employees within the sales environment. Finally, employees certainly felt that a number of roles had been combined to one singular role and that they were busier, but did not feel that they were more productive by being busier:

2E4 “It was just amalgamated into the one role and ‘I definitely do a lot more work, I don’t know if I’m more productive.’”

The above suggestions appear to be strongly linked to Modestino et al (2014) suggestion of upskilling being prevalent as there is a higher skilled work force being available for work and an ability to achieve more diverse job roles. The suggestion of more work for less pay can also be linked back to the work of (Hassard et al, 2009; Thompson, 2003) and has been linked to the intensification of the workplace.

Middle Management

At the middle management level there appears to be areas of work intensification, but it differs from the employee level, although there are links to more responsibility and more to do:

2MM2 “Additional responsibility really.”

2MM2 “Yeah, it’s... the word I use for it is relentless.”

It does appear that the organisation has seen its work intensification heighten at middle management level by growth and a recruitment drive, following initial confusion at the start of the GFC where jobs had been lost due to the heavy redundancy strategy:

2MM1 *“So intensified as in progressing in our business, growing the department.”*

2MM1 *“That we certainly have... basically, I’ve had to recruit extra staff.”*

2MM2 *“Almost doubled the amount of staff that I was responsible for overall.”*

The intensification from the middle managers seems to highlight the lack of resources at the level of managing these new resources and appears to be the main cause of their intensification of work, which can be clearly linked to Hassard et al (2009) and their findings of work intensification, which appear to have continued through the GFC. Also it does appear that the redundancy scheme adopted, kept the organisation afloat during the GFC (see page 194). The work did not simply go away and the cost of a recruitment push would also be costly, as well as the intellectual capacity lost from the employees released with Campbell (2014) suggesting that the average fee for replacing staff members stands at £30,614 according to Oxford Economics. This comprises £5,433 for logistics, advertising, and wages over the time period when the employees are not as productive, owing to learning the new role which is to be an average of 28 weeks at a cost of £25,182.

Senior Management

Finally, moving on to the work intensification of the senior managers, there does appear to have been a perception that middle managers have taken on extra job responsibilities and in turn look to manage the existing employees effectively:

2SM2 *“My role very, very quickly, within the space of about six months, I had more and more things I was being asked to do which was great.”*

2SM2 *“So, how it was intensifying was I was performance managing the guys a lot more.”*

There is an understanding at the middle management level in the organisation that there was an amount of work intensification pre-GFC, but the changes in the external environment have been highlighted as worsening that. The intensification has worsened in a relatively short space of time. Similarly there appears to be an understanding at this level that efficiencies need to be made with themselves and their employees:

2SM1 “I think now there’s jobs that we had people doing which I then tended to pick up and do. So, where we had a bit of spare resource.”

2SM1 “So, you prepare your own letters, answer all of your own e-mails, make all your own bookings. So you try and manage some of the administration yourself, it just adds to your workload during the day.”

Senior managers were taking on jobs which previously might have been completed by a PA or a member of staff, but are now completed by themselves, a point which was not uncommon amongst all three organisations, as a way to save on costs. To reiterate and support the point, this can again be likened to Modestino et al (2014) with suggestions that there is a higher skilled work force available who are able to fulfil more diverse roles. This does appear to be a predominant theme amongst Company 2 and a common theme amongst all three levels.

Change

Employees

Within Company 2, there appeared to be a large amount of change mentioned which was highlighted and noticeable, more so at the employee level than that at middle management and even to a lesser degree at senior management level. This highlighted and supported the idea of the differing perceptions within organisations and could also link to the cultural levels within organisations and the differing paradigm perceptions at the varying levels, which

supports Martin (1985) and the existence of sub-cultures and thus leading to the differing perceptions. There was a clear disparity amongst all three levels and this will be explored further, within the discussion chapter.

At employee level, people were aware of the changes which had taken place and also noted that a large amount of this change appeared to have happened at the start of the GFC with employees stating that:

2E1 “There’s been a few job roles which have been made vacant’ and ‘everyone always wants a good deal or better deal.”

In essence Company 2 managed to do most of their restructuring / redundancy earlier on within the GFC, according to the senior management:

2SM2 “Strong company that probably made redundancies a lot quicker than a lot of their counterparts.”

It was understood that if they restructured early, they would be in a better position as there had been a perception of growth within the organisation. Employees also highlighted the fact that the reorganisation was not only at the start of the GFC, but appeared to have been ongoing throughout the GFC with suggestions of:

2E1 “Few months and then there was a little bit of restructuring like I say, more assistant managers and less business managers.”

2E5 *“There’s definitely more turnover so that obviously generates work because you’ve got joiners.”*

2E6 *“Changed the clock in system. Basically when the job cards are handed out and when they’re handed back in.”*

The number of changes within the organisation would also highlight many areas of investigation, the first two being, the level of restructuring within the Company 2, and the third highlighting the increased control over time. Employees were aware of changes within the company, and much of the changes had been witnessed but very little appears to have been communicated as to the underlying reasoning.

Middle Management

Middle management appear to highlight the theme of changing roles over this time within the organisation. As has been previously mentioned, workers are expected to do more is argued by Harvey (1995) argues that they are actually up-skilling, but the rationalization of the intensification of labour is still relevant to the Braverman (1965) LPT and the managerial change.

2MM1 *“We’re having just a change of sort of roles as far as my superior is concerned and so it will be nice to actually have somebody who’s consistent.”*

There appeared to also be an understanding that this was a global problem and that it was not only Europe being affected. This has previously been supported by Van Dierendonck and Jacobs (2012) arguing global competition offers cheaper labour in other countries and this then adds to the current downsizing within these countries.

2MM2 “Consolidating the staffing at that point, what we found was Europe was in absolute turmoil, that the manufacturers turned their sights on the UK.”

Finally there did appear to be a realisation of the GFC and the change which it was going to instil throughout all industries. There also appears to have been a perception of not fully knowing how the environment might change or how the company might change as a result.

2MM2 “It was a massive wakeup call that this is a very real situation we face here, we didn’t know it was going to pan out”.

The previous statement highlights that the company was not fully aware of how to deal with the GFC as they did not know what was going to happen next. However, if the company was more transparent, that potentially could have eased concerns of middle management.

Senior Management

The change which senior managers highlight has not only been happening at the start of the GFC, but there appears to be continual change throughout the GFC. When conducting the interviews, it did appear that there was a need by senior management to explain that the cuts were made early to limit the pain of the situation. When reviewing the interviews, it was interesting to note that the continuous restructuring over the GFC appears to only be mentioned by the employees and not by the senior management, a point which will be further explored within the discussion chapter. This leads us through to the next section of the work of communication.

2SM2 *“Strong company that probably made redundancies a lot quicker than a lot of their counterparts. They were running lean if I’m honest and they were running sort of kind of like by the skin of their teeth.”*

Senior management appears to highlight the fact that they could perhaps have cut too deep in their approach to ‘cut their cloth accordingly’. This was also endorsed when it was discussed by the employees and is supported by Thompson (2003) with suggestions that, during the classic phase of globalisation in the 1990s, firms had become leaner through downsizing, restructuring and delayering and this has appeared to have been the initial reaction. The ramifications of these cuts were that the intensification of work has increased on employees’ leading to the degradation of the workplace.

2SM2 *“People are more accountable now for their performance. We use balance scorecards as a means of and I’ll use your word control, we performance manage.”*

2SM2 *“We had under performers and you know, you look... a lot of people just come in, they just get on with it and they’re doing a really good job and there were underperformers and it’s not fair.”*

Finally, the discussions around more accountability and performance management appeared to suggest that increased control was being used within the workforce. This has been discussed in previous studies of Inanc et al, (2013) where they have suggested increased control and within Braverman (1974) who suggests that management concentrates on either de-skilling or management control.

Communication

Employees

Communication appeared to be an area where efforts were made to be more effective and the employees appeared to understand that the organisation was attempting to communicate with them on varying levels. An employee stated that:

2E4 “So much more easier now to do to communicate or by phone, e-mail, telephone, even putting things into diaries, it’s just so much easier now than it once was... there’s less... and I guess that’s probably helping more to be efficient really.”

Communication had recently been suggested to have been improving through the GFC. WERS (2013) has supported this and proposed that communication has improved over recent years since 2004, and that there has been growth in the methods used and for the provision of information, so that over time the proportion of employees have felt an increase in their commitment and engagement within their varying workplaces. This could lead to information overload and employees being informed of things which are not useful within their work, a point which was also mentioned:

2E1 “A meeting every single day.”

This did not appear to be a major issue for the employees as they preferred more communication and on a number of occasions delays in communication were more of an annoyance stating:

2E6 “There is sometimes a delay.”

Employees were annoyed, knowing that there had been improvements in communication, but at times this had not been achieved. There was mention of an open communication structure which had been incorporated, but a blame culture was developing with an employee stating that:

2E3 “Now it’s more you will be kept up to date with almost everything ... again, if you go back to having negative feedback from a customer, you’ll always be kept in the loop with that as opposed to managers dealing with it.”

Which could be understood to be openly a blame culture, if not managed effectively, with Hsu (2013) suggesting that when a blame culture exists within an organisation, this could lead to fear becoming a main central motivator of the behaviour being shown within the organisation. The increase in fear as a motivator is highlighted within the work of Gallie et al (2013) also within Company 2 and will be examined further within the discussion chapter.

Middle Management

Middle managers appear to feel that communication within the organisation is of a good standard suggesting:

2MM1 “I have an open door policy. I work very closely every day with my staff. I am a hands on manager, open door policy as I said and I do believe I should imagine from the way all my staff communicate with me daily that they’ve hopefully feel comfortable and they certainly talk to me every day and they do open up and I do believe they are comfortable.”

There does appear to be some understanding of hitting that balance and creating an open environment which does not use fear as a motivator as previously highlighted within the work

of Gallie et al (2013) and it is interesting to note that another middle manager discussed striking a balance:

2MM2 *“It’s trying to strike a balance and trying to bespoke it to the different levels and the different departments but we could probably increase communications slightly and give people a little bit more interest going on in the company”.*

In essence, the work place appears to understand that communication is key, with Harding et al (2014) suggesting that middle managers maintain a central position and are responsible for implementing senior management strategies which could be manipulated as a way of controlling junior staff, both the way they have been communicated with and also how that information has been interpreted.

2MM2: *“Could have more information available either through the middle managers or directors.”*

Middle management felt that there could have been further conduits for the flow of information between both middle management and senior management. Jacobsen et al (2014) suggests that for better internal communication flow, internal links between the different functions need to be improved to ensure they are working at their best.

Senior Management

Senior management also realised the importance of communication between the varying levels and throughout Company 2. There appeared to be a wealth of communication avenues with one senior manager suggesting that:

2SM1 *“So, from our employee meetings and newsletters that we were sending out, people were much more inquisitive and interested to hear a point of view from the board of directors and that perhaps.”*

2SM1 *“Could have more information available either through the middle managers or directors.”*

There did appear to be an understanding that communication was satisfactory, but as with the middle managers, there was room for improvement, which is linked with the Hassard et al (2009) findings within their previous study that middle management were also finding issues of communication pre-GFC. Finally, it was noteworthy to suggest that the company were wanting to give / overload the middle managers with further communication and thus swamping them, with one senior manager stating that:

2SM2 *“I think sometimes that doesn’t always get filtered down because of the interpretation that the amount of information available, it can be difficult to distribute everything.”*

This is reiterated by Harding et al (2014) who suggested that junior staff are controlled by what senior management require. It did not appear that senior managers had suggested how communication had developed throughout the GFC. There was very little discussion regarding the improvements which are now apparent, which is supported by WERS (2013) which has recognised that communication has improved over the years, since 2004, with a number of suggestions that there had been growth in the methods used.

2SM1 *“It’s trying to strike a balance and trying to bespoke it to the different levels and the different departments but we could probably increase communications slightly and give*

people a little bit more interest going on in the company. Which are have been used for the communication of information.”

Senior management appears to appreciate the wealth of communication channels available and understands that there are things that need to be achieved in order to improve this and to promote the company externally. This introduces the next section of Technology.

Technology

Employee

When technology was discussed, again it did not appear to be overly important to any of three levels within the organisation, but employees certainly understood that it had made an impact. For all three organisations this appeared to be the least answered theme from the prior themes gathered from Hassard et al (2009). Employees noted that:

2E1 *“You know, we’ve now got a call centre which tries to draw in a lot of new business for us.”*

2E4 *“I think so. I mean technology again has evolved.”*

2E6 *“you know I’m a big fan of technology, it makes everything a lot easier.”*

The employees understood that technology has been utilised to make life easier, that it has evolved over the GFC and that this has led to work being more achievable. When comparing this finding to Hassard et al (2009) who had previously suggested that new organisational philosophies and technologies have led to the increasing fragmentation of a changing workplace, it appears that this is still happening to a lesser extent. Following this discussion, employees also considered the limitations of introducing new technology into the business as

the current workforce were either not fully trained or just did not want to be trained suggesting that:

2E6 *“When people aren’t fully aware of how to use the technology, that’s when you get the problems.”*

Also acknowledging:

2E6 *“Some older employees, sometimes technology either they don’t want to learn or don’t like it you know, it’s too hard for them being sort of the age I am, growing up at school when you used computers.”*

This was an individual point, but it can be supported by Mazzolari and Ragusa, (2013) where they suggested that there has been a skills demand or bias for technological change within the work place. This might be why some employees have noticed very little change within their work with suggestions like:

25E *“No, it’s still the same system when I joined. We had a new module put on back in ’09 and there was a new module put on but we haven’t really used that yet. So, basically everything is just still chugging along with the same as when I joined really to be honest.”*

Gulati et al (2016) supports this by suggesting that organisations will look to postpone making fresh investment in research and development or buying new assets such as plants and machinery in the middle of a recession.

Middle Management

For middle managers, technology has allowed them to track customer service more effectively and to monitor activity more clearly than the paper-based system which had previously been used. Middle managers stated that:

2MM2 “We were pretty much a paper based organisation from a sales perspective. So as a customer, if you came in you know, your details would be recorded on paper, they’d be kept in kind of a box file and worked through you know, in a very old fashioned way. We now have a web based lead management system.”

This allowed more control over the systems in place and an ability to act when things were not being done. Previously items were lost on the paper-based system. On the other hand it allows management to remotely manage the case effectively and thus employees were not in control. Delbridge et al (1992) supports this and highlights that Total Quality Management (TQM) industrialised systems can be seen to intensify work as a result of increased surveillance and monitoring and increased accountability with a view to improve the production process. How sustainable could the process of increased remote control actually be for this company and when will an employee actually push back these measures of increased control? Middle management discussed a web-based approach, which again reiterates the further control which the middle managers now hold over the employees stating:

2MM2 *“Web based lead management so all of a sudden we could see everything and telephony so we could hear everything. The balance scorecard process so that we could, you know engage regularly with the staff, you know both congratulating and working on development as well.”*

In essence, middle management have attempted to promote engagement and satisfaction, but, in order to have engagement and satisfaction, employees need to have some control of their work which appears to have been suddenly taken away with Hundley (2001) proposing that within their research, self-employed workers appear more satisfied because their work provides autonomy, flexibility and greater job security. When attempting to understand what management say they want, Argyris (2001) makes an assertion that management has said it wants employees who participate and engage more, with employees saying that they want to be more involved. But Argyris (2001) goes onto ask ‘Is it just a charade?’ as employees want more autonomy and management says the right thing but tries to keep control and thus the battle between autonomy and control continues to dominate the workplace.

Senior Management

Finally, when examining senior management, they appear to view technology in the same light as middle management by the way that the implantation of new technologies has allowed for further control over tasks, but also acknowledge the ability to gather further information. Senior management stating that:

2SM2 *“For example in the workshops instead of the guys working up writing worksheets, they do it with handheld devices. We have a lot more e-mail and text communication with customers that keeps them informed. A lot of the marketing information goes out through our digital channels. So, it’s changed enormously’ and ‘whole host of technology that I think we could use to provide better customer service.”*

This is supported by Bitner et al (2000) in that there appears to be a changing landscape of how organisations approach service, as there seems to be an emphasis in recent years on how initial encounters can be improved by utilising technology. In essence, the senior management do understand the need to introduce this new technology to improve the experience of the customer service offered. Negatively, it could be observed that many of the things implemented could be used to further control their employees with Lane (2003) suggesting that computer surveillance is only one form of monitoring employees, and employers do not inform employees about which methods are used to monitor their output and this in turn could be perceived as negative and non-trusting.

Career Management

Employee

Moving on to the next prior theme, which the researcher chose to examine, namely Career Management. Within the Company 2 there appeared to be a perception of upward mobility with some opportunities for progression within the organisation. One employee did mention that there was no access to study leave and that an employee had to manage their career development, within their own time:

2E1 *“No, no study leave but there is time during working hours, you know as a salesman you kind of self-manage your days.”*

This appears not to be an organisation specific problem as Felstead, et al (2012) goes to suggest that there was an assumption of training budgets being heavily cut, but this does not appear to be the case. Employers in the UK are still contained by the restraints of the economic factors of the recession and have adapted to the business requirements, with Felstead et al (2012) going on to suggest that most have been able to maintain training despite

the recession, but perhaps using different methods. It appeared that the organisation followed suit with regards to the previous work of Felstead et al (2012) as its training has not been particularly hampered by the recession, but has also limited the experience by not allowing study leave for the employees. Felstead et al (2012) signified that the recession has encouraged many companies to find ways of retaining the majority of their training requirements and in essence, as a number of participants suggested, 'train smarter'.

Within this section there appeared to be two differing opinions. In the first instance it appears as though they look to manage and promote within with the perception that:

2E6 *"Alot of people that are sort of like started in my position and they've sort of worked their way up' and I started here as an apprentice, did the usual three year apprenticeship, got my qualifications as a technician and then basically I have been allowed to move on to now do my master technician which I've completed."*

In essence, the majority of the employees felt they were able to move up or sideways within the company. But there was another perception by some who felt they had reached their ceiling within the company declaring:

2E2 *"Progression is difficult."*

2E4 *"Its quite difficult in terms of moving up, I can probably get slightly more diverse roles."*

There certainly appears to be a disparity of perceptions between employees and this does not fit with the sub-culture theory which had been proposed by Hofstede (1998) with the

suggestion that within a company there appeared to be three separate sub-cultures, a professional sub-culture, an administrative sub-culture, and a customer interface sub-culture. The insights from Company 2 appears to promote a more individual culture and almost a job-specific culture.

Employees did discuss a number of themes which were not initially linked to the priori themes and one of these concerned the use of further control in the work place and this could be considered a reduction in autonomy and a link back to the Taylor (1911) form of management, owing to an increase in tighter controls. Hassard et al (2009) suggests that post-2000 work practices are heading back towards assembly line work, not only represented within the factory context, but also within other organisational contexts. This could be suggested as a resurrection of Taylorism (1911) or that in principle the Taylor (1911) form of management never indeed ceased, but now it is just more pronounced during this timeframe. In essence, is it turning full circle in the workplace, with management behaviours reverting back to a Taylor (1911) style of factorised work with suggestions such as:

2E1 *“All kind of customers details is just analysed a lot more than what it used to be.”*

2E1 *“Managers can see what salesmen are doing a lot more, so they can analyse how often we are talking to customers.”*

This does appear to have some resonance with the further control over what employees are actually doing. Employees tended to stick to the priori themes and only occasionally would they move beyond them. This was noted as different from the other two case companies, in that this set of employees stuck closely to the questions proposed and very rarely discussed their answers fully.

Middle Management

Middle management appeared to mention the need for a work-life balance, but from what was suggested, they appear to have been working above and beyond, with suggestions of:

2MM1 "I just have to say, right Monday to Friday I'm just committed and I can't really do anything else. That's how I feel' and 'I'm self-inflicted. I take my lap top home and... but if you've got some issue perhaps going on, you know with staff issue at work, you can't just switch off."

Further study would be required to fully understand why some members of middle management could be doing this extra work, might it have been through fear of what might happen if they did not do it, or could it have been through the restructuring methods detailed earlier in the Findings? These will be discussed further within the Discussion chapter. Stress also appeared to be mentioned frequently amongst middle managers which links closely to the inability to switch off, which has been referred to previously:

2MM1 "I find it difficult to switch off sometimes but... and that's all. I don't want you thinking but I just find it really difficult to switch off because I'm so involved."

2MM1 "But it stresses me out if I just want to switch off, if I wake up in the middle of the night, I don't want to have to think about it but I will you know and I just wish I didn't but it has not made stressful."

It was interesting to note the interviewer only included stress as a priori theme in the second template and it appeared to be a clearly highlighted theme within the middle management level with a number of things were discussed around it. Therefore it could be argued that

middle management were indeed feeling more stressed over the GFC as more pressure was applied upon them by senior management. This concurs with Todd and Binns (2013) and their suggestion that globalisation has increased pressure on countless managers and employees over the recent economic difficulties.

Senior Management

Senior management also seem to discuss the perception of stricter controls and less room for mistakes by suggesting:

2SM1 “Because people are now finding that there’s less room for error, less room for waste and actually the outcomes are more positive. So, it’s certainly not a controlling environment but it’s a more process driven’ and ‘so, what we do is make sure that there’s very little room for error if we all follow the same processes.”

This reaction to the GFC links closely to the findings of Teague and Roche (2014) as Company 2 appears to be showing signs of moving in the same direction as the Teague and Roche (2014) findings on the Irish workplace. This is further confirmed when senior management state:

2SM1 “We’ve got clearer processes and boundaries where people can operate too.”

Whilst not mentioning control, it could be argued that boundaries go some way to suggest this. Much of the perception from middle managers appeared to be positive with one even suggesting:

2SM1 *“I believe it’s been very good for us. It’s forced us to look hard at how we run our business. It forced us to right size and become a much more efficient business. We had to create more robust processes.”*

This could be argued by the number of employees who were made redundant at the start of the GFC and those remaining survivors (Baruch and Hind, 2000) who have to work more intensively as the staff numbers have reduced and the amount of work required had not dropped as dramatically as had been forecast. There have also been direct similarities witnessed by Mucci et al (2016) proposing that stress in the workplace increases due to restructuring of work, which is brought on by increased workload and increased hours worked.

Summary of Company 2

Company 2 produced some data, but it did appear that two levels of the employee participants were not fully engaged with the interviews and this was revealed in some of the data collected (one word answers). Also, the employees appeared not to step away from the priori themes which then affected the flexible nature of the template. It was interesting to note the themes of stress and control which can go hand in hand when reviewing this organisation. To reiterate the stress, control and pressure was supported:

2E5 *“Yeah, there’s a lot more like key things that have to be achieved all the time. You know, in my particular job, I don’t actually have... as long as everyone gets paid and I do it accurately, ok I don’t have that sort of pressure. I know a lot of the other departments it’s all performance, so they probably have a lot more pressure put on them. So yeah, it’s sort of like one way of controlling.”*

Many of the findings have echoed much of the same as Company 1, with the suggestion of an increase in work intensification and a need for increased communication. There was also an introduction to an emerging theme of fear being used in the workplace and participants' suggestions of being fearful of their continued job security and a continuing lack of progression. This has been supported by the literature emphasizing the theme of fear at work, which had initially been highlighted by WERS (2013) and more closely by Gallie et al (2013) as there did appear to be a consensus that fear at work could take a number of guises from the actual fear of losing employment, to unfair treatment in the workplace, and this supports the current findings.

The organisations took steps to de-layer / make redundancies earlier in the timeframe of the GFC and this has in essence made them fitter / leaner to focus on the future and thus adding to the fear discussion:

2SM2 *"A strong company that probably made redundancies a lot quicker than a lot of their counterparts. They were running lean if I'm honest and they were running sort of kind of like by the skin of their teeth."*

2SM2 *"People are more accountable now for their performance. We use balance scorecards as a means of and I'll use your word control, we performance manage."*

It had also been felt that Company 2 had been somewhat more closed compared with Company 1 and 3 and could have been perceived as holding information back, as this was not apparent amongst the other companies interviewed. There was a sense of change within Company 2 and that tough decisions were made at the very start, making employees wary of what had gone before, if they were still with the company:

2MM1 *“We’re having just a change of sort of roles as far as my superior is concerned and so it will be nice to actually have somebody who’s consistent.”*

2MM2 *“We really did look at our business and had to make some fairly tough decisions really that forced us into a position where we looked at every job role and saw if it was really necessary or whether there were better ways of doing it. Sadly, that did result in some significant staff losses but it also made us leaner.”*

This worry appears to be sub-consciously mentioned by suggesting that others would be worrying about their job, but because there were very few skilled workers within the tasks they were doing, they felt safer:

2E6 *“I specialise in electronics and there’s only a couple of us and this is a large workforce in the workshop and you know, it felt a little bit safer knowing that there’s only like one or two that can do sort.”*

This understanding of feeling safe, is an area which should be explored through further study, as the current workforce may not feel safe within their work. The template and semi-structured interviews enabled the researcher to combine open and closed questions which is supported by Harvey (2011) suggesting that this method is understood to be a useful flexible form of completing interviews.

Company 3

Company 3 is a large and well-established food and beverage company which is also based within East Anglia. They sell a number of differing products and have been working in the sector for many years. It has been suggested by Company 3 (2016) that the company has a

long and rich heritage, with the company working on the same site for over 600 years. As with the previous companies, the researcher has attempted to capture a snapshot of the perceptions of workers, expressed as their co-construction of experienced reality. Also using template analysis King (2004) to construct the relevant questions, attempted to capture evidence of the changing nature of organisations towards their work processes in the post-GFC period in comparison to what had been suggested within (Hassard et al, 2009). Many of the excerpts from the interviews have been used to demonstrate some of the extractions of the participants' discourse on the themes identified.

Work Intensification

Employee

The first prior theme which was examined, was that of work intensification and whether it has increased over the GFC, and if so, how? When examining the employee transcripts it is clear to see that there has been a monumental increase in work intensification which goes on to confirm the assumption that work intensification has been rising over the previous years (WERS 2013; Thompson 2011; Hassard, et al 2009; Thompson, 2003; CIPD 2013) with employees stating:

3E1 *"I would say it has intensified quite dramatically within the last year".*

3E2 *"It was almost you took on that work for fear of if you didn't take it on."*

This is sustained within the literature (Gallie et al., 2013) that employees fear turning down work due to the possibility of losing their job. When examining the transcripts, no employee mentioned that there had not been an intensification of work and this appeared to be a common issue among employees with one employee stating:

3E5 *“It’s more for the same amount of money.”*

3E5 *“We’re running with a minimum amount of people and it seems.”*

Within Company 3 there does appear to be a perception that over the GFC work has intensified since before the GFC, and for a number of reasons. Some employees have understood this to be because of a lack of staff and a more for less approach and as others have highlighted (Companies 1 and 2), the workplace is actually producing more and tighter budgets has had an effect:

3E5 *“Budgets expectations, you know trying to deliver as much as you can.”*

3E4 *“Obviously the amount of work increased, we were doing more.”*

In essence, there does appear to be a more financialised focus on Company 3, with the perception that there is not enough staff to deal with the increased workload and that staff are not replaced, so the remaining members of staff have to do more, whilst an increase in productivity since the initial reaction to the GFC has also added to the intensification of work. This appears to have contributed to the recovery with Borowczyk-Martins and Lalé (2014) proposing that this reallocation of work and working hours mostly in companies that have working schedules are consistent with the view that employers adjust working hours of their employees in regard to the external situation and in this case the GFC. Finally, Borowczyk-Martins and Lalé, (2014) go on to suggest that this could partly explain the poor recovery that followed the GFC. There appeared to be a perception of positive change whilst the UK moves towards the end of the GFC, with some members of staff mentioning a shift from the start of the GFC to when the interviews were collected in 2014:

3E3 *“It has intensified but you know, if I look overall over the last five years, then obviously it’s better than it was.”*

The previous statement goes against what another employee discusses:

3E1 *“I would say it has intensified quite dramatically within the last year.”*

Employees appear to have understood that work has intensified dramatically over this time, with differing perspectives about the amount and timeframe. This could be due to one employee adapting to the increase and the other not.

Middle Management

Moving forward to discuss the level of middle managers and their perception of the workplace post-2008 and to understand if there was work intensification over the period of the GFC, their perceptions resonate with the employees, with a manager suggesting that:

3MM2 *“I would say we’ve taken on a lot more work, we’ve had a couple of redundancies but not necessarily replaced.”*

3MM2 *“I think the sort of the workloads gone up and the number of people doing it has gone down.”*

In essence, there does not appear to be much support for the employees’ views of the organisation taking on more work, with workloads going up, but not particularly replacing or even recruiting extra staff to accommodate this increase and not replacing staff who have

departed. There did appear to be a feeling that the workforce needed to do more than it had previously achieved:

3MM2 “The workforce does a lot more now than they used to do’. This increase in work could be seen as the organisation become learner, working smarter.”

3MM1 “We do more but you know that’s my job to manage it if you like so you know and I just get used to it to be fair.”

There appears to be a disparity amongst the levels of management. Pessoa and Van Reenen (2014) is of the opinion that there has been a significant rise in unemployment and the fall in the employment rate during the GFC would suggest a clear under use of human resources and the labour market. This appears to be the case with all three organisations (particularly Company 2) highlighting the need to reduce cost in order to maintain the business in its current guise.

Senior Management

Moving on to the senior managers who were asked questions in the final template developed by the middle managers and employees. Some of what they said also resonates with what was discussed at the other two levels within Company 3, stating:

3SM3 “People working longer hours. People making silly mistakes, minor mistakes things... the non-urgent, non-critical stuff just flips to the bottom of the pile.”

3SM1 “Work intensified to some of those people who were left behind.”

There was an issue of overworking people, who then go on to make silly mistakes and that the non-urgent things just do not get completed or, as CIPD (2013) suggests, that some people are always prepared to put the extra effort in and complete the urgent piece of work late at night, but the non-important work gets pushed to the bottom of the pile. Also the people who are left behind recognised the intensification which goes on to support the previous two levels and links closely with survivor syndrome (Baruch and Hind, 2000). Senior managers discussed the early part of the GFC, but did not dwell so much on the later part of the GFC, suggesting that the problems were then and not so much now:

3SM1 “The height of the crisis, 2008-2009... and probably into 2010 when we did see an intensification of our workload.”

3SM1 “2008-2009 we had to look at the shape of the business and we had to get it down to the right size.”

This was supported in part by the other two levels, but there appeared to be a perception amongst middle managers and employees that there was clear work intensification happening towards the latter part of the GFC. This difference in opinion amongst the other companies can be supported by Balmer et al (1997) with their suggestion that organisations will have a multitude of stakeholders with each coming from an individual and unique background. Furthermore, intentions and needing more or less management could therefore not provide a single regular image of itself. The varying perspectives will be explored in more depth within the discussion chapter:

3SM2 “People can be down in the dumps because of work intensification or vice- versa. You feel they have become more productive.”

In summary, it is clear that very much like the other companies, Company 3 appeared to be initially unsure in which direction to take the company through the GFC and this resulted in staff places not being filled, which had a knock-on effect on the intensification of work for the existing employees. There was some disparity regarding what was suggested within Company 3 over all three levels, the most convoluted of the three companies regarding work intensification. Some participants mentioned that intensification had improved, but others had the perception that it had not. It is clear to see that the GFC has had a resounding impact on the organisation going back to Burnham (2010) who suggests that the current crisis GFC exposes much of the fragility of the globalisation processes as they are implemented around the globe.

Change

Employees

The next prior theme which was discussed was that of change within the organisation and there appears to be a lot of cross-over with change and work intensification, which has been discussed earlier, through the organisation not replacing staff and thus existing staff having to take on the extra work left behind. There appears to have been a large amount of change through restructuring with one employee stating that:

3E1 *“It’s a bit disjointed, we’ve had lots of comings and goings.”*

For a team to work at its optimum, it should attempt to stay together and not allow it to become disjointed. This relates to the previous literature when Datta et al (2010) suggests that downsizing measures resulted in a reduction in commitment and thus productivity would be reduced owing to the lack of commitment of the survivors left within the company. Pressure was also mentioned in the interviews within the employee level and they suggested that:

3E2 *“I feel that if the department was organised better then, I wouldn’t have the pressures.”*

In essence, there have been many changes within the companies, which have been previously discussed, from the potential expansion of the business which did not fully happen through to the restructuring of departments and the expansion of the business, later in the GFC. This time period appears to have been a state of flux with the majority of employees not actually fully understanding what was going on and can be clearly summed up thus:

3E2 *“The plans for expanding the business went almost down the drain. We planned to increase from twelve shops, to twenty shops, to thirty shops and that was put on hold, we didn’t open any new shops.”*

There was a perception amongst employees that there had been a large amount of change demonstrated by the description extracts from the interviewed employees, with a further employee stating:

3E2 *“There’s been a lot of movement, lots of new people, lots of people leaving, I would say people get on with it, yeah, probably more productive but not more motivated.”*

The previous statement bears a lot of resonance to the theme of fear in the workplace during the GFC and the work of Gallie et al (2013) and this discussed in conjunction with findings of the (SES, 2012). Fear at work had been a key headline taking several forms from worrying about the loss of employment through to unfair treatment in the workplace. Gallie et al (2013)

suggests that 31% of the workforce investigated were anxious about unfair treatment in the workplace over the GFC.

Middle Management

Middle management tended to discuss the changing nature as a positive, furthermore that the company were expanding and this appeared to be a dominating factor and is supported by (Abdelal 2007 cit al Ban, 2015). On some occasions, change can take place when new senior management arrives and brings new financial ideas. If change is required within a company, then the middle managers feel supported if the perception is justified and supported.

3MM1 "It's mainly due to the fact that business is still expanding you know. We're not contracting."

3MM1 "You know, the company, provided you can justify it, you know they will allow that labour."

3MM1 "They will do if there's a hole, they'll fill it, simple as that. You know, we either use an agency or if they can they will use local casual labour."

If change happens, there appears to be a perception among middle management that this has happened either due to growth or for a justified reason. With that said, there was also a perception amongst middle managers that the GFC was seen as a negative:

3MM1 "I think with a recession people will tend to have bad times and anything right."

3MM2 "I would say pre the recession, we certainly had lots of people sort of waiting for stuff to do... waiting for jobs to come their way, whereas now I would say the vast majority of time people always have more than enough to get on with."

Change is never easy within companies. Aghion et al (2014) considers that decentralisation is a factor that is hard to change in the short-run. It does take time to implement and some employees may or not be used to the concept and in a sense it has taken them out of their comfort zone.

Senior Management

There was appreciation that Company 3 was required to streamline a number of things which they were doing in order to succeed within the GFC. Some clarity was required for them to succeed and this was understood at senior management level:

3SM3 “A lot of things became more streamlined. So, I think from that point of view, it’s probably got better. I think because we were working in this reactive way a lot of the time.”

3SM3 “I think we were starting to drift to having two cultures which an organisation like ours where culture is really important to us that created tensions. So, we’re now very, very clear on what our values are”.

Senior management also highlighted the financial pressures which the employees experienced within the GFC and also acknowledged the effect of work-life balance on the employee, empathetic that sometimes the issue was inevitable:

3SM2 “Everybody worries about the change, so when you are restructured and you have to tell them in a really positive way and however much you tell them, this is not personal if there’s job losses, it feels personal.”

Finally, there appeared to be some discussion around temporary workers and the issues which have been noted with agency staff which is supported by the Kersley et al, (2006) op cit Kelliher and Anderson (2010). There has been a changing nature of working arrangements with Kalleberg (2000) suggesting that the way in which we work was becoming interesting and that non-standard work arrangements such as part-time work and temporary work was increasing. This appears to have been continued with Kelliher and Anderson (2010) suggesting that there has been a growing number of organisations offering more flexible part time working opportunities in order to have some continuity within the company.

3SM2 “People temporary contracts, some of it was not anticipated and that’s caused a lot of issues, just as when we were getting some continuity.”

There appears to be large scale change over the GFC with some highlighting it as an opportunity and others discussing the negatives over this time period. One thing that is apparent is that there has been a notable amount of change, and how the company has reacted requires further investigation.

Technology

Employee

The next priori theme was that of Technology. During the interviews this theme did not cause much discussion amongst employees. They did suggest that improvements were made pre-2008, but it was noted that there appeared to be a perception of no new technology having been introduced since that time stating:

3E4 “The equipment we had was too old and we could either spend money to repair it or spend more money to put in brand new kit which they did in 2006.”

Another point which was mentioned was the move away from manual work to allow machines to do the work now, but as the employees state:

3E4 *“It’s positive when it works great you know, it’s really good but when it doesn’t work, you know you can lose a whole days work.”*

3E4 *“A power cut nothing works you know.”*

There did appear to be a frustration within the workforce that the new machinery was very productive when it worked, but problematic when it didn’t, losing days which would have to be caught up on and thus reverting back to the first theme of work intensification. This frustration also appears to stem from Kristal (2013) who argues that there appears to be a diffusion of the computer technology across workplaces and this translated into a decline in the labour’s share and the argument that there could be an increase in the machine’s productivity compared to that of workers’ productivity.

3E4 *“It’s really good but when it doesn’t work, you know you can lose a whole days work.”*

Employees tended to be more reserved with the theme of technology and stated that it was good when it was working, but it was a nuisance when not working as it could lose the workforce a whole day’s work.

Middle Management

Middle management have also suggested the incorporation of new equipment pre-GFC stating:

3MM2 *"I think the very start of the period you're looking at, we installed quite a lot of new equipment."*

3MM2 *"Fairly modern technology in terms of how we produce or product. So, that gave us a lot more control over the processes."*

The need to control the process within this time frame was supported by Inanc et al (2013) and there appeared to be a highlighted alteration within the changes of job control between 2006 and 2012. There did appear to be some resentment towards some of the equipment which the middle managers had to work with, stating:

3MM2 *"It's one of those bits of software that isn't supported anymore anywhere apart from one guy in an office in Leeds somewhere."*

This would suggest that when something goes wrong with the software only one person can fix it and this can link with what the employees are perceiving, that means the loss of the whole day's work. Middle management also reiterated the point that some of the new technologies/equipment is positive when working, but the perception is that it doesn't always work, stating:

3MM1 *"Positive if it worked properly all the time."*

There appears to be a perception of technology being a positive, when this technology was working, yet when it didn't was seen as a negative, this was a perception which ran through the 3 perspectives within the company and appeared to be a recurring theme.

3MM2 *“I think the very start of the period you’re looking at, we installed quite a lot of new equipment.”*

There also appears to be a period of development at the start point of the GFC with new equipment being installed, but to reiterate the understanding that the equipment did not always work, thus the workplace losing productive days.

Senior Management

There appeared to be a collective understanding that the development of the iPad (Apple Inc) amongst senior management has been a positive within the organisation, stating:

3SM1 *“iPad, using Blackberry. So, physically I’m not carrying so much paperwork around with me’ and ‘iPads, so what we’ve seen is a shift in the business towards on line. So, technology has helped that way.”*

Finally, the positive influence of social media on the organisation appears to be a main point amongst the senior managers with statements like:

3SM3 *“We’re looking at having some screens up around the business so we can see our Twitter feed.”*

3SM2 *“Now our web sales have gone through the roof’ finally ‘particularly social media and that’s had an impact on our communications both out to a wider group of stakeholders.”*

It does appear that this has been perceived as a massive growth area for the organisation which contradicts Khessina (2015) when they suggest that some multimedia platforms can be highly successful in generating membership and substantial profits, whilst others, such as Twitter, fail to be profitable, whilst Company 3 suggest otherwise.

3SM1 “I think the impact of e-mail has already been felt and that continues to evolve I think but we do have.... We do have a general feeling and it is a policy that we do have a general feeling of trying to get people to get up and go and talk to one another rather than send an e-mail to someone who’s sitting five desks away.”

There appears to have been an understanding that email was slowly depersonalising the workplace and the organisation was attempting to have a policy in place to try and stop this from happening.

Communication

Employees

The next priori theme is Communication and there are clear links between communication and technology. When technology improves, there appears to be a perception that it will have an effect on communication. As previously mentioned, WERS (2013) recognised that communication had been improving over the recent years since 2004 and also the growth in methods being developed, for example, improvements in technology. This does appear to be the perception amongst Company 3, but in particular it appeared to be recognised in the higher levels of the organisation. The employee level seemed to focus on one-to-one communication and being able to discuss things with their seniors suggesting:

3E1 “I’d like to see the snack and chat happen again.”

3E1 *"I think face-to-face with people from higher positions in the company come and talk."*

The perception was that the employees had felt that in some aspects opportunity had been taken away from them, and that the scheme called 'snack and chat' and was not in reality still happening with employees suggesting:

3E2 *"It's got better and then got worse. I think it's been a rollercoaster over the last 8 years."*

It appears unclear whether 'snack and chat' has been continuing as 50% of the workforce think it is and 50% want it to be returned, but there is certainly a consensus that speaking to management face-to-face is beneficial from the employees' viewpoint, and according to Kitchen and Daly (2002) internal communication by employees is influential in the survival and growth of the organisation.

Middle Management

Middle management did not discuss communication in any great depth, but there appeared to be a general perception that having a conversation face-to-face was of benefit and it is suggested that it happened twice a year. Middle managers suggested that:

3MM1 *"We have an open meeting if you like, they'll say where we've been, say where they think we're going and then they'll open it to the floor, you know so... which is really good".*

3MM2 *"I think one of the things we don't do particularly well is when there are changes in the business in terms of personnel."*

Middle managers also felt that Communication tends to break down when people left the business as other members of staff did not appear to be informed with the perceived lack of communication could worsen the attitudes, feelings and perceptions which is linked to survivor syndrome (Noer, 2009).

3MM2 “Twice yearly we have a snack and chat with senior operations management if you like and they’re very good at telling us where we are and where we’re going.”

3MM2 “Information is always there, it’s not always transparent.”

Middle management have suggested that communication with employees happens, but in reality what most are suggesting is that it simply does not happen anymore or employees are not aware of it. There did appear to be some communication, but in essence middle management at times found it difficult to identify.

Senior Management

Finally, examining the senior management level, the researcher feels that when they were discussing social media, twitter and info screens, this clearly linked to the outward facing communication for Company 3, showing links to developments in Technology and Communication. There seems to have been a reduction of ‘snack and chats’ (face-to-face meetings) but that appears not to have been communicated to the employees and hence they did not know if it was continuing or had stopped, and that has been acknowledged by:

3SM3 “People do still like face-to-face communication. I think we need to increase that again, that’s probably held off a little bit too much.”

There also appeared to be an understanding that there is a need to communicate effectively, by suggesting:

3SM2 “You can put it out there and out there and out there and if they choose not to read it, not to look at it, not to listen, they then think they haven’t been communicated to in any case.”

As with Company 1, senior management realised that communication could always be improved, but did not offer how it could be improved and merely acknowledged this by stating:

3SM1 “I think communication can always be improved.”

3SM3 “Like a snack and chat you know and I think although some people see it as a waste of time, for those few who really appreciate it, it does have a big impact.”

The employees stated earlier that ‘snack and chat’ sessions had stopped and this appeared not to have been communicated up to the senior management level, even when some middle management were suggesting that it had been stopped owing to lack of sign up from the employee level. So, in essence, communication did need to be improved. The personal side of communication appeared to have been lost, as highlighted:

3SM2 “All good to send an e-mail but like I’m not always sat in front of my computer looking at my e-mails and a lot of the guys here aren’t either...”

Career Management

Employees

Moving onto the next section of Career Management, and on the whole the employees' perception is that there appears to be security within their job, suggesting that:

3E1 *"As a company we're quite secure financially... certainly not heard anything that would indicate otherwise' and 'no, I feel quite secure."*

This is an unusual circumstance, but owing to the timing of the interviews, some companies had been seeing the signs of recovery in the South East of England with Gov (2014) suggesting in the briefing paper that there had been changes throughout the recession and there appeared to be a recovery period and growth within London and the South East appearing to be setting the early pace. There also appeared to be a perception amongst a small number of employees that they had reached the top of their career ladder and that there was nowhere to progress to:

3E3 *"I think I would be able to if there was an opportunity but I don't think there are any opportunity."*

There was also a representation which suggested that there are multiple opportunities to actually progress either within a department or to move sideways:

3E2 *"I've moved sideways and I've moved down."*

3E2 *“Encourage people to apply for other jobs within the business and we support them through that. We’ve got lots of movement within the business for people who’ve worked in one part and then moved to another part.”*

The perception was that there was a clash of views by the employees as some were of the belief that it was easy to move job, but others felt that that opportunity was not available, and this is a point which will be further reviewed within the discussion chapter. Finally, employees appeared to have aspirations to study for a course, but were not sure if the organisation would fund this:

3E3 *“I sometimes think about a masters, I don’t think I would do it. I don’t think I would do it but I don’t know if they would pay for it.”*

This could also be linked back to communication and control, which are both areas to be explored within the discussion chapter. Why would they feel that the company would not support further study and does this appear to be the case amongst all three companies?

Middle Management

Middle managers are generally of the same perception that career progression is offered and there are senior managers who have worked at a number of levels within the company:

3MM2 *“I say our board are examples of people that came in at much lower levels than they are now.”*

As for training, it was felt that if it was related to the employee's work then it would receive funding, but the anomaly happens when management appear to be sure of funding, when employees are unconvinced their training will be funded. Below is an extract from a middle manager's perspective:

3MM1 "Would definitely fund it you know."

3MM2 "If they wanted to do fork truck training which is relevant to their job, you know they'd pay for that without a question."

Briefly examining the narrative, the perception of Career Management appears to be discussed amongst the middle management in a positive light suggesting that it is something which the organisation particularly focuses on, from a middle management perspective.

3MM1 "They've just introduced us to a company which is called [REDACTED] on that, everybody here has access to the internet to get on to that and there's literally hundreds of courses."

There was also further mention of career management in a positive light, with the introduction of a new online training system and various training courses which were available. On the whole, middle management saw opportunities to progress when they wanted to and when they were of an appropriate age they were looking forward to retirement and training became less of a focus.

3MM1 *"I am. I've reached that age, as most people of my age do actually. As soon as you're 55, you see your retirement, the goal and that's it and you think, this is good."*

Senior Management

Finally, senior management also appear to be positive regarding career management within the organisation with them stating that:

3SM3 *"If you show an interest in your career then it's in your hands. It's a constant message."*

3SM3 *"Had a good reputation as an employer but I don't think I envisaged staying here thirteen years."*

This positive voice appears to be consistent amongst the senior management and the opportunity is there for career development amongst employees of the correct grade / level in the organisation. Harvard Business Review (2014) goes on to suggest that good managers will attract employees with drive, performance and engagement and who in turn will play a role in getting the most out of its employees, and poor managers will be reluctant to promote any of the above positives. Also, when examining the narrative, it appears that middle management and senior management are very positive about including the opportunities on offer. An individual even used the statement:

3SM2 *"I think I'm most proud of is you don't have to be a manager to be spotted to have a talent and I'm living proof of that aren't I because I work my way up."*

This proves that the opportunity is there to progress through the company through varying levels. Senior management finally suggested that if the individual shows an aptitude and a desire to progress, the organisation will support the employee which indicates that they, the management, take the view that the employees are in control of their destiny, and support is available from the company. It appeared that the economic environment has had an impact on Company 3, as employees appeared to be aware of plans being in place and not actually coming to fruition, explaining that:

3SM3 “The lease didn’t go ahead, you know we had all these ambitious plans for taking on lots of new people, expanding our web, all different areas of the business and then there were areas in sales who were made redundant because they’d got lots of people.”

Unlike the other organisations, there did not appear to be as much distorted communication and employees did not suggest this was an issue. As with the other Companies, there did appear to be a perception of a number of redundancies forthcoming. This is supported by WERS (2013) where they suggest that there has been an increase in working hours, with 29% of employees suggesting an increase in workload due to recruitment freezes and redundancies. Also with the other two companies, there appeared to be more of a financial focus and checking that money was not spent needlessly, suggesting that:

3SM1 “They taught me more about how they worked rather than focusing on the saving money part.”

Summary of Company 3

Within Company 3 the trend of financialisation seems to be continuing, with the perception that where money was being spent was being increasingly controlled throughout the GFC, something which had been clearly noted at an employee level and supported by Inanc et al (2013) with the suggestion that the economic crisis has both increased the intensity of work and the need to monitor and control this intensity. There was a general awareness amongst middle managers of Company 3 that it was a nice place to work with just a few areas which were suggested outside of the priori themes. The first view was that employee's pre-GFC did not have enough work to keep them busy and during the GFC employees had too much to do which means that the basic things were being forgotten, and this is clearly supported by:

3MM2 "I would say pre the recession, we certainly had lots of people sort of waiting for stuff to do and waiting for jobs to come their way, whereas now I would say the vast majority of time people always have more than enough to get on with."

3MM2 "I think the sort of the stuff that used to happen because you had extra people around who could go and do that stuff, doesn't quite happen anymore because those people just aren't hanging around anymore."

Also of interest was the awareness amongst employees of being informed and communicated with about these changes, and this further enhanced their anxiety around roles with suggestions:

3SM2 "Changes were going to be made as to who was going to be left but what that really meant there was a period of uncertainty probably of about eighteen months."

3MM2 *“To be as open and honest as they possibly could but for some of the guys, lots of guys that had been working here for a long time and hadn’t been used to being sort of, with people being honest with them about what was going to happen.”*

From the perception of middle management, this could have had a negative effect on the employee level and communication needed to be improved, as previously discussed. Senior management again appeared to be somewhat positive, but did also discuss a number of the issues raised earlier. Emerging discussions centred on a number of small matters, for instance a perception over this time period that the organisation has become leaner, with proposals of:

3SM3 *“We must have become a bit leaner and a bit smarter in how we work.”*

3SM2 *“So, we’ve sort of gone down this lean path which has worked very well, less so with office workers but more so within manufacturing and logistics.”*

Also a comment from senior management when employees are aware that their job is at risk, could in turn work harder, links somewhat with what has previous has been discussed with controlling with fear (Inanc et al., 2013; Gallie et al., 2013):

3SM2 *“Because they don’t want to be the one to go if the numbers are reduced... I know it sounds strange, I find they tend to up their game... people outside of that, so the rest of the employees if you like, I have no doubt that they all think, oh God.”*

The researcher views one of the final statements from senior management as a good insight into how the company is generally attempting to do the right thing by the employees and the

organisation, but a realisation that mistakes have been made and it was tough at the start by advising:

3SM1 “So, it’s been a rollercoaster ride but it’s been good, dammed good. Maybe I wouldn’t have said that in 2008 but you know, when you get the chance to look back, it’s been good.”

There have been many interesting insights into this company, from the initial examination of the perception of work intensification within the organisation over the GFC. Subsequently change and the introduction of redundancy, then a clear link with work intensification experienced by employees and the anxiety and pressure resulting from this. From a multitude of priori themes collected from Hassard et al (2009), the research has shown them to be still apparent within today’s context of work. Throughout the GFC there does appear to be a perception of increased work intensification and fear in the workplace which has been supported by the data collected by (Gallie et al, 2013). After examining the interviews individually, it has been clear that these organisations reacted differently to the GFC and in some areas they appear to have reacted in a similar way, but as they are working in different sectors these comparisons and differences could be of interest.

The discussion section explores a number of comparisons amongst the individual cases and also attempts to understand the differences amongst the cases whilst attempting to justify why these have existed. Finally, the work will then move toward understanding how this study contrasts with Hassard et al (2009) and what has been learnt from studying the three individual cases collectively in relation to the previous work. The researcher would like to take the opportunity to thank the participating organisations for agreeing to take part in the current study. Further study would enable a more in-depth examination of the findings and a return

to the organisations to see if the workplace has changed further would allow new research to answer new and emerging questions.

In collecting this data, the researcher would again like to thank the participating organisations, as the study has led to a number of additional areas to be explored. The findings will be examined in more depth within the discussion chapter. The researcher will have an opportunity to answer the research questions, that were set out within the introduction. Much of the data collected has gone some way to reinforce what was suggested within Hassard et al (2009) with a clear worsening of the working environment.

In what appears to be a changing environment within the workplace, the researcher will examine the findings as highlighted within the previous chapter. It was felt that the reader should understand the conceptual lens adopted through which the discussions will follow the findings and the perceived impact they have had on working life within the organisations surveyed. The next phase of the chapter highlights a number of changing and emerging themes and how they have affected the workplace. The chapter will then examine the three organisations to see how their workplace may have adapted over the GFC, if there appeared to be any common or different practices adopted within these organisations and how that might have influenced the employees' perceptions. Finally, the chapter looks to understand the similarities and differences with regards to the initial work of Hassard et al (2009) and will contribute to the existing knowledge contained within Hassard et al (2009) whilst adding to the discussed context and differing sample groups.

Summary of the Findings: Three Cases

This provides a brief integrated summary of the findings from the three cases. Evidentially, there was a perceived increase in work intensification across all three subject companies, at all investigated levels:

3E3 *“My work has intensified since I’ve joined [REDACTED] and I’m not saying it’s ever going to be as bad in 2008. So, from the 2008 perspective, yeah it’s better but my work has intensified since I’ve joined in 2012. My role is changing probably, we’ve had a few sort of departmental problems, so we’re just trying to iron those out and get the right people in at the right job. So yeah, it will get better, but I think currently we’re quite under pressure at the moment.”*

The way in which each company reacted to the GFC was also different. It was highlighted throughout that all three companies were in need of better communication. That became clear with statements from senior management suggesting that they did not fully understand things happening at the employee level anymore. Technology appeared to be the least discussed theme of those chosen. From the discussions, it did appear that the companies were making do with the equipment they had, summed up here:

2MM2 *“Are now not replacing machines where they would have replaced them before and now they’ve struggled on and made them last another year, another year in our business, so that’s definitely had an impact yeah.”*

Across the three organisations there appeared to be an approach of early reaction to the potential risks of the GFC, with all three companies making cuts early. This seemed to be

considered an appropriate policy, with one company saying that the recession was a 'good thing' for the company:

2SM1 "I believe it's been very good for us. It's forced us to look hard at how we run our business. It forced us to 'right-size' and become a much more efficient business. We had to create more robust processes."

In all the organisations there was a perception of constant flux at middle management level, with regular changes in reporting lines, which in some cases did not appear to have been communicated to employees. All employees confirmed that they had seen work intensification since the beginning of the GFC began and that the workplace had become a tougher place than it was previously. The perception was that employees were expected to produce more work, with fewer people employed to achieve this. This was interesting, as the expectation was that the work would be completed, without consideration for 'how' this would be achieved, while the constant flux of management suggested that there was a lack of understanding at a senior level of this intensification, with little action taken to stabilise the workforce.

There appeared to be many factors at work within all three companies (see Work Intensification sections in Findings), with work intensification appearing to be a worsening issue in all three cases, but the way in which this intensification has manifested itself seems to affect each company differently, perhaps as a consequence of the way in which each business has reacted to the GFC.

It appears that all companies and all levels of seniority have witnessed an intensification of work since the GFC began and among all three companies it appeared to be more prominent early on. This could be for many differing reasons, from the organisations responding to the

potential risks, rather than reviewing the situation and then acting. Another reason for the intensification could have been confusion caused by redundancy / layering, which had a destabilising factor. This could have raised the amount of pressure on employees to cover the work previously done by other workers that had been let go.

Communication during this process could have been better as well, as many of the employees suggested that they were confused and stressed by the threat of redundancy, and were very conscious of their smaller workforce (see pages from 175) and appeared incompetent as they did not have the information (see below).

1E1 *“We all almost look a bit silly and we had to say whoops, sorry [REDACTED] hasn’t told us that. Sorry about that. So, definite lack of communication there.”*

The amount of change over this time period was also highlighted, with a consensus that uncertainty over the responsibility or reporting structure for managers and supervisors often left workers unsure of who they were reporting to. There also appeared to be a consensus that the work place was becoming more driven by financial factors, and that was the focus of many decisions made by the organisations. This factor links with Cushen and Thompson (2016) and their discussion around the increased focus on costs in the workplace, which has been previously highlighted. What was noted by the researcher was that there appeared to be a consistent level of disconnect across all three companies, with senior managers not fully aware of what was happening on the work floor. Comments from senior managers regarding these issues across all three companies did not seem to match the information provided by some of the employees and even middle managers. (Freed, 2005 cit al Embertson, 2006) argued that management can fail, when it becomes disconnected from the organisation it

should be leading, and that disconnectedness can cause the organisation to find themselves at a disadvantage compared with their peers.

Communication was also an area highlighted and linked to a number of themes, but senior managers across the board were aware of its importance, with some suggesting it was an area for improvement. This was supported by CIPD (2010), which proposed that improvements for business performance could be achieved by talking to, listening, helping and engaging with employees through the use of social media and communication. What surprised the researcher was the lack of discussion around how technology has changed over this period and how that had impacted employees at work. This point, supported by Chandra et al (2014), suggested that there was an apparent slowdown in the development of new technologies that coincided with the process of reduced spending during the time period under review. Senior managers provided a clear illustration of how the GFC has impacted upon senior levels within their organisation, but this was the least-discussed theme throughout the process.

The reason why the researcher utilised three companies from different sectors, but in the same region, was to try and provide insights into individual perception across industry of how different companies have reacted to the GFC, with the aim of identifying any new themes that may have emerged since the work of Hassard et al (2009). There appears to be a level of fear amongst the workers questioned across all three data sets, with some worried about the risk of losing jobs, or that they would do more work to counteract the 'fear of losing the job'. With the influx of temporary workers, perhaps employees increasingly saw their job as being at risk, and instead found themselves opting to take on a more flexible, but less stable role, with better short-term job security (and benefit to the firm), but less long-term certainty over their future. As suggested by Pyper and McGuinness (2013) many companies within the retail and

hospitality industries are increasingly taking on workers on so-called 'zero hours' contracts over this recent downturn in the economy, with people agreeing to work when they are required, but in essence they have no actual guarantee of work.

Within the first company reviewed, links were evident with regards to the current UK labour market and to that of the perceptions of the recession, as observed in Ireland by Teague and Roche (2014a) in their interpretations of changes in Ireland's work processes. As they saw, there was a tendency towards work intensification, which had also been observed by (Hassard et al, 2009). The researcher has attempted to understand the various factors that may have impacted the companies studied, and leading to changes in work practices, following the start of the GFC. The review of individual perceptions from the workforce as a whole has helped to provide an insight into the nature of the changes seen in the UK workplace, within the region studied. Part of the original contribution of the study was the examination of three levels of the organisation, thereby extending the work of (Hassard et al, 2009). In the case of the first company, there appears to be a need for further research into both employer and employee perceptions, over the period following the onset of the GFC, specifically as to why there is such a disparity between perceptions at different levels. The researcher also feels it would be of benefit to understand the potentially 'low road' responses that have been acknowledged. Finally, engagement appears to be hampered by the rapid change in management, and the consequent lack of communication, with this disconnect (and increased uncertainty) linking to the 'low road' reactions to the GFC.

Employee responses suggested a shift to a more financialised work place, with some suggesting that this might be 'partly because of a cost issue'. It was commented that 'even if we were allowed to take somebody on, they [being management] would have not let us'. This evidence would suggest that some employees felt disempowered by management during the

process, with quality of work secondary to cost efficiency. This is supported by Siepel and Nightingale (2014), who started to explore the intensified awareness in the processes of financialisation over the GFC in relation to the impact of neo-liberal policies and attitudes. An employee suggested that:

1E2 *“we’ve always been taught about quality, but to me that’s becoming secondary to figures.”*

This contrasts with what is suggested by Paroutis et al (2014), where they proposed that there are key areas that should have received investment during the GFC, with areas such as marketing, quality and product development classed as ‘good costs’ that should be seen as an investment, whether or not this might have an impact on short term profits, given that they will improve the organisation’s competitive advantage. While touching on the factors around the process of financialisation since the GFC began, ‘value over quality’ appeared to be an emerging theme. As stated above, evidence suggested that the perception of the quality of products produced was not as positive as it was prior to the GFC.

Each company has been broken into three distinct levels: employee, middle management and senior management and the findings are discussed within each differing level. This was designed to understand whether perceptions were different or coherent throughout the organisation or if there was a difference in perception and if so, why. The aim was to add to the existing body of knowledge around perceptions of management over the recession and this investigation includes 3 perspectives of staff and focuses insights into an under-researched group of non-supervisory employees.

This has also offered an insight into the creation of the finalised conceptual framework by providing interlinked themes and theory through which to view the data. When interpreting the data, the researcher is then able to form the created conceptual framework and justify the apparent subtle links.

Chapter 7

Discussion: Emerging Themes

Having highlighted the lens through which the data was viewed, there does appear to be the perception by employees that the workplace was worse off than before the recession. Many employees stated that they had seen an increase in the amount of work expected (see work intensification sections) and also there were less people to actually complete the work. The participant's interviews gave the impression that there was a connection to the financialisation of the workplace and that decisions appeared to be made with costs as a focus and a worsening of this was documented over the GFC. The financial aspect appeared to be more severe at the start of the GFC with all three organisations having highlighted this by making redundancies at that time. Within Hassard et al (2009) there is evidence of corporate downsizing which appears to be led by the financialisation of the work place according to (Hales, 2010; Hassard, et al 2009). Within the initial study which looked to examine only middle managers, this study has gathered data from both the employee level and also senior management level.

Downsizing appears to be prominent amongst the employees and even discussed to some degree with new members of staff at senior management level. There appeared to be a worsening of these effects regarding downsizing from the data collected, and it was not just middle managers who were affected throughout this turbulent period. With this in mind there did appear to be a higher degree of control, it could be assumed a Taylor (1911) way by which management has adapted to these turbulent times. This does appear to be masked as many employees are somewhat protected from the realities of the GFC with most not linking the changes to the external environment/ (see Findings for lack of mention of the GFC).

New career opportunities and job security appeared to be an issue for middle managers according to Hassard et al (2009) and was widespread over the participating organisations with a number of employees even suggesting that there was a fear factor in the workplace and they felt they had to do the work otherwise they could lose their job. This was also supported by Gallie et al (2013) and fear has been suggested within Company 2 and 3. This theme was not within the initial template and was an emerging theme within the current environment, a point which has been supported by other academics Gallie et al (2013) who have witnessed the same.

A number of the senior managers discussed career management as being integral to the growth of the business, but that appeared not to be the perception of the employees, suggesting they were unable to progress any higher within the organisation, which counteracted what was being suggested by senior management. It was interesting to note that technology appeared not to play a pivotal role when discussed directly and this might be owing to a lack of new developments of a new 'Twitter or Facebook' or another internet platforms. This could also be linked to the fact that, as a number of employees discussed, buyers were 'making do' with what they had previously bought and were not purchasing new and because of this the organisations were having to do the same (see page 199). However when probed about this, one company openly started to discuss the improvements in sales owing to them adopting a more outward facing online sales workforce (see page 224, 227). This has been a growth area for that organisation, but it was deemed a necessary risk to keep up with the competition. In every participating organisation there was a perception from the employee level that more work was required to be done, but fewer employees to actually do the work, owing to the restructuring and downsizing of workforces within the surveyed organisations and there was a fear they were expected to do 'do more for less' (see pages 165, 212).

On the whole, the perception followed many of the key themes highlighted by Hassard et al (2009) with some more apparent themes emerging. Within two of the companies there appeared to be an underlying internal discussion regarding tighter controls, suggesting that the employees always used to be able to undertake tasks, but now these need to be signed off by a manager. This suggests tighter control and the financialised focus within today's workplace is clearly highlighted by Cushen and Thompson (2016). Technology can establish what the employee is actually doing with their time and in a sense creating a further big brother state / organisation. The time period post-GFC appeared to be in a state of flux as organisations were unsure of what direction to take, leading to confusion from the employees. If communication had been improved, this could have led to this change being better facilitated amongst employees and some middle managers.

It was of interest that the general perception of the workforce was that unlike Hassard et al (2009) finding that the workforce was being deskilled, the research suggested the opposite, that the workforce were actually acquiring more skills, because they had to cope with the loss of staff, and the increase in workload due to the round of redundancies. The up-skilling argument is discussed by Harvey (1995) where they have examined the up-skilling of nurses within the NHS. What was interesting to note, was the amount of employees who had been sheltered from the impacts of the GFC and not actually linking much of the blame to the GFC for the de-layering throughout their workforce. It was only when the interviewer mentioned the GFC that these links became clear, indicating that the GFC was partly responsible for the changes within the workplace.

Over time there have been a number of changes to the way in which we work. Gold and Bratton (2014) suggests incidents such as deregulation, privatization and the actual withdrawal of state intervention in countless areas of social provision led to what has been

suggested by (Harvey, 2007 op cit Gold and Bratton, 2014) a neo-liberal political-economic agenda. This leads to the change in recruitment in the organisations and in one of the organisations recruitment has completely changed from where they used to employ local people, perhaps friends of colleagues, but it has moved now towards recruiting 80% graduates and having to receive official sign-off from senior management to be able to hire an individual who is not a recent graduate. The perception of the current employees was that the graduates were not experienced and it added to their work intensification as they needed to mentor the new graduates and in essence show them the ropes. This also adds to the globalised world in which we live as people would need to migrate to the jobs which are available. Recruitment appeared to be a changing theme from that of Hassard et al (2009) as across all organisations there appeared to be more justification as to why a new member of staff was required, but the perception of the senior management indicated that this was beneficial to the business. The question remains to be asked, if staff are required why were they made redundant in the first place? This is also supported by McCann et al (2009) who asks, in reality does restructuring really work? It is clear that the workplace has experienced wholesale change and this in turn has affected the workforce, but how does that compare with the initial study undertaken by Hassard et al (2009) explored within the reflections on Hassard et al (2009) section.

Financialisation

Financialisation appears to have been one of the key emergent themes amongst all three companies and is linked to quality which is discussed later within this section. It was discussed amongst all three levels of all three companies as the reasoning and starting point of the determination of the workplace.

The issue of financialisation is intertwined with all the emergent themes and appears to be the catalyst for many of the things discussed within the Findings section and is supported by (Burnham, 2010 op cit Cushen and Thompson, 2016) and that this wealth / financialisation

appears to be separate and without the slightest connection to that of living labour. This can be further examined with Cushen and Thompson (2016) and their understanding that the commitments made to management, lead to various interventions and a further financialised focus, which in turn affects employees and leads to outsourcing, headcount reduction, centralisation, reward insecurity and this can be seen within the three cases mentioned (see pages 74, 167, 235).

This comes back to the theme of financialisation and confirms that there is a perception that companies are becoming leaner and that companies are 'cutting their cloth accordingly' during recent years. This is supported by Thompson (2003) with their suggestion that companies are becoming more lean, have more fragmented tasks, higher work intensification and forgetting about workers being more cohesive with their employer.

Companies have focused more on making their companies more profitable and attempting to survive the recent difficult environment, rather than focusing on the body of employees, which has led to less commitment and goodwill from employees (see pages 195, 206, 217). To see the cross connections with the baby ceiling study (see page 103) Thompson (2011) suggests that 'low road' lower cost, short-term HRD has emerged and the financialisation of capitalistic management approaches have led to employees being affected by so-called 'work bargains'. These work bargains appear to have led to increased work intensification and the degradation of the workplace.

Quality

Quality was mentioned within one of the companies and there was a perception that quality was not as good as before the GFC (see page 248) and the reasons were that products were being rushed to reach market. This was highlighted predominantly at the employee level, but was also touched upon at the middle management level. It felt as though the employees had

been somewhat let down by the company for allowing this to happen and also a little angered as they were having to remake components repeatedly as they were not correct. Considering the reasons why this may have been the case for instance, the increasing focus on financialisation has been discussed above and (Bryan et al 2009 op cit Cushen and Thompson, 2016) propose that market pressure to preserve the asset price of a product is at the same time a pressure on labour as flexible capital Cushen and Thompson (2016) discuss the continuous restructuring and unremitting and disturbance which has affected the labour force.

It could be argued that within the current paradigm the focus of production has shifted to have a higher emphasis on financialisation rather than on what has be produced. This sense of a change in priority post-GFC has changed to a more financialised focus, appears to have shifted and it could be interpreted as a society issue with (Mills, 2000 op cit Gold and Bratton, 2014) suggesting it is a way of examining the human experience that can see connections between the perceived private problems of the individual and the social environment. This can also be confirmed by Colley (2012) who previously suggested that austerity does not only make changes on its own within industry, but would seem that many changes have been introduced through amending work practices or processes WERS (2013).

Employee responses suggest a shift to a more financialised work place, with some suggesting that this might be partly because of a cost linked issue (see page 217). This evidence would suggest that some employees felt disempowered by management during the process, with quality of work secondary to cost efficiency.

Recruitment

It was interesting to note that recruitment strategy had changed within Company 1 and appeared to have made an impression amongst middle management (see page 171). There

are a number of reasons for this within the company and senior management suggested it was a change of policy after a recent takeover. This is supported by WERS (2013) who raise the issue of working increased hours, with 29% of employees suggesting an increase in workload due to recruitment freezes and redundancies and thus adding to increased hours.

This change was mentioned on a number of occasions and adds to the intensification of work as it was understood that the existing employees would take on the new members of staff and have to train them up. This statement is supported by Hassard et al (2009) that previous work within the perspective of 'more for less' as their hours have decreased, but the work has not gone, yet are still expected to complete the work for less pay. There is also confirmation from Felstead et al (2013b) regarding work intensification being on the rise. The perception from employees was that the change was not entirely accepted by employees, but in a sense they had to get on with it whether they liked it or not.

With the influx of temporary work (see pages 171, 203, 228) perhaps employees saw their job as being at risk and then offered to become a more flexible, less stable workforce as suggested by Pyper and McGuiness (2013). With the increase of a temporary workforce, employees have felt vulnerable to what could happen in the future and this could also be linked back to the idea of fear being utilised in order to manage. This could however have had a lasting effect on employees' perception, with the fear of potential further job losses, which has also been suggested by Gallie et al (2013). As previously highlighted by Ward, et al (2001) it is recorded as far back as 2001 that temporary work has accounted for an increasing amount of new employment within the UK's labour market and that temporary agencies represented a significant role for entry into organisations. There has been a notable perception that this has increased over the GFC.

Stress

Stress within organisations is not a new phenomenon. McCann et al (2004), (2010), Morris et al (2006), (2008) and Hassard et al (2009) have previously noted, prior to the GFC in 2008 that organisational change had led to the intensification of work and increased workplace stress. There does appear to have been an increase in stress over the GFC owing to the increase in work intensification and changes introduced (see pages 187, 206, 208).

Stress was mentioned over this time period in all of the organisations, but appeared more prominent within Company 2 (see pages 187, 206). This is supported by Hales (2010) with their suggestion that there is increased intensification of work accompanied by stress and anxiety experienced by the organisations and the consequences for the labour process. This could be for a number of reasons, for instance the targets have been set too high. The intensification of work and the unsustainability of that and not enough people actually able to achieve the work results in stress becoming apparent. Employees have mentioned the stress of their job on a number of occasions within the company. This can also be supported by Green et al (2013a) suggesting that there is a notable rise in job stress, and fall in job satisfaction.

Stress was highlighted as an issue within the final Company 3, but it was not focused on as integral to their discussion, but on examining the other two companies it appears to be a main discussion point for the participants. The question has to be asked why this was not apparent across all organisations, but was developed as emergent theme in only one? Could it have been merely the industry within which the organisation works or was it the way in which the organisation reacted to the GFC? It has to be noted that Company 2 reacted very swiftly, but making a large number of job cuts and redundancy at the very beginning of the GFC could

have had a lasting effect on employees' perception of the fear of potential further job losses, which has also been suggested by Gallie et al (2013).

There have been direct similarities witnessed by Mucci et al (2016) when they proposed that stress in the workplace increases due to restructuring of work, which is brought on by increased workload and increased hours worked. This fits with the more work intensified workplace of 2014.

Control

Control was an issue which was closely linked to stress within the workplace and further control is an interesting area, with Company 2 highlighting on a number of occasions (see pages 168, 209, 222) that the organisations had introduced further controls of their work over this time period. This appears to bear relevance to LPT with Braverman (1974) and appeared to place the highest importance on capitalist management as the control exchange between employee and management. Control was discussed at senior management level, but was in a sense discredited as they suggested it was a way for the company to become more productive as a method of knowing how people are working. Control appeared to have been an emerging discussion point within two of the organisations (see page 195, 203) and within one company, senior management attempts to suggest that it is only used as a measurement tool. Control had been mentioned to some degree throughout all companies, but was more apparent within Company 2, it is interesting that, as suggested, the workplace was becoming more financialised that control over the workforce appeared more dominant.

Control was also witnessed by (Inanc et al, 2013; Siepel and Nightingale, 2014; Cushen and Thompson, 2016). It is clear that the workplace has experienced wholesale change and this in turn has affected the workforce, but how does that compare with the initial study undertaken by Hassard et al (2009). It could be argued that the workplace appeared more like a historical Scientific Management Taylor (1911) shop floor, with tasks being the most important area and

finding ways to control the employees' labour, in what could be considered a quickly growing capitalist environment (Cooper and Taylor, 2000).

When attempting to reflect on what was found amongst the participants, it was clear that there was increased financialisation and an increase of financial control. In conclusion the emerging themes appear to be closely linked with increased work intensification and more focused attention on financialisation within the work place.

Reflections on Hassard et al (2009)

It is acknowledged that Hassard et al (2009) focused on the middle management section of the workforce and that this study has examined the three levels of the workforce, so the findings must take this into consideration in conjunction with Hassard et al (2009). When attempting to reflect on what was found amongst the participants, it was understood that there was increased financialisation and an increase of financial control. Organisations appear to have reacted differently at the start of the GFC time period and that might have been because they needed to act, but it would appear they were unsure how to react. There does appear to have been a development of Taylor (1911) and the thinking behind Scientific Management with much of what was discussed revolving around factory working productivity, now being utilised within not only factory situations, but also within the offices investigated in this study. When first writing this this piece of work the researcher attempted to classify it as a resurgence of Taylor (1911) theory, but in hindsight has it ever gone away? The researcher would suggest not, but it could be argued it has devolved into other contexts, which have become further pronounced within the GFC time period.

What appeared to be of interest, were the suggestions of new and emerging themes coming from what was discussed when developing the template for the interviews of the organisations and the five emerging themes. They appeared not to be spread amongst all three companies, but the five themes emerged from all the companies in varying degrees and it could be argued

that this could have been contributed to by the way in which companies initially dealt with the issues in the early part of the GFC. Of the emerging themes, the researcher found the theme of quality the most interesting as one would have expected this to have improved over this period. The company should be able to do things correctly once and not to have to repeat the process and thus it was surprising that employees had highlighted this. On reflection, whilst attempting to get things to market early, this could be rushed and mistakes could happen. Furthermore, this suggests a short term 'low road' perspective when a 'high road' initiative could have facilitated change towards an organisation's focus. They should move away from a short term focus of 'low road' low cost approaches to people management (Thompson, 2011) and it could be argued that the way in which some organisations have reacted to the changing economic environment through the way in which they manage employees.

As previously highlighted, many of the themes which had been examined by Hassard et al (2009) were still very much apparent within this study, except one, which has been discussed. Technology was somewhat under-discussed and appeared to be not as important over the GFC time period. What was clear from the participants was that there was a perception of a worsening of experience in the workplace, be that through increased work intensification, communication or even down to recruitment and this has an effect on the whole contributing to a predominately negative impact. Participants talked of some of the themes in a positive light. But these would generally be followed by a negative experience of a theme. The use of fear was also worrying within the workplace and also one which the researcher was surprised to find, although only within one company predominately and appeared not widely used.

In conclusion, the GFC has had a noted influence on the workplace and on employees. There was the perspective that it was considered worse at the start as organisations were unaware of how they were meant to react to situations and it felt a little like 'panic stations' for the

majority of employees. This can be linked with Gallie et al (2013) as there did appear to be an understanding that fear in the workplace could take a number of guises from the actual fear of losing employment, unfair treatment in the workplace, through to the loss of status within an organisation and that appeared to be prominent. The three organisations have done what they needed to in order to survive with (Deaton, 2012 cit al Kler, et al 2015) highlighting that the link between objectives and changes within the financial circumstances can be accessed through individual views of these changes, which if done correctly, is an achievement, with some actually seeing growth within their industry. The longer viewpoint which should be adopted across the board had not been taken at the early stages of the GFC, then organisations had the opportunity to grow from the difficult times which they had to experience whilst attempting to achieve that longer term plan and not just look to survive by taking short term unsustainable profits.

Chapter Summary

To summarise this chapter, it has been clear that the workforce has seen a worsening of conditions within the working environment. The researcher has understood this to be partly because of the reaction to the GFC by the three companies and the lack of real understanding of what an organisation should do in the situation. After the initial shock, companies would then look to the market to witness what they have attempted to do and fall in line. In a sense, copy their competitors to survive. However, what appeared interesting was the initial perception of how organisations first reacted. The reaction appears to be different amongst all three organisations, but appears to have been long-lived in the perceptions of the workforce. It has been well documented by (Siepel and Nightingale, 2014, Thompson, 2013, Cushen and Thompson, 2016, Arestis et al, 2013, Cushen, 2013) that there is financial focus which now exists within the workplace. It appears these three organisations have now fallen in line with a similar reaction to the GFC.

The researcher has argued that a resurgence of Taylor's (1911) with Scientific Management as a form of control within the workforce becomes more pronounced within the findings. Furthermore, that the resurgence of this form of control leads to a more alienated Marx (1844) approach towards the workforce. Particularly poignant with regards to Boddy (2009) is the suggestion that the keystone of Scientific Management is a focus on the relationship between the employee and the machine system. This appears within all three companies within this project. The opinion that the employee is now just part of a machine and can be controlled links closely with Inanc et al (2013) which then links to the promotion of fear in the workplace by Gallie et al (2013).

Within the next stage of the thesis, the researcher will discuss and contextualise the findings above, to allow the reader to see links with historical theory and new contributions within the viewed context.

Chapter 8

Discussion and Contextualisation

The contextualisation chapter examines in-depth discussions around the findings and the new emerging themes, which have become more prominent throughout this study. The aim of the research was to establish employees' non-generalizable perceptions of their work between 2008 and 2014, taking in the timeframe of the GFC with reference to Hassard et al (2009). This was achieved by answering the three research questions (see page 21).

The study has gone on to detail any revision in the perception in the work place, it has been interesting to note the emergent theme and how the themes have built on the study of Hassard et al (2009). There is a clearly a relationship between the findings of the historical context and that of historical theory, as previously mentioned by Taylor (1911). The different perspectives from three different sectors, have also offered a rich discussion during the contextual timeframe, with many differences and similarities in the perceptions being discussed. The template analysis approach worked well, as it provided a flexible template to include the historical themes gathered by Hassard et al (2009) but also allowing for the identification of more or new developing themes, which were then discussed (see from page 244).

The conceptual framework has emerged from the data collected and this enabled the researcher to build on the work of Hassard et al (2009) & Braverman (1976). Initially, the work was solely rooted on Hassard et al (2009) and Braverman (1976), but owing to the emergent nature of the analysis tool, this enabled the researcher to also include previous contributors, such as Taylor (1911), within the theoretical framework for the study. The concept of the work has been influenced by a range of smaller historical contributors, documented within the

literature review of the work. The historical nature of the enquiry has drawn on many different theories (Marx, 1867; Weber, 1907; Ford, 1918; Taylor, 1911; Braverman, 1974; Thompson, 2003; Hassard, et al 2009).

The data collected and discussed previously has included the work of Taylor (1911) and Braverman (1974) to help analyse the data collected. A comparison was also required on the previous work of Hassard et al (2009), where a degradation of the work process has been evidenced. The researcher believes these theories may have emerged due to insight from those employees interviewed, who provided a personal reflection of their experience of work. By using the theories highlighted, it has enabled the researcher to give some insight into the current workplace. Finally, while the conceptual framework was developed using existing literature, it was felt that, to fully allow insight into developing or emerging themes in the workplace, the conceptual framework of the study would be confirmed only after data collection.

When building the conceptual framework the researcher has attempted to initially embed the research within an existing framework of Hassard et al (2009). This assists the reader by providing a solid foundation from which to develop the conceptual framework, and from there, the final confirmed framework. When attempting to build the conceptual framework, the researcher felt it was important for the reader to have a good grasp of some of the historical factors that this project was looking to build upon. The previous research of Hassard et al (2009) was similarly based on, or built on, concepts developed in previously existing literature, linking back to literature from Braverman (1974). The study has also been impacted by developments within the field of management (Ashton and Sung, 2002; Teague and Roche, 2014; Thompson, 2010; WERS, 2011; SES, 2012).

It is interesting to note the way that Hassard et al (2009) utilised the work of Braverman (1974). There appeared to be a realisation that the context of the theory needed addressing, a thought supported by Adler (2007). This helped to confirm the researcher's initial thoughts of the need to utilise LPT in a different way, owing to a changing work environment. Hassard et al (2009) chose not to continually highlight the theoretical lens of LPT, as it was evolving the theory to that highlighted by (Adler 2007 op cit Hassard et al 2009) which highlighted the quality of the lens to fit the changing working landscape. With this in mind, the researcher employed an 'evolved' LPT-style view focused on the current 'financialised' workplace. One factor highlighted by Cushen and Thompson (2016) was the suggestion that Labour Process Theory can still be an important tool to understand the process of work. It can provide a foundation from where academics can understand the distinctively financialised environment within the labour environment.

It was also apparent that Braverman (1974) identified links to an existing body of knowledge (Marx, 1884; Taylor, 1911, Ford, 1918). With this in mind, the researcher felt the development of management was required, when conceptualising the study, as it plays an integral role within the literature on which the study has been built, from where the researcher has then applied a critical realist philosophy. Hassard et al (2009) and Braverman's (1976) work provided a starting point when examining the perception of the workplace among the participants interviewed, which should go some way to providing an understanding as to why particular issues might indeed be evident.

The chapter now moves to assess how the historical context fits together with the present work. The researcher chose a starting point of Marx (1884). According to Calhoun (2007), Marx (1884) believed that capitalism facilitates the social relationships of production, for example, the relationship between workers, and the relationship between workers and

capitalists through commodities. The latter includes the value of labour, which is sold and bought as a commodity on an open marketplace. Braverman (1974) was critical of the contemporary labour process and understood that capitalism was having a permanent impact on the sociology of work. When examining the fundamentals of this factor, Braverman (1974) looked to build on writings by Marx (1884), with regards to the impact of capitalism on industrial growth and the actual labour process. Braverman also attempted to pay closer attention to the growth of giant corporations, addressing how that impacted on the labour process. The interlinked nature of the work of Marx (1884) and Braverman (1974) has been previously discussed within the literature review in this study, with regards to evidence of potential neo-Marxism.

It is relevant to refer back to Marx (1867) (page 31) who stated that workers will feel estranged from fellow workers, who are also in turn feeling alienated by the experience of work, and will thus struggle to connect within the situation they find themselves (Atzeni, 2013). This intensification of work appeared to increase the alienation in the workplace, owing to the sheer amount of work expected. This intensification / alienation of the workplace was unsustainable with fractions being highlighted in new themes (see pages from 244).

When examining other bodies of knowledge observed by Braverman (1974) it has been acknowledged that Taylor (1911) and Ford (1918) appeared to have resonance with the initial work. Scientific Management, termed as 'Taylorism' was developed by Taylor (1911). This management theory looks to examine how work is done and addresses ways to improve efficiency, with a particular focus on labour productivity. From there, Braverman (1974) looks to incorporate the work of Henry Ford (1918). According to Stanley (2005), the manufacturing system was designed to produce standardized, low-cost goods, but also to provide workers with sufficient wages.

There also was also an understanding of the need to archive this study, owing to the shift in paradigm caused by the GFC. It was important to investigate how this has impacted upon the three levels of employee seniority - worker, middle managers and senior managers - with regards to their perception of their workplace. Much of the previous analysis of the workplace appears to focus on middle management. Within this study, there has been an attempt to provide an overview of the perceptions of ordinary workers as well, while using the other levels as a comparative tool to help understand if the same perceptions are felt throughout all levels of an organisation, or if there is a disconnect between the various levels.

Conceptually, the study has looked to focus on employees, but it also endeavours to examine the organisation as a whole. Three studies have assisted in building the conceptual framework (WERS, 2013; SES, 2012; Teague and Roche, 2014; Keeble - Ramsey, Kemble & Lovett 2014). These previous works provided an historical starting point to help build the template used to survey the three subject organisations.

What appeared integral to the current study was the importance of the work by Taylor (1911), with regards to methods incorporated into the current management process. These methods were adapted to work not only on a factory floor, but also within the office floor, and has started to become more pronounced within the office environment. The indications of autonomy from the late 1990s, as proposed by Keeble-Ramsay and Armitage (2011), resulted in a significant number of organizations in the early 21st century being dedicated to a philosophy of High Performance Working. This trend, however, appears to have ended, enabling the Taylorist (1911) form of working to be more pronounced within a different context.

The Labour Process Theory (LPT) was used to assist in the understanding of the information gathered as part of this study. Smith (2014) proposed that there are nine key concepts to LPT, with the researcher providing examples for the most prominent areas:

- *Labour power*

Labour power can be clearly linked with the emerging theme of control (see page 252) and how employees have perceived that this has increased.

- *Control* (significantly linked with Taylor's (1911) reasoning behind enhancing the capitalistic labour process). Within this context of 2014 there appears to have been adopted by not only working on a factory floor, but also morphing to the office environment.

- *The labour process*

With work intensification increasing, this process has become more stretched, with participants acknowledging this challenge. Participants had seen work intensification since the GFC began and that the workplace had become a tougher place than it was previously (see work intensification sections). This also links back to the alienation argument (see page 31) highlighting the issues of alienation among workers, as the worker is disconnected or alienated from the actual work itself, through the increase in the intensification of work.

- *The work regimes*

- *The division of labour and the migration of the work or worker*

With the increase of a temporary workforce, employees have felt vulnerable to what could happen in the future (see pages from 244)

- *The potential conflict existing within the labour process*

- *Capitalism and the various trends and dynamics of capitalism*

Financialisation appears to have been one of the key emergent themes amongst all three companies (see page 244) and it could be argued is for the companies' benefit or employees' benefit.

- *The labour market and the structure of the organisation*

The structure of all three companies has been in a state of flux, with Company 2 looking to make cuts early and the other two companies taking longer, but in essence all have reduced their workforce over the GFC.

- *Employment relations within the organisation.*

There appeared to have been a clear disconnect across all three companies, with senior managers not fully aware of what was happening on the shop floor.

These nine concepts were those used to review the information provided by participants in the study, and in doing so, help to understand the pronounced impact of scientific management. Not all areas appear to have been highlighted within the interview data, but most have been utilised to support the information provided.

The links between the historical nature of management and the current understanding have helped to form the researcher's conceptual framework for this study. Finally, the research has attempted to connect any personal troubles in the workplace to wider public issues. There is evidence that employment culture has steadily deteriorated since the start of the GFC during a period of significant change in the workplace. This worsening appears to be a society-wide issue, reflecting perhaps the increasingly capitalistic approach of the Western World by (Skills and Employment Survey, 2012; WERS, 2013).

Finalising the Contextual Framework

Whilst attempting to use the existing framework which had been developed by Hassard et al (2009) it appeared, after data collection that Taylor (1911) Scientific Management theory should be used in conjunction with the existing ideas of Braverman (1974) to analyse the data collected. As this work was emerging it was decided to create the conceptual framework after the data collection phase and to be informed by initial insights into the data for the researcher to then use the correct tools upon which to build that contextual framework. The research suggested that it did not need to move far from LPT in order to analyse the findings, but Scientific Management (1911) appeared to have emerged in conjunction of the new financialised way in which the workforce is expected to work. What was found to be of interest was that this method was not only relevant in factory working conditions but also in the office environment.

Utilising LPT and Hassard et al (2009) will provide an alternative lens in the explanation of any personal issues being linked to other wider public issues which could affect perceptions in the workplace. By being able to 'hang' the data collected, the reader is able to understand how further public issues have been perceived as affecting the personnel troubles of the employee in the work place. King's (2014) template analysis and LPT was used as the basis to build on themes ascertained by Hassard et al (2009). Template analysis was deemed to be best placed to cover the emerging nature of the current research through providing a flexible template by which to view the findings.

The continuation of the work of Hassard et al (2009) has allowed for the reader to clearly see that financialisation has damaged the workplace and this can be supported by (Thompson, 2013, Cushen & Thompson, 2012 and Thompson and Smith, 2000) that the 'do more for less' or short term perspective is not sustainable as there is only so much an employee is able to

endure. This appears to be crucial in the further development of the conceptual framework and appears to be pivotal for the emergence of the new themes and the appropriate theory.

In conclusion, the conceptual framework seems to have been influenced by the historical nature of the enquiry, which has drawn on many different theories (Braverman, 1974; Taylor, 2013; Hassard et al 2009; Marx, 2012a). That said, the work appears more focused towards Braverman (1974) as a way in which the work has been interpreted. The previous conceptual framework (see page 100) was achieved prior to the impact of the GFC and through the literature available from Hassard et al (2009). The current conceptual framework will be reviewed in the light of current findings collected. The data has shown the need to include Taylor (1911) as this style of management has appeared to be more prominent within this paradigm (see page 260). The researcher believed these theories may have emerged due to personal experience within the working life of the participants. Due to the employees becoming less engaged within their work, the arguments of alienation Marx (1844) became more obvious, interlinked with Taylor (1911) forms of working (see pages from 260).

By using the theories, it has enabled the researcher to demonstrate insights into the understanding of the current context of the workplace. Finally, the conceptual framework has been developed in conjunction with the current literature, but it was felt that it would be confirmed only after the data collection had informed the current study. Braverman, (1976) & Hassard et al (2009) were chosen to give the conceptual framework flexibility of construction of the conceptual framework. The emergent nature of the study has allowed for the initially the conceptual framework which was created from the literature, and a finished conceptual framework, is detailed on the following page, after the data was analysed and discussed.

Conceptual Framework Diagram

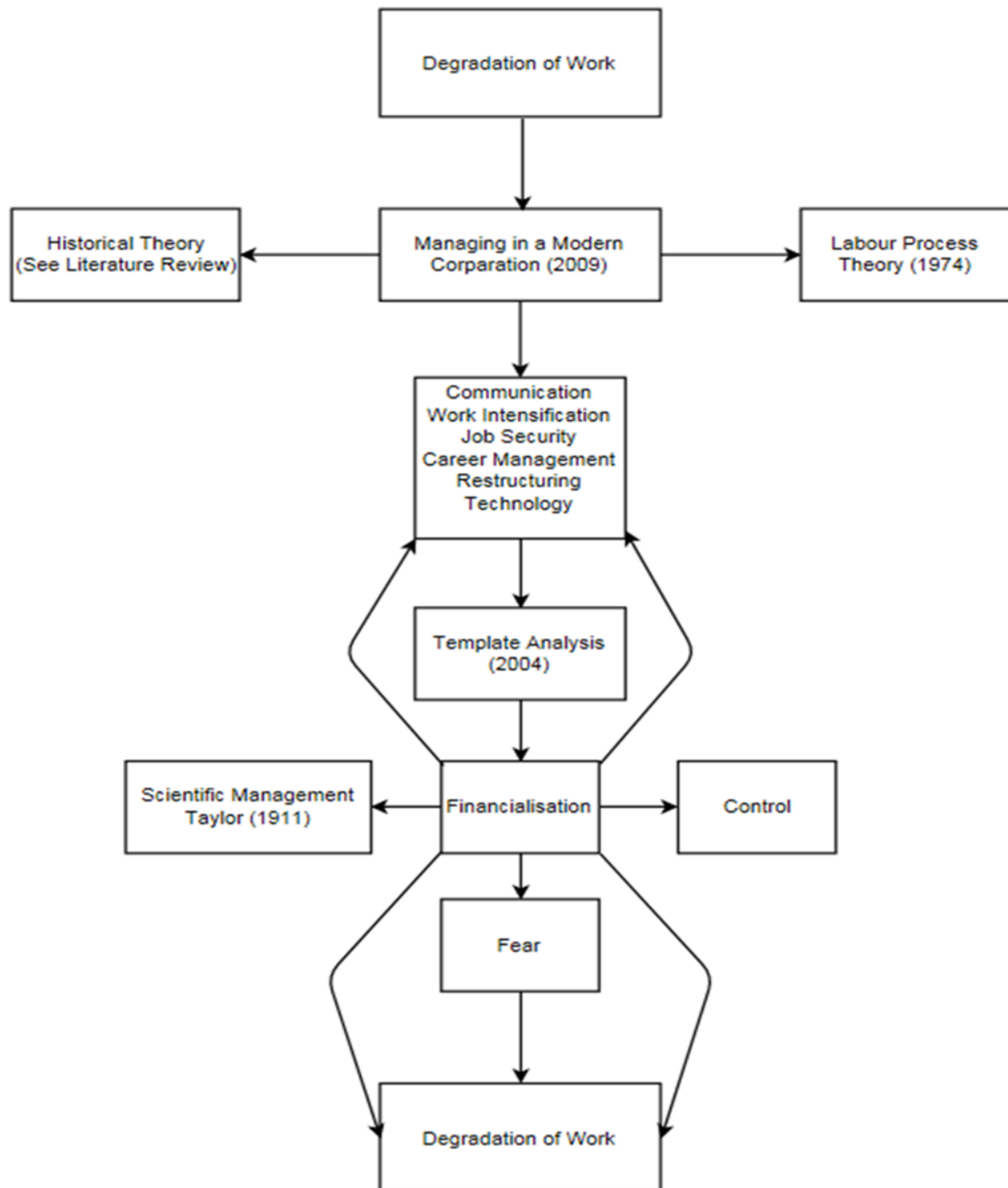


Figure 4 Conceptual Framework

Chapter 9

Conclusions

In conclusion, the researcher set out to provide insights from the employee's perceptions of their management, post-GFC. It focuses on the three questions below in the three companies/levels studied:

1. Has there been an increased intensification of work? If so, how has that manifested itself within the workplace?
2. With regards to career management and continuous professional development (CPD), how has the workplace responded to the GFC?
3. Has the process of communication altered, in terms of how management has communicated with its employees?

The thesis provides in-depth discussion from the full data set of the three companies initially individually, and then collectively. There appeared to have been some confusion from the differing interviewees at the starting point of the GFC), that something needed to be done within the organisations, and there does not appear to have been a standard reaction to the GFC.

This offers an insight into differing viewings of the workplace from the position of the employee, not for the purposes of reductionist comparison but to provide deeper insights and provide opportunities to reveal their personal reasoning. The study does not attempt to analyse these by content analysis but to identify themes emerging from their different viewings. In so doing it attempts to reconcile and reflect the different perceptions without judgement of their ways of interpreting. It seeks to identify the space that they occupy in order to allow the audience to

perceive the differences in understanding the organisation and the environment within which they are placed. In so doing the study seeks to recognise the positions that respondents took in the different companies and at different levels to contribute to the examination of the changing nature of work.

The study did not seek to propose there are important conflicts or opposing positions of power or struggles within the organisations but to consider that the perceptions of employees influence their actions. As such their observations of the changing nature of work are exposed through the interviews undertaken. In making these claims, it is recognised that further research would be necessary to extend any further investigation into opposing positions or between 'realities' and perceptions. However the focus of this research lies with its aims and objectives which constrain the current project to the presentation of the different perspectives uncovered in the research undertaken.

Perceptions remain within the complexities of the individual. Whilst this study seeks to offer a mirror to the possible interpretations and appraisal of influences given the changing nature of work (Arnold and Silvester, 2011) it recognises that the purpose of this study is not to measure the change nor provide some measurement but to make some initial reflections from the different levels of employee engaged with, within their ecological environment in order to gain depth of enquiry. In terms of the purpose of the study employed, it recognises that further research would be needed in order to provide any other interpretation of the position of the individual employee in terms of the collective phenomena under investigation. As such it engages with the different levels of employee in order to provide some richer enquiry by way of deeper illustration of the potential differing of viewings or lens held by where the individual stands within the organisation.

It is clear that the GFC has had an unreserved effect on all three organisations. By drawing on the historical studies pre-2008 of Hassard et al (2009) to gain insights and make comparisons within the post-GFC timeframe to the current data and this provided a lens to frame the study. Historical developments reported from the Hassard et al (2009) study acted as the springboard. What became clear from the resulting research, was that there was a worsening of the perception of the workplace (see pages from 183) with a number of employees highlighting this at all levels over the three organisations. Employees across all three organisations link the GFC as a key factor to the degradation of the workplace. Surprisingly, the researcher found that the organisations did not refer to the GFC as a main instigator of policy change at employee level. It would appear that organisations did not know how to react to the financial crisis. In essence, this level of crisis had not happened since the Second World War. Despite the Guardian (2008) suggesting that the UK's economy will be one of the hardest hit within the developed world, with the "deepest recession since the Second World War", organisations have attempted to keep themselves going in the way they considered best.

When examining the first research question of:

1. Has there been an increased intensification of work? If so, how has that manifested itself within the workplace?

The workplace will have changed over the GFC, but how this has been perceived across the employment levels? Within Company 1 change appears to have been interlinked with the intensification within the workplace (see from page 165). A general perception was that the organisations studied have attempted to 'survive' in the doing whatever they can in order to survive (see sections on work intensification). It must also be noted that the recent economic crisis was worse than seen before and there were no set ideas on how to react. The way in

which the three companies reacted at various stages of the GFC was acknowledged. They appeared somewhat similar to one another, after the initial shock of the start of the GFC, ie all companies took a more financialised view point, supported by Cushen (2013). Organisations appeared to be unsure of their reaction to the GFC, but there appears to be a common interpretation perceived by all three.

There appeared to be considerable worry and fear from employees (see pages 196, 211), more so, at the beginning of the GFC, particularly around job losses and this resonates clearly with Gallie et al (2013), the work achieved within the SES (2012) study and also that of WERS (2012). The issue of the financialisation of the organisations appeared to be a main talking point, perhaps inadvertently. Many employees (see change sections) talked of change and of that being linked back to a financial focus with employees expected to 'do more for less'. It could be argued (Thompson, 2013, Cushen & Thompson, 2012 and Thompson and Smith, 2000) that the 'do more for less' or short term perspective is not sustainable as there is only so much an employee is able to endure. It has been perceived that organisations are merely 'testing the water', to understand how much employees are able to cope with. This corporate response could be perceived as risky, an opinion echoed by (Burke et al, 2010, Green, 2004b and Felstead et al, 2013b) as this could lead to employees leaving the organisation.

Consequent to GFC, the labour market appeared somewhat employer-friendly with Daley et al (2014) suggesting that employers have the ability to lay off workers and change hours to cope with any shocks in demand by employing and switching to temporary workers (see pages 171, 215, 228). Owing to the lack of work mobility as the unemployment levels rose, the pool of talent available was increased and so organisations felt able to deploy (Thompson, 2013; Cushen and Thompson, 2012; Thompson and Smith, 2000) the 'more work for less' approach. This creates tension as it only takes the economy to improve slightly, and then employees

begin to see that improvement and attempt to negotiate a better deal. If they leave, the company loses the intellectual property (IP) which is owned by the employee. The East Anglia region which has not been as affected by the GFC as harshly as the rest of the country. This is reiterated by Gov (2014) proposing that there appears to be a recovery period, with growth in London and the South East appearing to be setting the early pace although the North of the UK is failing to recover at the same rate.

2. With regards to career management and continuous professional development (CPD), how has the workplace responded to the GFC?

This provided some useful insights. Most notably the awareness that there was a perception of a reduction of the offering of CPD within companies (see career management sections). This is supported by Cushen and Thompson (2016) and Cushen (2013) who observed the realisation of cost cutting, that a focus on financialisation has led to a reduction on CPD offerings. Training is also an interesting point regarding career management as it should be seen as investment (Adda et al, 2013) as early choices adopted would have long-term effects for future careers. As stated above, owing to the financialised focus adopted, this appears not to be the case. This can also be supported by CIPD (2009) who examined the reason for employees wanting to manage their careers. The reasons why UK employees would like to change their job was reported as to increase job satisfaction (57%), to do a different type of work (43%) or for better pay (39%).

In general it does appear that CPD is an area that has been least affected by the GFC. However, the way in which it has been managed has been, with more of an emphasis on self-managed development. There has been both positive and negative (see pages 171, 215, 228) in the companies with regards to career management but this does not always suggest that

this in reality is actually happening, and the employee level appears to be constrained the most. Senior management are determining what should be undertaken, yet in reality not actually knowing whether this has happened.

There was a perception within Company 3 that this area was well managed within all three levels (see from page 228), with the introduction of a new online training system and various training courses which were advertised and available. There was also a perception that these opportunities had been poorly communicated and this was seen as an area for improvement, CPD was available but not advertised particularly well.

3. Has the process of communication altered, in terms of how management has communicated with its employees?

The data collected offers a clear cross section over three different organisations, with three different levels from, employee, middle management and senior management. This appears to suggest there is a disconnection between levels. There was a clear pronounced disparity amongst levels within organisations, with employees highlighting issues of how they were being communicated with, which were not even acknowledged by senior management and in some cases even middle management. This issue it is recommended should be examined more with future research. Communication from management to employees does appear to be an area of improvement. The lack of communication from senior management appeared to be the main instigator amongst employees (see communication sections in Findings) of a perception that if employees were informed, they could understand and contemplate dealing with any changes and further make informed choices.

Communication appears to have changed over the GFC, becoming much more impersonal. This could be due to the over reliance on emails. It was an issue that all companies stated

picked up on and all who stating that personal (face–face) communication was the better way to communicate with employees most of the time, but were not all acting on it. This is also supported by WERS (2013) recognising that communication has been improving over recent years, since 2004, with a variety of suggestions that there has been growth in methods which have been used for the communication of information (for example improvements in technology). There appears to have been an understanding that email was slowly depersonalising the workplace, thus Company 3 were attempting to put a policy in place to try and attempt to try and stop this from happening further.

It is also worth highlighting the link with Marx (1867) (see page 31) in that workers will feel estranged from fellow workers, who also in turn feel alienated by the experience of the highlighted intensification of work. This intensification/alienation of the workplace would be unsustainable, indicated within new themes (see pages from 244). This leads the reader to consider the increase of Taylorism (1911) over the investigated timeframe.

Increase of Taylorism (1911)

There does appear to be a link between the 3 research questions. It is felt that the specific research questions, bore considerable relevance to Taylor (1911) and the ideas associated with Scientific Management. The majority of participants interviewed fell in line with many of the methods highlighted within the literature review (see pages from 38). The difference is that there appears to have been adaption, not only working on a factory floor, but also morphing from what was historically termed as affecting factory working and this has now started to become more pronounced within the office environment. The autonomy from the late 1990s appeared to evaporate with Tampoe (1993) suggesting that in order for employees to achieve increased goals, they must surrender some autonomy in the organisation. Because of this issue, control has become an issue for organisations and now appears to have been eradicated and a switch to have taken place. The Taylor (1911) way of working and being a

cog in a bigger machine appears to be more pronounced within a different context (see pages from 38 and Findings section).

It did appear that all organisations who took part within the study did not fully understand how to react to the GFC and there was a reaction, but not one set reaction. There are a lot of similarities regarding how organisations have reacted and there is clearly more emphasis on the financialisation side of the business (see pages from 244). Finances appeared to play more of a crucial role, a point which participants highlighted. Much of the initial change was instigated at the start of the GFC, and then there was a perception of stabilisation from all interviews, which then encouraged growth, when they were able to analyse their position.

When examining the points which have been discussed, it was considered what the workplace may indeed look like and what the future of work might be. When considering the Findings produced, the researcher discovered an article by Cleveland et al (2015) which proposed creating a four-part module where HRM is aligned with a psychological concern for human dignity and this would produce more respect for the employee at work. If an organisation could assume this at the start of the GFC, then a more respected worker could become a more productive worker. It appears that HRM considers employees as an important asset to the organization with Cleveland et al (2015) suggesting that historically (Taylor, 1911) Scientific Management began to understand an initial attempt to develop these employees as assets and treat them like tools rather than as individual personalities. As shown within the historical nature of the first part of the literature review, it can be understood that HRM and the management of people in work developed over time to take into account the actual consideration for the human asset, which needed to be effectively developed.

Nevertheless, this does not appear to have always been accomplished. Cleveland et al (2015) suggest that there is a common flaw as HRM has not existed to serve its employees in isolation, but rather to develop and sustain that asset as it is crucial to the organisation. With this in mind, this does appear to be the case within the current paradigm owing to the higher focus of the financialisation of the workforce (see from page 241) and the links back to Taylor (1911).

Employees appear to have been protected from the realities of the GFC and only appear to see the GFC as playing a role in the increased work intensification, change and differing working environments after this has been highlighted as a potential contributor. This can be highlighted (Roche and Teague, 2012 op cit Cooper, 2009) where they suggest that an optimistic position could be adopted and they go on to suggest it could be an opportunity for HR and managers to motivate and lead through the tough economic times of insecurity. This optimistic outlook appeared to be paramount amongst the data collected from senior management, added to the positive message from the employees.

All of the companies seemed to have developed a positive outlook, owing to the natural geographical protection from the GFC. Company 1 and Company 3 appear to utilise this method throughout the GFC, but for this to have been understood, employees should have 'been kept in the loop' more effectively than they were, but with a positive spin. Company 2 appeared to have utilised this slightly differently (see pages from 195, 196) by actually making cuts deep and challenging at the start of the GFC, but then in turn developed the positive 'speech' when the company started to see the seeds of recovery and were vindicated for their initial difficult reaction. In doing so they lost the IP which is owned by the employee and had to advertise to fill the positions by cutting deep in order to survive.

What appeared interesting was that there was a perceived drop in quality which clearly links back the work of Deming (1982) and there were clear suggestions that the quality of the product being produced was being hampered by the speed that management wanted it to come to market (see page 248). There was certainly an opinion that Deming (1982) suggested that quality was not considered important and Krüger (2001) followed that by suggesting that quantities and volume were more important and that the extra profit was seen as more than enough to cover any lack of quality (see pages 179, 180, 181). This was mostly evident within only one organisation, but there were suggestions of this problem across all three participating companies.

The world in which we currently work has shifted into a different context since the GFC and this shift has been promoted by a further financialisation of tasks appearing to be the underlying perception of drivers for this change. Employees have suggested that the intensification of their work has worsened (see Findings section) over the time period, but interestingly they rarely link this intensification to the external environment. This is closely related to the work of (Mills, 2000 op cit Gold and Bratton, 2014) with the suggestion that connections can be between the perceived private problems of the individual and the social environment and within the participating companies, protecting this from actually happening.

There was an interpretation within the workplace that the goodwill element from employees appeared to be diminishing (see pages 165, 187, 211) due to the intensification of work and the lack of autonomy experienced over this time period. Another area which has been discussed was that there was a perception of reduced quality within the workplace (see quality section) that companies had seen a perception of reduction in products and tidiness in the organisation throughout the GFC. The focus has shifted from TQM / HPW to a more highlighted focus on a historic form of management where control over tasks appears to be

more of a priority, as previously mentioned. Obviously there is not a hypothetical 'crystal ball' in which the companies can see in the future, but the researcher would suggest, if this continues, then a few areas for concern will become pronounced.

If these methods were to continue, the intensification of the current form of work is presumed not to be sustainable as currently there is an interpretation that the workplace is close to breaking point and cannot continue in its current guise. There was an interpretation of survival and short term measures which the organisations have adopted continue. In order for the organisation to grow, a more devised ideal should be adopted, upon which to build from, agreeing with Thompson (2010) argument of taking a 'higher road to management' and taking a longer view point. If quality continues to be an issue, it will only be a matter of time before the consumer will be aware of the perceived reduction in quality, which could be detrimental to the organisations examined. A further point was highlighted, was the perception of a lack of quality and this appeared to be a new area for research within the context of the post-GFC. This could bring a negative marketing perception which is supported by Krüger (2001). The reduction in quality and the short term measures being adopted could potentially be detrimental to the brand value and presumably be negative to the current client market base.

The search for information around the area of employees' perception of their management, has informed the current literature. The Findings appear to fit with the current literature (Thompson, 2013; Cushen and Thompson, 2016; Teague and Roche, 2014b; Roche and Teague, 2014; Felstead et al, 2013b; The 2011 Workplace Employment Relations Study (WERS) - Publications - GOV.UK, 2013), with some new interpretations due to the lack of comparison studies around the context of employees' perceptions and the post-GFC timeframe. The workplace was attempting to revert to a TQM and a certain amount of Taylor's (1910) principles (see page 201) certainly appeared prominent within the study regarding how

organisations attempted to adapt to the changing environment and the changing nature of work. These models have been utilised to exert further control (see from page 252) over the workforce and to take away the autonomy of work, which appeared to have been a key element of the HPW agenda (Keeble-Allen and Armitage, 2007). This supports the suggestion by Thompson (2003) that 'high road' initiatives may possibly facilitate a conceptual change towards an organisation's focus and that they should move away from a short term focus of 'low road' low cost approaches to people management as experienced within the 21st century UK workplace. However, this is not what has been suggested, as merely continuing or worsening with this form of management is not going to improve the workplace experience of employees is unlikely.

All issues considered, it does appear that further study is required to fully understand the generalisability of the findings. This further study of the situation is required not only to provide further understanding, but also to provide an understanding of the situation for employees in the current workplace and further build on this project

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The thesis has also presented some initial insights from the research at UFHRD (University Forum of Human Resource Development) Cork (2015) where a full bursary for presenting this research was received.

Reflections

Organisational reflections

Having had the opportunity to examine the three organisations the researcher suggests it would be beneficial to re interview participants around the Findings of the initial work. Another recommendation would be to actually understand if any of the themes mentioned began to worsen or indeed improve in a new context or timeframe thus making the study longitudinal in nature. Having been able to build the relationship with the individual companies, the researcher feels this would be a possible and an area of recommendation.

The data being collected in the East Anglia region of the UK would be used to complete a comparison study, for example within the North East of the UK, to try ascertain if the UK has reacted differently to the changing economic times in the global market in which we live. If this were to happen, it could lead to a full picture of insights across the UK and perhaps offer a more generalizable section of information by which to analyse against. Owing to the time limitations of the project it was only possible to collect insights within three multinational organisations, but a recommendation for further, would extend the data collection to another demographic data collection site.

A further reflection is that companies might be willing or able to act on themes highlighted for improvement and thus improving the work environment for employees. Following on from this the organisations should also realise what they are doing well and look to continue in that vein. Future study is certainly a recommendation as the research has benefited from the initial insights of potential issues but a more in depth study could assist in understanding issues more and also assist companies in moving forward.

The researcher also recommends an ethnographic study as this could enable them to fully immerse themselves within the organisation and get an understanding of what is happening, and would be of benefit, but this was not possible owing to time frame and access issues which would not exist moving forward with future studies of the three organisations. If the opportunity did arrive in the future, it would be interesting to consider if companies would release their employees for a more substantial time frame and more of them. Admittedly, time was an issue for these organisations but it was felt that if access and availability was increased a deeper more intuitive study could have arisen.

A further recommendation would be for organisations not to make an initial reaction to their external environment and to consider the holistic approach which needs to be addressed in the time of crisis of the GFC. It has been clear that all three organisations have reacted differently from one another with a perception that they have then stabilised and started to fall in line with one another within the following year. This appears to have been an interesting anomaly owing to the different sectors from which the case companies originate. If the reaction had been more structured, then the organisation would be better placed to react if it was aware of what was happening. If allowed time to understand what was happening, the situation it would be less reactionary and more proactive to permit in planning for the future.

The GFC has affected the way in which the workplace is being managed, reflected in a trend of higher work intensification and an increase in 'management with fear'. In some cases, this can be purely as a result of poor communication with staff, effectively leaving them in a state of uncertainty, or flux. There does appear to be more of a financial focus across all three organisations studied, with most of the employees alluding to this at some point during the interviews. The way in which the three case study organisations have attempted to cope with the GFC have been different. This was expected, with a previous study by Boyle and

McDonnell (2013) suggesting that the GFC has been a driver for change, with higher unemployment and evolving employment methods (such as fixed and zero-hour contracts), among the consequences, with the impact on different organisations likely to vary.

This research has shown the way in which individual organisations have reacted over the past few years, has varied immensely, but there appear to be some consistent factors, which have been discussed. The researcher is of the opinion that those organisations that did not face a large degree of change, and which were able to assess the situation and then act sensibly (rather than 'react'), have been those best positioned for the GFC. They are the companies that have not lost any knowledge, employee skills or Intellectual Property (IP) through large-scale redundancies. They have been able to develop new technologies over time. This does not go to say that any organisation has performed perfectly – there is always room for improvement. The world, however, has just witnessed a seminal period within the economic environment and workplace, and it was the first time that many organisations would have faced a similar situation.

Project Reflections

There have been lots of positives noted regarding how the companies reacted to the GFC and how the employees have tended to be frank and open about their perceptions. The world has changed dramatically over the past few years and the perceptions of all three data sets proved invaluable in giving some insight into how this has affected the workplace and how the GFC has altered the way in which people have been managed.

The project has been full of highs and lows. As with any study of this size, the step-up in the level of academic skill required was initially daunting, but this was slowly addressed. The project was particularly helped by the supervisor's determination to ensure that the research student immersed themselves in the discipline, encouraging them to attend as many conferences as possible. It was such a positive experience to be able to meet and discuss with the academics referenced and in a sense 'hear it from the horse's mouth'.

In terms of further development from the subject matter, there seems to be strong grounds on which to open up the study on a larger scale; for instance, to develop a questionnaire from the insights gained from the data collected, which could then be distributed to other companies within the region. From there, it should be possible to gain further insight into the perceptions of the three levels of an organisation, whilst attempting to then find some generalizable data from the region. Another recommendation would be to conduct a large-scale survey amongst the three levels, to ascertain if the themes and issues raised were indeed factors that affected the participants interviewed, or if there are more ingrained and broader issues / themes to address.

One obstruction that the researcher faced was that of access to companies, but after that had been addressed, it became a good working relationship. Gaining 3 Multi National Corporations (MNC) was seen as a benefit to the research and having them actively engaged with the process was equally positive. Gaining access to three levels of management was particularly interesting in helping to gather individual perceptions, and providing the researcher with the ability to show how others perceive the same factors.

The Doctoral Journey Reflections

The Doctoral journey started as a project to help develop from my previous situation as a fairly inexperienced researcher. The aim was to progress my career as an academic. I knew the area I wanted to study, which lacked up-to-date research on a key area that affects everyone within the workplace. I wanted to better understand why things are as they are, how this evolved, and potentially what this could mean for the future, and I believe that I have a much better understanding of this. A lot of the theories discussed had only been briefly touched on during previous studies, so it provided an excellent medium by which to develop a much more conclusive understanding of the subject. I never envisaged embarking on a PhD, but have found a new love for research. Undertaking the PhD required a steep learning curve and one which I feel I have embraced.

As with, I imagine, all doctorate students, it was only upon starting the journey, that I realised my research led to more and more questions on the matter, which sometimes side-tracked me from the core investigation. My supervisor worked tirelessly to keep me focused on matters linked to the study, rather than where my research naturally seemed to want to lead. It underlines the importance of clarity and focus in research, something that initially took time for me to understand. I also found academic writing difficult owing to myself being severely dyslexic, with mild dyspraxia. Sentences and paragraphs would initially seem unstructured, but by reviewing old drafts of the project, I was able to see how much my writing has improved over this time period.

During this process, I also faced some fairly significant personal obstacles, particularly a period where I was caring for my very ill mother, who unfortunately passed away towards the end of my first year. It took a number of months before I was able to refocus on the project.

After some time, having the doctorate study to hand helped to provide some distraction, giving me a further goal to complete. I also feel that the project gave me new focus regarding what is important when conducting research, as well as a better understanding of the drivers that led me to undertake and complete this research.

Now to the project itself, I found information on the historical nature of work that reached back as far as Marx (1884). This provided a historical context for the work. At this stage it is important to note the key works of Hassard et al (2009), which were used as a starting point and something of a guide/springboard into the project. Using the work of Hassard et al (2009) as a base provided a framework on which I could hang the data and look to develop the discussion within a different context. I found the methodological section particularly difficult in the first instance, but through discussions with colleagues and academic friends, this became easier. The university also provides doctoral training, which assisted in areas I knew I needed to develop.

When entering the field, I particularly felt this was helping me to develop a strong skill set beyond the matter at hand. Improving my skills as a communicator assisted me when attempting to gain participants for the study. After initial contact was made, I was able to arrange a meetings with the companies, from where I was able to build a strong rapport. After that initial face to face session, I was encouraged by the willingness of participating companies to take part within the project. Following the meeting, interviews were scheduled and data was collected.

I feel the doctorate experience has been unique in my time as a researcher and one of the toughest, challenging and yet rewarding experiences I have ever gone through. When I started, I did not know what to expect and felt somewhat like 'Bambi on Ice', not really knowing

what I was doing, yet slowly developing the breadth and depth of my knowledge through this process. There were times, particularly at the beginning of the process, when my supervisor helped me to get back on track. Rather like parenthood, I do not think you can be fully prepared to take on a doctorate, but I feel that, through the process, I have developed both as a researcher and as a person.

Final Thoughts and Contribution

There have been a number of developments / new themes (see chapter 5), which have become more prominent within the 3 Companies of the 2014 context:

Financialisation

Quality

Recruitment

Stress

Control

The majority of these themes have been discussed within previous literature (see sections 4, 5, 6) but it has been understood these themes have become more prominent and changed within the investigated context. Also to highlight the priori themes:

Work Intensification

Communication

Technology

Career management

Change

These were obtained from Hassard et al (2009) and were either confirmed as still being current or as not relevant in the timeframe, with the flexible template being able to evolve iteratively over the data that was being collected.

The rise of Taylorism during the data collection and what that has meant for the participants. Over the next few years as the UK continues to be in a period of austerity and the recent referendum regarding Brexit could mean further implications, via Taylorism which could be seen as a way to control the workforce.

Finally, a new conceptual framework for the post-GFC period (see page 266) has been developed. This also highlighted the need to utilise Taylor (1911) Scientific Management theory in conjunction with the existing ideas of Braverman (1974). With the collection of new data, whilst utilising previous theory, the researcher was able to construct a new conceptual framework for the post- GFC timeframe within the three investigated companies.

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Appendix 1

Example of themes and questions from template

WORK INTENSIFICATION

Has your work intensified?

How has your work intensified?

In what ways?

What impacts have you witnessed due to work intensification?

What's your perception of why there has been an intensification of work?

Has the work force become more productive after the intensification?

COMMUNICATION

In your opinion has communication improved over this time?

Why has there been an increase or decrease in communication?

What ways have you been communicated with? (give some examples)

Do you feel more could have been done?

What do you feel could be improved with the way you have been communicated with?

What is the best form of communication?

TECHNOLOGY

Has technology has had an impact within your job?

What do you think is the major impact technology has had on your job?

Do you think technology could play more of a role within your organisation? (Give examples)

How has technology impacted communication?

Do you perceive technology being positive or negative to your job? (Give examples)

Do you perceive technology has improved the way you work?

CAREER MANAGEMENT

Do you feel within your job you are able to move up? (examples)

Did you initial think about moving up within the job?

Does the organisation promote this?

Would you now want to gain progress within the organisation?

Do you feel you have access to progress in your job?

What is in place to promote progression?

GFC

How has the recession affected your work?

What have the feelings been over the GFC?

Has the company been affected by the austerity cuts?

How do you feel you have been managed over the GFC?

Company 1

Emerged themes and added to template (after 3 interviews)

Trust

Work Patterns

Financialisation

Emerged themes and added to template (after 6 interviews)

Quality

Control

Company 2

Emerged themes and added to template (after 3 interviews)

Control

Stress

Emerged themes and added to template (after 6 interviews)

Financialisation

Work Life Balance

Work Patterns

Company 3

Emerged themes and added to template (after 3 interviews)

Financialisation

Recruitment

Emerged themes and added to template (after 6 interviews)

Quality

Appendix 2

Example of transcript

1E2

TRANSCRIPT: r09_0002.

I INTERVIEWEE.

P PARTICIPANT.

(I) Hello...

(P) Hello...

(I) Ok. So we just had a brief chat about what we're going to go through. So, I'm just going to start with work intensification. So: has your work intensified since you've been at [REDACTED]? So, I'm looking specifically from 2008 sort of the financial global crisis but then from your time at [REDACTED]?

(P) ... I would just say as the years have gone on...

(I) Yeah...

(P) ... the amount of work I have to do in the time has increased.

(I) Ok: in what kind of way?

(P) There's just more volume of it...

(I) Right...

(P) ... not necessarily the complexity of the tasks but it's just the volume of work has increased.

(I) Ok: So have management put more people in the company or have they just let you get on with it?

(P) We've taken on more people over the years...

(I) Ok...

(P) ... but I deal with disciplinary, grievances, contracts and just having more people has meant that there's more issues.

(I) Ok: has the department increased in size?

(P) No, decreased.