##### Researcher

Okay, so obviously I've had a look at your profile, so I know a little bit about you in terms of your research interests and your position and stuff, but just in your own words, could you tell me sort of about yourself in terms of your background, your career to date and your current role, please?

##### Participant 54

Yes, sure. So I am originally from [home country]. Before I became an academic, I used to work in [field]. So my bachelor's was in [alternative discipline]. I used to work as a [role]. And I became interested in becoming an academic or, let's say, studying further for different reasons. I always loved studying, and I wanted to do a master's degree, I thought of a PhD degree as well, but I never really thought through the idea of actually becoming an academic. But I loved studying and I wanted to study abroad. And at that time, there were many opportunities for grants for [students from region]. So I thought of applying for some of these. And that's how I ended up doing my PhD studies. But also, as part of my job, there were two things. So one thing was that I became, let's say, frustrated with some jobs that were coming from clients related to environmental changes they were doing in their products or services, as if they were doing something that was proactive or special when they were just doing something that was mandatory. So that's what we know as greenwashing, right? And that made me feel very uncomfortable because I had this romantic vision of [field], I didn't foresee this idea of having to lie, right? And that made me very uncomfortable. And I have always been very connected to nature, I think, because I've grown up by the sea, used to go to the beach a lot, which is something I miss. That was the discomfort. And then I started thinking, what if we could actually have companies stimulating people to be more responsible? So that was actually the idea with which I wrote my grant application. It's not the research I ended up developing, but that was the initial idea. And the other thing as well, working in [field], was that oftentimes we were involved in client problems that were not only [field-specific] problems, they were management problems. And then I felt I needed to understand management better as well. So these were two motivations. And I started applying for grants, and I was quite lucky to get one of the first ones. And then I ended up going to [foreign country] where I did a degree that's equivalent to a master's. And then did the PhD. I ended up in this career and sort of. It has suited me because I always have been very academic and I like reading and writing and all of that, so that was always part of me. In a sense, I think I was lucky. So yes, I did my PhD studies and when I finished, I came to the UK. So my then partner was here and I got my first job, which was at [previous institution]. And then I worked there for seven years. You'll probably ask questions about this period, but yes, I was teaching [topic]. I continued developing my research as well. I led the MBA programme while I was there and then last year I started at [current institution]. So I made what I say is a lateral move in terms of pay and position. So I started last year at [current institution] as a [role] in [management sub-discipline], which then is more related to the research agenda that I developed after the PhD because of this particular direction that my PhD took with this interest [area]. I met, in a conference back in 2009, a colleague, then mentor, who was researching [part of management sub-discipline]. And that became, I would say, my main research interest and I've been trying to push work mainly in this area, I've been working hard to develop this research agenda. So as a PhD student, I also did a research visit at [another institution] back in 2010. I forgot to mention that. Yeah. So I think in a nutshell, that's it. And at [current institution], I joined the [subject group] and I'm teaching [topics].

##### Researcher

That's really interesting. I was going to ask you about your motivations, but you've already kind of covered that quite well. The move from sort of practice into academia, that's really interesting. So what was it that kind of, I guess, inspired you to make the move from [previous institution] to [current institution]? Did you sort of want to be at a more research intensive university or was it another kind of factor?

##### Participant 54

Definitely. So that was a decisive factor. Also, I worked at [previous institution] for more than seven years, right? So that's a long period of time. So it was time for a change, I think based on the time that I had spent there, but also based on the changes that were going on at that moment. When I joined [previous institution] back in 2012, I think it was the second or third wave of a massive recruitment effort that they were doing. And they were bringing younger people finishing their PhDs, because I think most of the teachers there, they did not have a doctoral degree, right? So they wanted to bring people with degrees and they had this intention of starting, creating a research culture as well. So the time that I joined coincided with the time of a new dean joining and two other deans, one for quality student experience and a research dean. I would say they really were able to drive many positive changes there, both in terms of outcomes for students, but also for research. So I benefited from various initiatives in terms of research, such as they opened up sabbatical for faculty who had just joined. So I could go on a sabbatical very early that was funded by them. So I went to the US and that was all funded, for I think around four months. So in a sense, I managed to make progress because I had opportunities. I consider myself lucky in that environment because, of course, being a university that was previously a polytechnic, you know, this is a place that does not have a research culture. And then they were trying to just build everything from scratch and they still have some very good people there. But it is a challenging environment as well, depending on what you're teaching. So I think I have been lucky in that environment in that the topic I was teaching, so I had lots of students always, but there weren't that many modules to cover. Whereas, for example, if I would have been [alternative management sub-discipline] academic, that would have been an entirely different situation because the amount of modules there is enormous and then the demand on your time is a lot more intense. And then I was also able to, let's say, navigate the environment a little bit better after I found my feet. After the initial years I was given the responsibility of looking after the MBA programme. So I was course leader, which is different from a programme director in a Russell group university. It's usually a role where you're line managing people, you manage a budget. So because I did that and managed to do it well, then I could also protect more pockets of time. The ability of having done this thing for the MBA for them, which is something that not many people wanted to do, enabled me to secure other pockets of time that enabled me to develop my research. So I had a very happy time there. You may not hear this from everyone who has been there, but I have very positive things to say about it, but I acknowledge it has not been the same for everyone. But also there were some frustrations with some broader structural changes that occurred that were coming from, not from within the business school, but from the university. There was a major restructuring which was highly controversial. We lost a lot of the professional service staff and the academics really had this very close relationship with professional services. We had this big open plan office and they were great colleagues. So there was like a massive change. So I had my first daughter in 2016. So I had a year on maternity leave, came back, did a bit more of the MBA role and then I had just passed the MBA role to another colleague. Then I had this idea I wanted to have a second child and I wanted to move job. But I was kind of holding back, thinking, well, I should probably first have my second child and then move. And then I turned to my husband, who is also an academic, and he said, if you want to move, just apply. And then if we should get pregnant, then we figure out what to do. So that's what I did. So then I applied for [current institution] and applied to a few other positions. And I think what led me to [current institution], I really liked when I looked, so I saw that there was a position and I saw the group, I really could see how I could fit within the group because of the amount of people doing things that relate to my interests. I think also seeing the amount of women that are in this group that I am, we have three women professors in our group, which I think is something quite unique. And looking at the profile in terms of publications and all of that, it didn't feel so threatening. Because I had this, in a sense, I guess a bit of low self esteem, right? Because I was at a post-1992 university, even though I had some success in terms of publications, I always felt that a lot of academics, you feel a certain stigma attached to it. In conferences, some people, they look down on you. That was not the motivating factor for me but the motivating factor was first and foremost really being in an environment where research is happening and there are people with similar interests. Because, at [previous institution] I had colleagues who were doing research as well, but then it was kind of sparse and then because we were not many, then there aren't so many connections. So it was this idea of being in a more research active environment. And of course it is a bonus that it's a prestigious university, that's all great. But for me, when I saw the position and I saw the group, I thought, well, I think I could have a good chance because I think I really fit in there. And it turned out that it was a good hunch. I think also it was the right moment in terms of the publications that I had just achieved. They were still fresh. So I could demonstrate I can publish in these journals, which are important for the school.

##### Researcher

That's very interesting. Thank you. You mentioned the presence of women in more senior roles, that's something that I'm sort of more interested in looking at further. So as a woman academic in this environment, do you find it particularly beneficial to have women in more senior positions? And I'd be interested to know if I guess, within your department, do you have women who are in the kind of leadership positions, do you think? If that is the case, do you feel like that has had any kind of impact on you and your kind of working life? I'd be interested to know.

##### Participant 54

Yeah, absolutely. The head of the department now is a woman. So when I was interviewed, it was a man and it was him and two of the women professors of our department. We have six professors in our group, three men and three women. Yeah, it's six. So now it's a woman, and also because our group, right, so it's not a department. So I think the department would be the business school and the group, the research group, is the [subject group]. And then because we have these three topics, we kind of have our, if you so wish, our subgroups, the smaller groups, right? The professor who is the head of the group, her research does not align so much with mine, but one of the other professors, there is a lot of alignment. So we're going to work together now on a paper, and she was a role model for me. So I really admire her work, and I'm very excited to work together with her. We haven't yet started, but I think it's great to be able to talk to them. So my head of department is my official mentor, but I've talked to the other professor as well for some mentoring in the past. I don't know, perhaps I find it... it's different. I've always had very good relationships with my bosses and men who really understood me and took the time to develop me. But yeah, it's very nice, I think, to be able to look up to someone who perhaps understands other aspects of your identity first hand, if that makes sense.

##### Researcher

Absolutely, that all makes sense. It does make sense. It's good. I think it's a really kind of interesting sort of element of the environment because some people I've spoken to have kind of put forward the argument that the kind of very metric based view of success in academia, looking at the REF, for example, and things like that, I guess trying to quantify success can be unbeneficial for certain groups. So, for example, if a woman has maternity leave, how does that then impact her standing with the REF and that kind of thing? And is that taken into account? I guess obviously with the REF cycle, you would have been on maternity leave whilst you were at [previous institution?

##### Participant 54

Yeah. But still, I was probably one of those who most contributed to the REF there.

##### Researcher

Yeah. And was that like taken into account?

##### Participant 54

Yeah, it was. But I think that the universities, they have a formal... so both at [previous institution] and I think at [current institution], I imagine as well although I joined after I had my son... so, yeah, but then in the end, I got pregnant. I went to the interview pregnant, but nobody knew. And then I got the job and then I said, hey, can I start a bit later? Yeah, that is something interesting, perhaps this point, just before I go back to the REF thing... when I got the job offer I thought, well, obviously I cannot start when they want me because it was September and my son was being born in July. But I thought, I cannot ask for them to wait for me for a year. Or maybe, perhaps I could. Some people said, no, it's your right, they cannot deny it. But then I thought, it doesn't feel right and I don't want to lose the opportunity. So then I asked for January and it ended up coinciding with when they wanted me to teach. And it is like that for a lot of people in my department that we just have teaching in one term. I was just afraid of losing the opportunity. But with the REF, so I'm not so familiar with the process at [current institution]. At [previous institution] they specifically had, I think they have this, I don't know if it's based on university or whether there is some policy that you get an exemption based on maternity leave. That was never a concern.

##### Researcher

That's good. Thank you for sharing that.

##### Participant 54

So one thing is that with the maternity leave, I think the impact that it has on your productivity... so it's not only the year or the time that you take. Right? But it's also after you come back. So, for example, I started my job at [current institution] when my son was just short of becoming six months old. Right? So I was starting a new job, commuting to [city] and he's still little, and the pandemic came and all of that. So that has been a challenge to resume my previous productivity levels.

##### Researcher

And do you think, I guess having such a short space of time to actually attend the physical environment, obviously, I don't know if you've been going on campus since the pandemic hit at all for teaching and stuff?

##### Participant 54

No.

##### Researcher

Do you think that has had any kind of effect on how you kind of integrated into that environment in terms of colleagues and getting used to things or do you actually find it hasn't really had an impact? I'd be interested to know.

##### Participant 54

Yeah, I think it's a question that is hard to answer because I think it does make a difference. But at the same time I think our group has been really good at keeping in touch and I think, I feel I have been able to develop some of the relationships. It doesn't feel the same thing, right? But I feel part of the group. We have been in touch and meeting for different purposes, especially in the subgroup.

##### Researcher

Yeah, okay, that's really interesting. So on the topic of kind of, I guess what you're doing at the moment then in terms of your current role, obviously you said you have your research responsibilities, you said you teach [topic]. So those two things obviously are kind of like core activities. Do you have any other kind of like administrative or leadership or citizenship roles alongside that? So similar to how you said you were kind of in charge of the MBA at your previous institution, are you doing anything similar in terms of programme leadership or anything like that at the moment?

##### Participant 54

Not now. I will be, from September, looking at admissions for one of our MSc programmes. So there's a colleague within the group who is leaving, and it's a small service like, I think counts for 10 hours or so. But I also had this agreement with my head of department, because we have at [current institution], there's an academic performance framework and then you have the activities in teaching, research, impact and service. And I'm now on probation, so I have to write these reports, but then it's also the same framework later when you want to apply for promotions, so then you have to highlight your performance, your achievement in these different areas. So then I discussed with my head of department after starting, she said, well, towards the end of my probation time, she would give me a small service role so that I could tick that box and then it coincided that this colleague is leaving. So I'm taking that.

##### Researcher

And how do you sort of feel about that? Is it something you're doing and it's sort of like, I kind of have to do it, so I'll just get on with it? Or is it something you're actually like, I'm fairly looking forward to doing that? How do you kind of feel about that admin side of things?

##### Participant 54

To be honest, I haven't really thought much about it. I guess I don't mind. It's not something like, wow, I'm excited to do, but it's also not something that bothers me. I think there is a nice aspect to it of being able to, in a sense, help shape the cohort that we're taking. So I think there is a nice element to it. But yeah, it shouldn't be too time consuming as well. I think I would be perhaps a bit more anxious if it was something bigger at this stage, because I'm still on probation and because I came out of this period of leave, right? I just started a lot of stuff. So I have the research plates all spinning and trying to keep things going.

##### Researcher

And you mentioned there on your academic performance framework, he said it was teaching, research, service and impact in the context of that performance review, what do they define impact as and what does that mean for you as an academic?

##### Participant 54

Okay, so I can tell you, I can tell you the framework in a minute. Impact, so, it's actually called impact and innovation. So this would be active engagement in knowledge dissemination and transfer and considering impact of research beyond academia, for example, with government and industry. Could involve an impact case for REF, but it doesn't have to. They also consider impact as including practitioner perspectives in teaching. So, for example, including guest speakers. So that is something that actually my head of group said I should explicitly put in my probation report as evidence of something I did in this area. Also contribution to CPD, executive teaching, and developing links with non-academic stakeholders and public engagement via media reports or other outreach events. Yeah.

##### Researcher

That's interesting. And how is that sort of weighed up in comparison to the other elements of your job? Because obviously it's a very varied job, an academic job. How is impact seen? Is it, is it on equal footing to other elements? How is it kind of seen?

##### Participant 54

I think, so, we have these four areas, right? So I think this is a transparent framework in terms of what I know exists out there. So I only have the previous experience of [previous institution], and I know from my husband as well and other colleagues, so I think it's very nice, the framework, because you have specified this criteria for the different grades, what you should be achieving in the different areas and what is essential and what are the nice to haves. I think that's helpful. But the most important aspects are teaching and research. You do need to show progress in your research, but I think teaching is gaining an increase in importance at [current institution], and I think this is also driven by our vice dean of education. She's a trailblazer, and she also came to improve NSS scores and all of that. So she's pushing a lot of change. And I think [current institution] now has clearer paths for the academics who want to follow a teaching track, right? So there is this possibility, I think, of moving from a research track to a teaching track or vice versa, right? I think it's probably more difficult coming from the teaching to the research than the opposite because of the time that research takes. Teaching and research will always be a priority. But I think these other points in terms of service and impact, they are also important. I get a sense that you are looked at in a holistic perspective. So, maybe, it's okay if you haven't achieved anything that fills the box of perhaps service or impact, if you have just started or in a particular year, you're focused on something. So they tell us that they also consider if you have done some substantial progress in one of the areas, that it is natural that there will be less progress in another area, for example.

##### Researcher

That's really interesting. Thank you. Generally, in your own experience as an academic, how do you kind of find the relationship between all those different areas in terms of... do you generally find that you have enough time to give each of those areas attention? Do you find that you need to prioritise certain areas over others in terms of your progression or whatever? I've be interested to know how you've generally experienced doing all of those things as one person.

##### Participant 54

Yeah, yeah. It's... it's, I think it's one of the things that makes this profession so interesting, but it's also a challenge. So it's at the same time a blessing and a curse because you can always be working, right? This work, as you probably have realised as a PhD student, is not something that you start at nine and you finish at five, right? Or you may if you have the discipline, but there's always something to do and you could always do more. And letting go of that is challenging, right? Especially when it's a very competitive landscape. I think lots of people think that you cannot be a good teacher and a good researcher and I disagree with that, I think you can. But you do need the right support and you need the resources and mainly time, right? So I think right now the setup that I have with the number of modules that I have - I have two modules, the same topic, one undergraduate, one postgraduate, and I'm teaching in one term - so it's quite intense. I don't have many teaching hours because I'm still on probation and our teaching hours are limited. So it has been intense because all of the online recording and all of that. But now I have all this time... well, not all the time because you have to do other things, right? But I have a lot of time for research, but it is a challenge. So in addition to the teaching, you have the pastoral care of students or the personal tutoring, other activities that come under the teaching umbrella. But that is not only your teaching, right, because you have your teaching, your marking, you have the personal tutoring and then you have dissertation supervision. So now I've stopped the teaching but I have all this supervision, right? And this year I thought rather than, because they said the students have to schedule the meetings, but then the agreement that we have with our master's students is that you are supervised until July, and then August, September, they should work independently because then it's the time that we have for holidays and all of that. So I thought, okay, last year I didn't follow that strictly and there were some students who abused my goodwill. So I thought I'm going to be proactive. So I sort of created a doodle poll and then I divided, I think each of them, they have a certain number of hours of supervision, I divided these in half an hour chunks of meetings and then organised the weeks. And when you actually put this in a week, it does take a lot of time, right? So I put all the hours together of supervision and I'm always happy to give more time for the students if they need it. I get really excited about some of the projects and all of that. So it is very challenging and yes, you do have to prioritise at certain stages. So last year when I was focused on my research, I also took some time to develop more relationships with some industry partners for data collection as well. So these things, they also take time. So yeah, I think you have to make decisions and decide when you prioritise what. So I don't think you can do everything at the same time. But I do think, with the right support and the right amount of teaching, you can be a good teacher and a good researcher. So I think it's a misconception that both things cannot be achieved.

##### Researcher

That's really interesting. And in terms of, obviously you only joined [current institution] a couple of months before the pandemic started, but in terms of the teaching side of things, you mentioned that teaching is increasingly becoming seen as a more legitimate academic activity. It's given more attention, that kind of thing. Do you think in any way that process might have been expedited in a way because of the pandemic? Because obviously there was this shift towards online teaching and it was sort of like, right, we need to figure out how we're going to support our students? Do you think in a way that's had an encouraging effect to shifting a focus on teaching and obviously the reskilling of academics to carry out online learning and all that kind of stuff? Do you think that from your own perspective has been something that has happened? I'd be interested to know.

##### Participant 54

That's interesting, yeah. I guess, probably, yeah. Because of the massive adaptation effort that was required. I think there was this intention before because I know it's specifically with the role that the associate dean for education assumed in trying to improve NSS scores and some changes that she implemented that I was already very familiar with, such as a feedback template that I have been following since I became an academic, and then it's like a novelty for everyone. Yeah. I got a sense from different meetings that I have been to that some people sense what she's been doing, that the changes that she's been driving, and there is from some people a positive reaction to that and from others a not so positive reaction. Although I feel, I have a different perspective, perhaps, because I came from this environment which was more teaching oriented and whenever there would be more demand, we would just have to take the additional work. Whereas I feel that in [current institution] our hours are quite protected, right? So I need to do X hours of teaching. I'm going a little bit beyond that. I immediately am entitled to get a GTA. That would never happen at [previous institution], never, ever. You would have a battle to be able to hire an adjunct to do that. Otherwise you would just have to do it. Here, for example, they have had more students doing dissertations and then people are having to supervise more students, because there was this over-recruitment last year with numbers of students, and you're probably familiar with that. Anyway, so we have to supervise more students, and then they come in and ask who is willing to do that? And we are paying you this extra amount to supervise more students than the amount that you are supposed to supervise. That would never happen in my previous university. So I'm thinking, wow, they're really serious about this, really protecting your time and giving you time for research. From my perspective, I think it's all great and fantastic. But others who probably have been in this type of environment from the beginning, they see any minor changes as a threat to having research time, but I don't see the problems in the same scale. Of course, I think there have been some concerns with a new workload model that they are trying to implement, but I think these things, they are inherently very difficult to quantify. But for example, even with the workload model not being perfect, the amount of time that they allocate for teaching prep, it's just... it would never have been imaginable in my previous job as well, because they never allocated a realistic amount of time for teaching prep in my previous job. So I tend to see things in a more positive light, probably because I came from an environment that was more challenging in terms of the resourcing, right? And [current institution] is a place with a lot more resources.

##### Researcher

That's really interesting. Yeah. In terms of my questioning, I think I've pretty much covered everything that I wanted to talk about. So thank you very much for answering my questions. So unless you have any kind of final thought or anything at all that you think might be relevant for this sort of area that I haven't asked about or you haven't had a chance to say, any final thoughts?

##### Participant 54

Well, I'm glad to be of help. I think some people definitely struggle with this tension between teaching and research, but there is also the question of how they see them and the question of the actual resources, right? And some people are able to do both activities simultaneously and others, they need to separate the time when they're doing them. Yeah. So that's probably, which is also a theme, right? Within the institutional theory literature, the integrating and separating of the activities, when you do that. It's definitely a challenge. And I think it becomes ever more challenging for the new cohorts that are joining. Because the bar always becomes higher, right? Always becomes higher. And we are not trained for a lot of things that are important in this job. We are not trained during our PhD.

##### Researcher

Absolutely. Yeah. Well, it's been really interesting to chat through this.

##### Participant 54

Good luck with everything.

##### Researcher

Thank you very much. Yeah, yeah, it's been great and it's been lovely to meet you and best of luck with everything.

##### Participant 54

Thank you. You too.

##### Researcher

Thank you. Bye.