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Analysing increasingly complex career landscapes

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# ANALYSING INCREASINGLY COMPLEX CAREER LANDSCAPES

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# AIM OF THIS PRESENTATION:

To argue that my multilogical research approach, methods of data collection and data analysis are compatible and likely to serve to address the research questions.



# ANALYSING INCREASINGLY COMPLEX CAREER LANDSCAPES: FROM TEACHING ASSISTANT (TA) TO TEACHER IN ENGLAND.

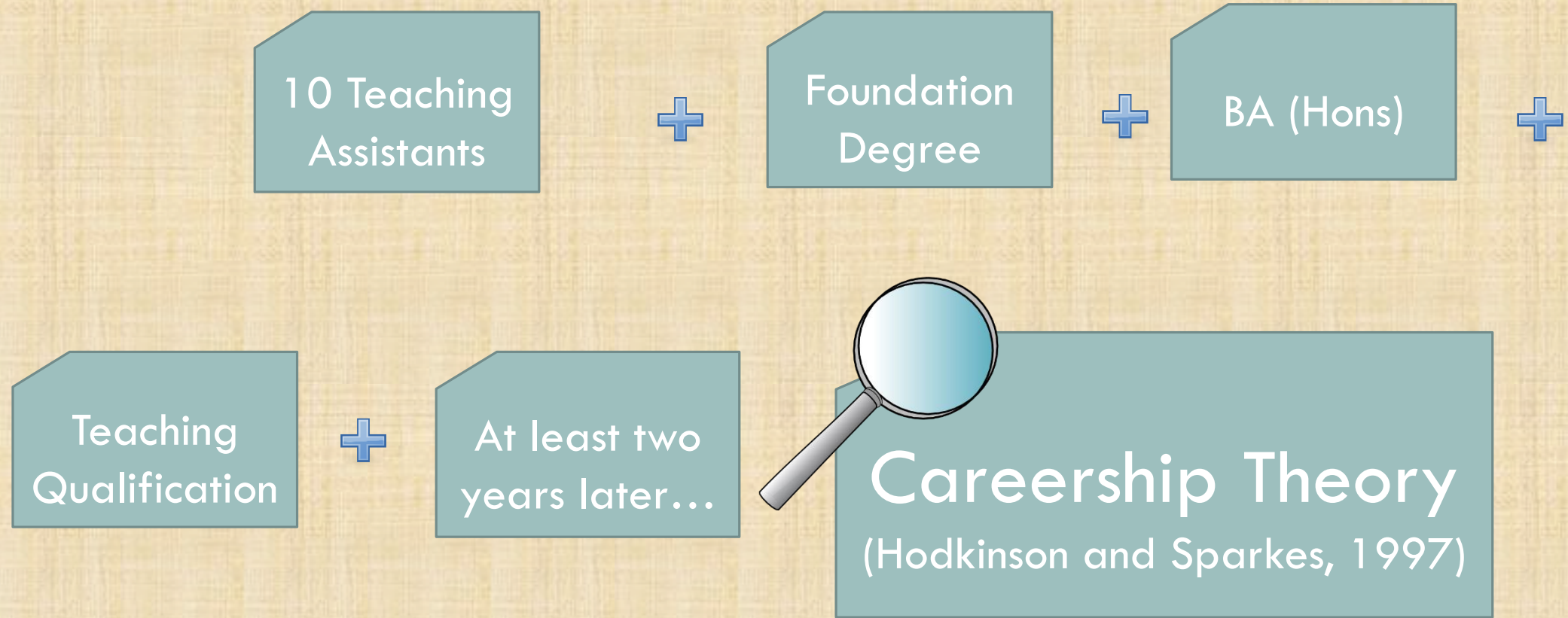


Mature TAs in England who enter HE with minimal qualifications with the aim of becoming a classroom teacher.

# RESEARCH QUESTIONS

What do mid-career teaching assistants (TAs) get from Higher Education?

What factors play a part in their career success or struggle?



**‘CAREERSHIP’: A THEORY BY WHICH TO EXAMINE  
CAREER ROUTES OF TEACHING ASSISTANTS**



# CONTEXT

The opening of access to Higher Education through flexible study patterns and accrediting prior learning, gathered some pace during the mid-2000s and enabled these TAs to begin to navigate a route to teacher status.

But, rules changed ...



**MONETARY COST = £11,000 – £27,500**



Example of first participant – cost £12,000

Current income for Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs)  
£11,700 – 23,400 for 32-40 hours/week.

Annual income can be significantly lower as TAs are often paid term-time only.



# CAN AN INVESTMENT ECONOMICALLY, EMOTIONALLY OR IDEOLOGICALLY IN HE CIRCUMVENT THE CHALLENGES?



As yet unclear, but already a significant detail is emerging...

... significance of the times and timing of the careers, life stage and contemporary life, which is different from their own parents and their childhood experiences.

# TIMELINE

2010 through the 2015

... and now 2017 elections and to 2018



# LIFECOURSE RESEARCH

## **Elder & Giele (1998; 2009)**

*Lifecourse research* 'link[s] social change, social structure and individual behaviour' (2009, p.2)

A design that bridged the relationship between macro and micro social relations and orders.

### **Elder (1994)**

Historical time and geographic location

Social ties, linked lives

Personal control

Variations in timing

### **Giele (1995)**

Cultural background

Social integration

Human agency

Timing of lives



# TIME —LINEAR OR CIRCULAR?



Location of time needed to be central to the theoretical framework for analysis.

Individual life course stories used as representative of collective accounts (Plummer, 2013). This includes relational aspects of context, including temporality, to notice the way lives are linked and influenced by those around us (Giele & Elder, 1998).

# CRITICAL APPROACH (PART 1)

## **Hodkinson & Sparkes (1997)**

### *Careership Theory*

- Positioning in broad social fields
- Embodied positions and dispositions.
- Acknowledges decision making in orderly, determined or unplanned ways. Later revised.

### *‘Horizons for action’* Hodkinson (2008)

Identification of enablers and restrictors of relational forces.

Noticing ‘time’ in learning.

# TEMPORALITY RATHER THAN TURNING POINTS

Relates to perceptions of time and social organisation of time that change over time, rather than at unrelated points in time.





# CRITICAL APPROACH (PART 2)- INFLUENCES

## **Lara (1998)**

Constructing identities and recognising the power of individual cultural narratives that also extend the understanding of universal social justice issues.

As examples of the impact of policy making on specific groups accessing HE but not individual subjective representations.

## **Plummer (2001)**

Inner stories informing wider life context.

Critical lifecourse approach to find the link between the human story and hidden insights behind the data.

## **Colley (2007)**

Impact of 'time in learning' that changes over time in relation to dimensions in external forces in the field *and* embodied positions and dispositions of individuals.

# CONSIDERING TIME AND TIMING

Allows acknowledgement of:

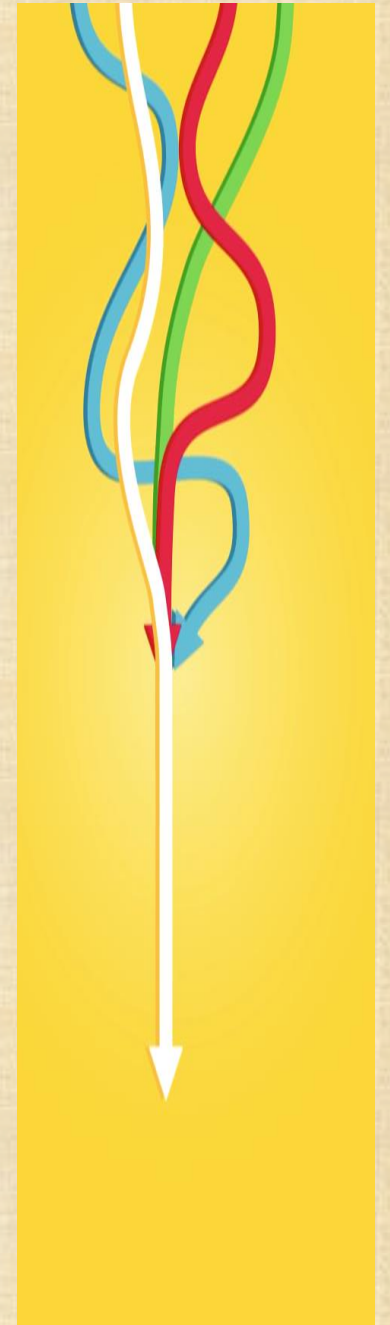
Material context as well as the historical (Colley, 2007; Adams, 1989)

Complex responsibilities that overlap

‘Female’ and ‘male’ characteristics of time  
(Hughes in Colley, 2007)

Circular activity, time driven by family needs, giving time.

Linear activity, clock driven, employment related, being in time.



# DATA COLLECTION

Interviews using a **low-directed mapping technique** (Ruiz-Primo et al, 2001)

Participants drew a **time line** to note significant events in their professional and personal lives that they perceived to have influenced their career direction.

A **satisfaction measure** (a high/low line) was laid over the timeline.

+

Textural analysis of a Reflexive Study written at the end of their undergraduate studies.





# METAPHOR OF 'HORIZONS FOR ACTION'

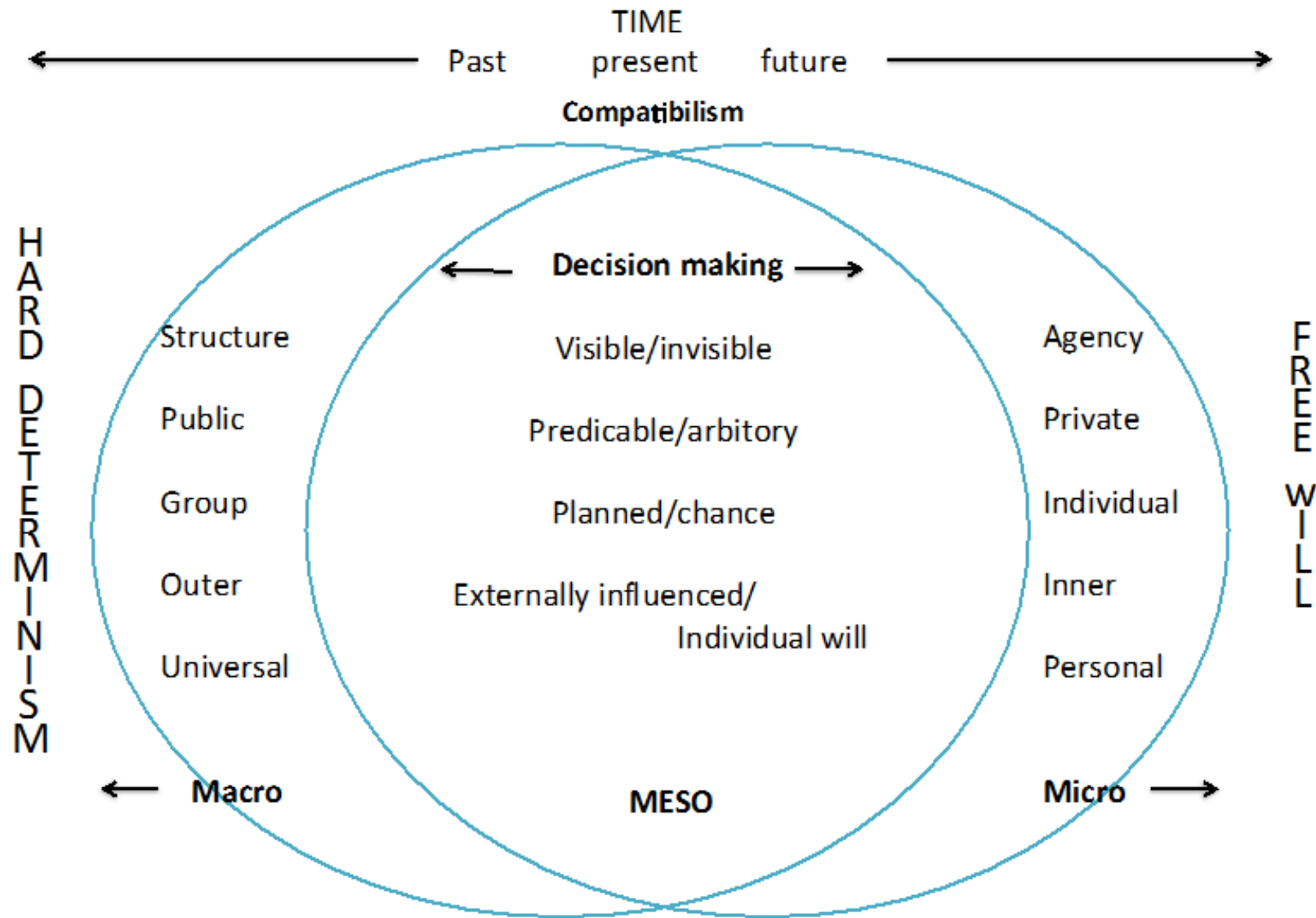
... recognisable in early interviews through:

- rational and/or pragmatic decision making
- interacting with others in the field
- re/acting in relation to their life course capital and the socio-political context of the time

... their 'horizons for action'



# 'Horizons for action'





# SIGNIFICANCE

The sample size to date is relatively small.

The depth of understanding gained from the data collection methods and data analysis method indicates an insight suited to contemporary life that explores reasons as to why, in challenging contexts, some reach their career goals, others do not and some have the capacity to decide to change route whilst others do not.

# ONE EXAMPLE: SADIA (PSEUDONYM)

- Loss of confidence at school - despite good results
- Sibling 'success' – but high debt
- Career glass ceiling and lack of security
- Family support
- Connections and context – volunteered at local school; friend recommended course; government policy
- Challenges – change in government policy, unpredicted costs, time to study, to work, to socialise, uncertainty, precariousness.
- Benefits – good preparation, patience, determination, confidence, ability to make deliberate ethical choices.

# SADIA (TIME, STRUCTURE AGENCY)

- When asked about a job on completion, she was uncertain 'I don't know. Possibly. It's not confirmed'.
- 'You get to the point where you don't really have a life anymore' adding that her husband was fed up.
- Experience of scaffolded learning and receiving responsive feedback in HE countered the effect of its previous absence (at school).
- 'the way children develop...it fascinates me and I still get excited just as much as I was the first time'
- ... 'it's about seeing how far I can go. It's proving it to myself more than anything else'.