RECRUITMENT AND PROMOTION:

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL TIES IN PUBLISHING

Pui-yan Lau

St Cross College
University of Oxford

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology at the University of Oxford.

Word Count: 92,121 words

Recruitment and Promotion: the Role of Social Ties in Publishing

Pui-yan Lau
St Cross College, University of Oxford
D. Phil Thesis, Trinity 2009

Abstract

This thesis is an in-depth study of the labour market in the UK publishing sector. The aim is to study the role of social ties in publishing in external recruitment and internal promotion. Conventional sociological studies on social ties and labour market outcomes either neglect the perspective of the recruiter and the referrer or fail to explore the mechanisms by which social ties bring about labour market outcomes. This thesis fills these gaps.

I used qualitative research methods, i.e. semi-structured interviews and participant observation for this research. The semi-structured interviews were with 40 interviewees, who were working in different roles (e.g. editorial and design) and levels (e.g. senior and junior) in Oxford and London-based publishing houses. I also served as a committee member of a publishing association in Oxford for seven months. Participant observation serves to triangulate the information I obtained through semi-structured interviews.

This thesis examines different aspects of the labour market process and mechanisms. Regarding recruitment methods, I found that whether recruiters use formal or informal (word of mouth) methods depend on the level of uncertainty of recruiting a wrong person and the cost of making such mistakes. The greater the uncertainty and the cost, the more likely recruiters are to use social ties. Social ties serve to provide information about the availability of suitable employees. With regard to selection processes, I found that professional skills are a must but not enough in themselves. Recruiters use informal method at the final stage of selection to ensure the recruits possess the relevant qualities.

As for job-hunting methods, I found that most newcomers introduce themselves using formal methods to get into publishing but in fact informality is often embedded in formal methods. Interviewees at managerial level almost entirely got their job through informal channels. Social ties have different functions as people rise through the different levels: whereas first entrants use social ties to obtain information about job opportunities, senior level staff members and freelancers carry with them reputation of their fitness to fill a particular position.

Finally, when it comes to internal promotion, employers in my sample promote staff from within the company who already possesses the relevant skills, so as to minimize training costs and get around the uncertainties in settling in new staff. From the employees' point of view, so long as they perform well in the job and establish a cooperative link with their boss and team members, they would be able to be promoted.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Here I express my deepest thanks to my supervisor, Professor Anthony F. Heath for his unfailing support, patience and advice. The process of writing this thesis has brought about an all-rounded transformation in me. Working with Professor Heath has taught me how to work on and complete a task in a mature and step-by-step manner, which will stay with me for the rest of my life. Thank you so much, Professor Heath, for sticking with me during my doctorate study. Professor Heath has demonstrated a role model of an excellent supervisor in the contemporary academic world: in addition to spending a huge amount of time on reading and giving invaluable comments on my thesis, he guided me to become a decent adult who understands the genuine meaning of mutual trust, sincerity and thanksgiving. I owe Professor Heath far more than an acknowledgement. Without Professor Heath, I will never be capable of completing my thesis in a reasonable shape; and personal-wise, be able to re-born.

I need to send a special thank-you to Nicholas Jones, Jemima Kallas, James Greenan, Isabel Thomas, Edmund Chattoe, Heather Hamill and Thomas Wong on various different occasions. Warm thanks, also, to all my interviewees – you have all shown me generosity, humility and intelligence: you have taught me so much about the best in people.

I also need to express my deepest gratitude to my aunt and uncle in Australia. Without your unconditional financial support and love, I would not be able to stand the unpredictable and extreme financial pressure in the last two year of my study. I also learned from my aunt the genuine meaning of thanksgiving.

Finally, I need to express profound gratitude to my parents: without your financial and spiritual support and unconditional love, I would not have been able to complete my degree. I cannot tell how much I owe you.

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements* ……………………………………………………… *i

Contents* …………………………………………………………….. *ii

List of Figures* ……………………………………………….…… *vii

Chapter 1 Introduction ……..………………………..………..…. 1

1.1 Introduction
1.2 Purpose of the study
1.3 Clarification of the use of term social ties
1.4 Targets of this study
1.5 The UK publishing sector
1.6 Overview: literature and key questions

Chapter 2 Methodology ………………………………...…….. 18

2.1 Introduction
2.2 Methodological justification
2.3 Methodology
 2.3.1 Pilot interviews
 2.3.2 Semi-structured interviews
 2.3.3 Participant observation
  2.3.3.1 Gaining access
2.4 Types of information collected
2.5 The interviewees
2.6 Data analysis
2.7 Conclusion: An evaluation of the research design

Chapter 3 Setting the scene – what are the career opportunities available in publishing? ………………..…………… 39

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Entry requirement in publishing: qualifications and institutions
  - 3.2.1 Differentiation in publishing roles
  - 3.2.2 Training schemes and short-term contract
- 3.3 Promotion in publishing
- 3.4 Flexibility – employing freelancers
  - 3.4.1 Reasons for going freelance
  - 3.4.2 Evaluating the freelance status – from a freelancer's perspective
- 3.5 Career paths in the main publishing categories
  - 3.5.1 Editorial work
    - 3.5.1.1 Responsibilities of each editorial position
    - 3.5.1.2 Case studies of career lines in publishing
  - 3.5.2 Design
    - 3.5.2.1 Responsibilities of each position in design
    - 3.5.2.2 Case study of the career line of a designer (or an art editor)
  - 3.5.3 Marketing and publicity
    - 3.5.3.1 Responsibilities of each position in marketing
  - 3.5.4 Publicity
    - 3.5.4.1 Responsibilities of each position in publicity
  - 3.3.5 Production
    - 3.5.5.1 Responsibilities of each position in production
    - 3.5.5.2 Selected case study of the career trajectory of a production manager
- 3.6 Contextualising sociological discussion on the nature of a job
- 3.7 Conclusion

Chapter 4 Recruitment methods ………………………………… 90

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Theoretical concern
- 4.3 Empirical researches on recruitment methods

4.4 Implications for publishing
4.5 Aims of the chapter
4.6 Formal recruitment methods
  4.6.1 Recruitment agencies
  4.6.2 Advertisements
4.7 Informal recruitment methods
  4.7.1 Recruiting previous employees
  4.7.2 Mechanisms of informal recruitment
  4.7.3 The superiority of informal method for a senior position
  4.7.4 Institutionalising the informal channel
4.8 Recruiting freelancers
  4.8.1 Mechanisms of freelance recruitment
  4.8.2 Agencies
  4.8.3 Word of mouth
4.9 Reputation and the labour market
4.10 Conclusion

Chapter 5 Selection processes …………………………………… 151

5.1 Introduction
5.2 Empirical studies of selection criteria under conditions of uncertainty
5.3 Implications for publishing
5.4 Aims of the chapter
5.5 What traits do recruiters look for in the intensive search in publishing and to what evidence do they refer?
  5.5.1 Selecting editorial staff
  5.5.2 Recruiting art editors/designers
  5.5.3 Recruiting production staff
  5.5.4 Recruiting graduate trainees
5.6 The use of reference letter
5.7 The use of networking
  5.7.1 How recruiters see networking in selection
  5.7.2 Referrer and referral processes
5.8 Conclusion

Chapter 6 Getting a job ……………………..………..……... 199

6.1 Introduction
6.2 The strength of ties and getting a job
6.3 Implications for publishing
6.4 Aims of the chapter
6.5 Getting into publishing
  6.5.1 Finding a job through direct application
  6.5.2 Making cold calls
  6.5.3 Getting prepared to go into publishing – doing courses
  6.5.4 Preparations to enter publishing – voluntary internship
  6.5.5 Starting out from administrative positions
  6.5.6 Receiving information through various occasions
6.6 Getting a job – managerial level
6.7 Getting freelance jobs
6.8 Conclusion

Chapter 7 Internal promotion ……………..…………………........ 246

7.1 Introduction
7.2 Perspectives of internal promotion
7.3 Implications for publishing
7.4 Aims of the chapter
7.5 The employer's perspective
7.6 Mechanisms of internal promotion
  7.6.1 Being offered a promotion without formal procedures
  7.6.2 Promotion via formal procedure followed by competition
7.7 Mechanisms of external promotion
  7.7.1 Being offered a job without formal procedure
  7.7.2 Being invited to apply and going through formal procedures

7.7.3 Going through formal procedures involving competition
7.8 Giving up promotion – the employee's experience
7.9 Conclusion

Chapter 8 Conclusion ………………………………………….... 282

8.1 Overall findings
8.2 Key similarities and differences for different types of posts
8.3 Contributions to sociological literatures
8.4 Room for further research

Bibliography ……………………………………………………………. 306
Appendix I: Interviewee information ………………………………………. 328
Appendix II: Detailed career path of each interviewee ………………… 332

LIST OF FIGURES

Table 2.1 *Role(s) of the interviewees ………………………………….* *33*

Table 2.2 *The Research Process ……………………………………….* *36*

Figure 3.1 *Typical career path in editorial work……………………….* *54*

Figure 3.2 *Career path of the interviewees in editorial work………..* *60*

Figure 3.3 *Angelina's career trajectory ……………………………….* *62*

Figure 3.4 *Sue's career trajectory ……………………………………..* *62*

Figure 3.5 *Typical career path in design ……………………………….* *64*

Figure 3.6 *Career path of the interviewees in design …………………* *69*

Figure 3.7 *Typical career path in marketing ………………………….* *71*

Figure 3.8 *Career path of the interviewees in marketing ………….* *74*

Figure 3.9 *Typical career path in publicity ………………………….* *76*

Figure 3.10 *Career path of the interviewees in publicity ………………* *77*

Figure 3.11 *Typical career path in production ……………………….* *80*

Figure 3.12 *Career path of the interviewees in production ………….* *83*

Figure 4.1 *Typology of recruitment – full time (Type 1) ………….* *105*

Figure 4.2 *Typology of recruitment – full time (Type 2a) ………….* *108*

Figure 4.3 *Typology of recruitment – full time (Type 2b) ………….* *112*

Figure 4.4 *Typology of recruitment – full time (Type 2c) ………….* *114*

Figure 4.5 *Typology of recruitment – full time (Type 3a) ………….* *117*

Figure 4.6 *Typology of recruitment – full time (Type 4) ………….* *119*

Figure 4.7 *Typology of recruitment – full time (Type 3b) ………….* *120*

Figure 4.8 *Typology of recruitment – full time (Type 5) ………….* *122*

Figure 4.9 *Typology of recruitment – full time (Type 3c) ………….* *124*

Figure 4.10 *Typology of recruitment – freelancer (Type 1a) ……….* *131*

Figure 4.11 Typology of recruitment – freelancer (Type 1b) ………. 132

Figure 4.12 Typology of recruitment – freelancer (Type 2) …………. 135

Figure 4.13 Typology of recruitment – freelancer (Type 3) …………. 137

Figure 5.1 My response to Kanter's homophily argument …………. 193

Figure 6.1 Typology of job hunting – first entrant (Type 1) ………. 207

Figure 6.2 Typology of job hunting – first entrant (Type 2) ………. 215

Figure 6.3 Typology of job hunting – first entrant (Type 3a) ……. 222

Figure 6.4 Typology of job hunting – first entrant (Type 3b) ……. 224

Figure 6.5 Typology of job hunting – senior manager (Type 1) …… 227

Figure 6.6 Typology of job hunting – senior manager (Type 2) …… 229

Figure 6.7 Typology of job hunting – senior manager (Type 3) …… 232

Figure 6.8 Typology of job hunting – freelancer (Type 1) …………. 237

Figure 6.9 Typology of job hunting – freelancer (Type 2) …………. 239

Figure 7.1 Typology of promotion (Type 1a) …………………………. 256

Figure 7.2 Typology of promotion (Type 1b) …………………………. 263

Figure 7.3 Typology of promotion (Type 2) ………………………… 264

Figure 7.4 Typology of promotion (Type 3a) …………………………. 267

Figure 7.5 Typology of promotion (Type 3b) …………………………. 271

Appendix I General information of the interviewees ………………. 328

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This thesis aims to study the role of social ties in the labour market in the UK publishing sector. The labour market covers external recruitment and internal promotion. This thesis aims to create a better understanding of the roles of ties of personal relationships on labour market outcomes. Early social network analysis identified structure or the degree of connectedness among members of a network as an important variable in determining the behaviour of individual members (Bott 1957). To apply this concept to the labour market, Granovetter (1973:1378) argued that a large, open network of weak ties between an individual and others who do not know one another is “indispensable to individuals’ opportunities and to their integration into communities”. This suggested for the first time that informal connections could be more useful in finding employment and pursuing a career than the tight-knit family circle (Portes 1998). Burt (1992, 2005) has argued that individuals can gain competitive advantage by brokering information that flows across “structural holes”, within or between large open networks.

Much sociological research suggests that well-connected workers benefit from the job information and influence that flow from social ties (to name some, Granovetter 1973, 1995; Lin 1982, 2001; De Graaf and Flap 1988; Burt 1992, 2005; Moerbeek *et al.* 1995; Flap and Boxman 2000; Flap 2004). For example, in 1981, 34% of Dutch male managers found their first job through informal channels, and 32% their current or previous job. The percentage increases to 45% and 52% respectively in 1991 (Flap and Boxman 2000). These researches stress how deeply embedded social networks are within the processes of search and hire. All markets are seen as organised by social ties.

However, these researches suffer from drawbacks that deserve further attention. The researchers specify the influence of personal relationships on the search for work and labour market outcomes. Yet there is no multidimensional study of the labour market as a whole – the use of social ties in the labour market is not only a job-search process but can also form part of the recruiter's selection methods: the recruiter may make use of social ties when searching for in-depth information about potential recruits. In this thesis, the person who has such social ties and who makes or gives a promise and assurance typically relating to the potential recruit's quality and performance is termed as a referrer. He or she is the key person in the referral process. A recruiter or a job applicant can be a referrer so long as he or she has made informal recommendation about the general performance of a potential recruit for a recruiter or provide information about a job opening to the potential recruit. However, existing researches on social ties and labour market outcomes concentrate mainly on the supply side of the labour market (Flap and Boxman 2000). The demand side, including the perspective of the referrer, is yet to be studied. As a matter of fact, referral is an interactive process which involves a recruiter, a job hunter and a referrer. Only when the perspectives of these three parties are studied, are we able to understand the complete process of referral; and thus, the role of social ties in the labour market. Moreover, several labour market characteristics may be expected to influence the decision to use social ties (Flap and Boxman 2000). For example, the degree of closure varies across labour markets. Different jobs may call for different ways of taking advantage of social ties in the labour market. The quality of these social ties, i.e. whether the relationship is bound purely by friendship, acquaintanceship or colleagueship etc. also needs to be explored[1].

1.2 Purpose of the study

My main aim is to examine the mechanisms of recruitment (from the recruiter's point of view) and finding a job (from the applicant's point of view) in the external and internal labour market. The reasons I studied the UK publishing sector are as follows. First, the use of social ties during recruitment and promotion among colleagues is frequent in the UK publishing sector[2]. It is therefore an appropriate field for study. Second, within the publishing sector, there are a series of roles and positions. Vertically, the positions range from very junior to very senior. Horizontally, the roles range from editorial, design, production, marketing, publicity and rights (refer to Chapter 3 for details). By studying the labour market process of these roles and positions, I believe I can have a more comprehensive understanding of the role of social ties in the labour market *as a whole*. Third, being an overseas doctoral student who associated with academics most of the time, I felt more at ease talking to people in the publishing sector, which is closely related to academia[3]. Similarly, I assume that people in book publishing will be more willing to assist a doctoral research student.

The value of this thesis lies in: firstly, studying the use of social ties in the labour market from a recruiter's and referrer's point of view, which has rarely been systematically studied in previous literature, as well as from the applicant's point of view. Secondly, exploring the mechanisms by which social ties influence labour market outcomes. As we will discuss in the next chapter, existing researches on the influence of social ties are quantitative-oriented: instead of exploring the *process* through which social ties make a difference to certain outcomes, existing researches focus on the numerical attributes of relationship between the referrer and the referred. Questions such as the frequency of meeting each other and what activities they participate in are the focus of concern[4].

---

[1] In Chapter 2, I will discuss the common methodology of studying social ties and their relevant consequences.

[2] I heard of this from some academic staff in the Department of Sociology, Oxford.

[3] As mentioned in the next chapter, most of my interviewees come from academic and educational publishing background.

Following this, thirdly, an additional value of the thesis is to give an understanding of the nature of information flowing through social ties. Conventional sociological studies used to study the strength of ties and their relevant outcomes. For example, Granovetter (1995) and Lin (1983) discussed how weak ties help the flow of job-related information among acquaintances; and Burt (2005) discussed how structural holes (i.e. various patterns emerging from weak ties) enhance the probability of being successful in a competition as agents within the network will be able to get earlier information. These studies agree that social ties contain information which help to bring about positive outcome. But what exactly is this information? This thesis helps to identify the nature of the differing types of information that flow through social ties.

Fourthly, the thesis aims to explore the ways that the nature of the job affects labour market processes. As we will discuss in section 1.5, the difference in the nature of the job (such as the level of autonomy and the closeness of the employment relationship) might imply a difference in the labour market process. For example, the selection criteria for jobs having higher level of autonomy might differ from those having lower levels of discretion: job commitment might be emphasized more for the former than the latter.

---

[4] Examples can be seen in the British Household Panel Survey and Employment in Britain.

1.3 Clarification of the use of term social ties

In this thesis, I choose the phrase social ties rather than social capital, a widely used term in social sciences. It is largely due to the fact that there is no consensus regarding the precise definition of social capital (Portes 1998, Durlauf 1999, Manski 2000, Kadushin 2004, Fischer 2005). Attempts have been made to define this term. For instance, Putnam (1995) suggested that social capital is divided into three main components: moral obligations (reciprocity) and norms; social values, especially the sense of trust; and social networks, especially within voluntary associations. Putnam's basic argument is that the level of social capital (defined as above) accounts for the well-being of an economic system and the level of political integration in a region. Coleman (1998) claims that social capital is defined by its function**.** According to him, social capital consists of a variety of different phenomena that cover aspects of social structures and facilitate certain actions within those structures (1998:98). These actions are, to a large extent, resources that can be used to facilitate the actors' interests. To put it in another way, social capital is generated through social relationships among individuals and this capital is productive in nature; that is, it can be transposed to the attainment of other economic and social objectives[5]. The processes that generate social capital break down into three major types. First, they involve obligations, expectations and trust. If someone does somebody a favour, he or she will expect this person to reciprocate in the future. This establishes an expectation and obligation between two people. Second is the potential for information transformation within social relationships: since acquisition of information is costly without social network connections, social capital helps to channel information at a lower cost. Third, social capital exists in the form of effective norms and sanctions among people within the social relationship. In other words, effective norms and sanctions, which facilitate and constrain people within social relationships can constitute a powerful form of social capital.

---

[5] This argument is in line with Bourdieu's conception of social capital. Bourdieu identifies three dimensions of capital which is relevant to his ideas on class: economic capital, cultural capital and social capital. Accordingly, social capital is a resource in the social struggles that are carried out in different social fields (Bourdieu 1986, Siisiainen 2000, Allard 2005). There are two components of social capital. Firstly, it is a resource that is connected with group membership and social networks (Bourdieu 1986). Agencies such as voluntary associations, trade unions and political parties carry social capital. Secondly, social capital is characterised by mutual recognition of members of a social group (Bourdieu 1986).

However, the term social capital suffers from a couple of limitations (Portes 1998; Durlauf 1999, 2002; Manski 2000; Kadushin 2004; Fischer 2005; Mouw 2006). In the first place, there is usually a problem of tautology. When criticising Putnam's arguments (1995) on the relationship between the belief in democracy and regional differences in social capital, Portes (1998) argues that people tend to commit logical circularity, that is, they refer to the effect of a phenomenon first and then work retroactively to find the target-oriented explanation. Very often, scholars tend to assume the positive effects of social capital first in the explanation of a social phenomenon. In line with this criticism, Durlauf (1999) points out the role of causality when discussing social capital. For instance, scholars like to explain the efficacious community in the light of social capital. However, Durlauf questions whether trust-building social networks lead to efficacious communities or the other way round, i.e. successful communities spontaneously generate these types of social ties. For social capital to be a useful concept, we have to pay more attention to the direction of causality.

Secondly, the causality of social capital and its effects is complicated by the way people make friends and join social groups. So far social capital is understood and interpreted in terms of "network" social capital, that is, the effect of characteristics of friends, acquaintances, or groups on individual outcomes (Mouw 2006). Yet, it is possible that much of the estimated effect of social capital simply reflects selection effects which are based on the role of "endogenous friendship formation and self-selection in the estimation of peer effects" (Mouw 2006:80). Based on the principle of social homophily (McPherson *et al*. 2001), i.e. people tend to choose others who are similar to them as friends, the estimated effect of social capital simply reflects the consequences in which people become friends in a non-random way.

Thirdly, it is hard to measure and even to prove the existence of social capital (Portes 1998; Daulauf 1999, 2002; Fischer 2005). Coleman (1998) offers an example to demonstrate one of the functions of social capital and yet, direct measures of social capital are very rare. In his example, Coleman suggests that, allowing for all other factors, the more frequently a child changes school, the higher his or her rate of dropout; this is because the parents of such children do not know other parents and hence lack the social capital to raise their children well. However, Coleman does not directly measure parents' relationships with one another. He merely infers its presence from the outcome that he wishes to explain.

Generally speaking, the concept "social capital" is defined by its functions (as suggested by Putnam, Coleman or Bourdieu) but such functional definition of social capital is fundamentally challenged by the direction of its causality and the difficulty in figuring out its network effect. Based on these considerations, I will no longer use the term social capital in this thesis.

Rather than using the term social capital in this inclusive sense of expectations and obligations, norms and reciprocity and social networks, in this thesis I disaggregate the concept into its component parts and make it a matter of empirical investigation, rather than assumption, whether they all go together. I take the social relationship, or social tie, as the basic building block. It then becomes an empirical question whether or not these social ties provide channels for information flow, which involve mutual obligations or trust, are part of wider (open or closed) networks, and so on. Rather than assuming that Coleman's or Putnam's model of social capital is important in the labour market, I wish to investigate which aspects are important, and why.

Based on the above considerations, I will no longer use the term "social capital" and "social network" and use a simpler term "social ties" instead.

1.4 Targets of this study

This thesis examines the role of social ties in recruitment and promotion from the perspective of the recruiter, the job applicant and the referrer. The identities of the three parties in this research sometimes overlap. For example, on some occasions a recruiter can be a referrer, and a job applicant can also be a recruiter. I draw my information from every sector in publishing: I will elaborate on this in Chapter 3. This study focuses on the following publishing roles: editorial, design, production, publicity, and marketing, among whom are found the recruiters, job applicants and referrers who are the targets of this study. I would like to distinguish between the word "guarantor" and "referrer". In this thesis, a guarantor refers to somebody who passes a reputation of a job applicant. The word will be seen in Chapter 6, when I discuss the role of a guarantor during a job application. A referrer in this thesis refers to somebody who gives information about a job opportunity to a potential job applicant; and/ or somebody who passes an informal assessment of a potential recruit to the recruiter.

1.5 The UK publishing sector

The UK publishing sector underwent significant change after the Second World War. In the pre-war period, most publishing businesses were run by families interested in the cultural content of a publication as well as in any subsequent profit, an outcome that they tended to view as secondary to their main aim (Miyamoto and Whittaker 2005). In the post-war period, however, profit has become a primary concern. Since the 1960s, the trend has been towards publishing groups. Small publishers have been under pressure to become part of a conglomerate. For example, in the 1980s the UK publishing sector became involved in global media integration. Many UK publishing firms underwent restructuring. Small to medium-sized publishers integrated with large publishers and these large publishers formed into global media conglomerates (for example, Random House (US and UK)).

Publishing is a very broad industry. It covers books, journals, directories, databases, magazines and newspapers, and it increasingly encompasses electronic as well as print products. The focus of this research is book publishing. Book publishers serve three major markets, namely 1) general consumer books, 2) children's books and 3) educational, academic, reference, scientific, technical, medical and professional information for specialised readerships. Over 125,000 books are published in the UK every year, mainly emanating from London. As Angelina[6], an editorial director of a global publishing house, commented:

---

[6] All company names and interviewee's name are fictitious.

> *"It's very London based, although there are publishers in different parts of the country. Oxford has got OUP and you get some small companies surrounding that. Edinburgh has quite a big publishing industry. Bristol and Bath: you get some small publishers around there. I think there's Cambridge as well because it's got CUP. But still 90% of the industry is London based." (Angelina, interviewed on 9th December 2005)*

Over 30,000 people were employed in the UK book publishing sector over the past ten years[7]. According to the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS), in 2005, 36% of people worked in editorial, marketing and production and 5% in design[8]. The UK publishing sector has been both conglomerating and proliferating (Owen 1993). There are over 2,500 publishing houses in the UK. Taking market share into consideration, the majority of people are employed in conglomerates with over 200 employees[9]. Yet there are no more than five employees in 75% of UK publishing houses. Although there is a gender bias in each publishing role (e.g. women predominate in editorial and rights while men predominate in sales), there are equal numbers of men and women in publishing as a whole. Roughly 8% come from ethnic minorities.[10]

---

[7] Two sources indicate that there were about 30,000 employees in publishing at the end of 1990s. These are the *1998 Publishing Industry Employment Survey* (Book House Training Centre) and the 2000 edition of the *Business Ratio Plus* (ICC Business Publications). Information provided by "*Ethnic Diversity in Publishing: A Research Report*", Book Marketing Limited (BML), commissioned by the Diversity in Publishing Network 2007.

[8] Another recent survey shows that the largest group of people in publishing were in editorial (29%), with a further 26% in sales, publicity and marketing, 18% in design and production, 7% in cross-organisational roles, 7% in finance and accounts and 3% in I.T. The information is provided by *Ethnic Diversity in Publishing: A Research Report*, Book Marketing Limited (BML), commissioned by the Diversity in Publishing Network 2007.

[9] Examples of these conglomerates include Pearson, Harper Collins, Random House and Penguin.

[10] According to the report by "*Ethnic Diversity in Publishing: A Research Report*", Book Marketing Limited (BML), commissioned by the Diversity in Publishing Network, 2007.

1.6 Overview: literature and key questions

This thesis is a broad study of the labour market in the UK the publishing sector. Vertically, I study social ties at work at the different levels in a company. Horizontally, I study what role social ties play for people with their different roles in publishing (e.g. people in design, editorial etc.). Chapter 2 describes the methodology I adopted in this research. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the labour market in the UK publishing sector. I discuss the patterns of promotion and the career paths common to the different roles in publishing, e.g. editorial, production, publicity, and design. This defines the opportunities formally available to people in publishing. The information presented in this chapter is a combination of secondary sources and empirical findings from interviewees.

Chapters 4 to 7 discuss the operation of social ties in the labour market of the UK publishing sector. As discussed in section 1.1, the nature of a job might carry some implications for recruitment methods. The nature of a job is therefore discussed along different dimensions. On one dimension, Sorensen and Kalleberg (1980) regard the labour market as matching the queue of applicants to the list of vacant jobs. They identify two aspects of control over the job. First, there is control over the activities involved in the work, which results in more or less autonomy for employees. Second, there is control over access to the job, which results in more or less closed employment relationships. This refers to the ease with which an employee can be replaced. On another dimension, Goldthorpe (2000) defines the service relationship in terms of the difficulty involved in monitoring the work performed by employees and in measuring the quantity and controlling the quality of the products: this refers to the degree of specificity of human assets. The service relationship is usually found in professional, administrative or managerial positions and these positions are where my interviewees are situated in the workplace.

From the above, the differences in the nature of a job include the level of autonomy for employees, the ease of replacement and the level of difficulty of monitoring the work (i.e. the quality of products). These differences might carry implications for recruitment methods. For example, a recruiter might be more likely to use social ties (informal methods) to recruit staff who share a higher level of autonomy in the workplace than those who do not. This is to make sure, from a recruiter's point of view, whether he or she is recruiting somebody who is capable to handle task on his/her own from a referrer's point of view. Another example is that a recruiter might recruit staff at a junior level through formal channels as the job is not difficult to monitor and the staff is not difficult to replace.

Based on the distinctions outlined above in the nature of jobs, Chapter 4 studies the recruitment process (extensive search) from the recruiter's point of view. The overall objective of the chapter is to investigate recruitment methods for different roles in publishing.

The resultant questions are:

1a. Does the level of difficulty in monitoring the job affect the methods of recruitment?

1b. Does the level of control and discretion affect the methods of recruitment?

2. Under what circumstances do recruiters use either formal or informal methods?
3. In what way do recruiters use these methods?

Chapter 5 is a continuation of Chapter 4, where the emphasis moves from recruitment to the selection process (intensive search). With regard to the selection process, Kanter (1977) emphasises the idea of ‘homophily’, which refers to homosocial reproduction of management based on social and ascriptive similarity, e.g. gender and ethnic background. During the selection process, managers look for those they see as “their kind” before placing trust in the new recruit despite uncertainty as to their ability. Goldthorpe (2000) emphasises the point at which difficulty in monitoring work arises. He argues that job commitment is crucial in an employee, with the implication that this is what recruiters will look for. Jackson (2001, 2006, 2007) emphasises that, on top of cognitive characteristics, personality traits and social skills are important determinants of occupational attainment. However, the role of personality traits and social skills also depends on the nature of job. Hence, recruiters will look for different traits for different sorts of job.

These arguments do not go without challenge. William *et al.* (2007) argue that diversity rather than homophily may be more emphasised in the workplace. This, in turn, may become part of the selection criteria. Responding to Goldthorpe, job commitment might help only in monitoring a particular member of staff; but uncertainty in the quality of the staff could be even more important in the selection process. Goldthorpe confines his argument to the theoretical: he has yet to examine whether job commitment is vitally important in real life selection processes. Jackson confines her work to a basic view of personality traits and the nature of the job. In a workplace, there can be more than person-to-job relationship.

The literature reviewed above does not address the concept of teamwork, which is so common in the workplace (Stevens and Campion 1994). Their view is that teamwork requires a specific set of qualities in everybody in the team, in which inter-personal competence is essential. Such competence is termed “knowledge, skill and ability” (KSA) and includes attributes such as initiative, trust, flexibility, supportiveness and openness.

These literatures suggest some implications for selection processes. For example, a recruiter might look for traits such as flexibility in roles that require teamwork, on top of the essential skills that are required in the roles (and positions): an editor should be expected to possess excellent command of English, but in addition, communicate well and should be able to work with a team. This applies to design, production and marketing as well as these departments also need to communicate internally and with other publishing departments.

In addition to exploring the criteria recruiters look for, I also explore how recruiters ensure that a candidate does actually possess these traits: that is, how do they make sure whether they have actually made the right decision. In this regard, I will discuss the selection processes and the evidences recruiters actually rely on during the selection process.

Based on the key literature developed by Kanter (1977), Goldthorpe (2000), Jackson (2006) and Steven and Campion (1994), the overall objective of chapter 5 is to investigate what are the desirable traits for an employee in publishing. Do the selection criteria vary with the nature of the job? The specific questions are:

1a. Does the level of difficulty in monitoring the job affect the selection criteria?

1b. Does the need for commitment, trustworthiness and loyalty vary from position to position?

2. How do recruiters ensure a candidate possesses the desired traits?
3. Do the selection processes vary with the nature of the job? Specifically,
    - 3a. How can the selection process indicate to the recruiter that this applicant fits the job?
    - 3b. On what does a recruiter base a selection decision?

Chapter 6 discusses applicants' job-hunting strategies from a job hunter's point of view. Granovetter (1973) argues that weak ties are important in job searching because this enables individuals to break away from a closed circle of connections and broaden out (so as to extend the scope of information). They can also get non-redundant information from acquaintances. Langlosis (1977) echoes this theme in stating that administrative and managerial employees frequently use weak ties for job-hunting. In Lin's (1982, 2001) discussion about how an individual accesses and mobilizes social resources to achieve purposive action (literally speaking, that is, to improve one's well-being), Lin argues that social resources are embedded in the social structure in which one's position in the social structure determines how much he or she is able to access and the extent he or she is able to mobilize social resources. Based on the literature offered by Granovetter (1973), Langlosis (1977) and Lin (1982, 2001), I attempt to answer the following question:

1. How do people look for a job in publishing? Does their job hunting method vary according to position and role?

As administrative and managerial employees frequently use weak ties when compared with blue-collar workers and semi-professionals, I propose the follow-up question:

1a. Do people in junior positions tend to find work without referrals, unlike those in senior positions, who would get their job through referrals?

Chapter 7 examines the internal labour market in the publishing sector. The focus is on internal promotion. Three sets of arguments are proposed to explain the mechanisms leading to promotion. First, Becker's human capital theory (1975), which suggests that promotion is awarded in jobs where human capital investment is high. Lazear and Rosen (1981) refer to promotion as a tournament, in which the company turns promotion into a tournament as a way of creating incentives for workers to work harder. Second: political loyalty. This perspective argues that promotion is not only a matter of productivity but of whether the employees are politically loyal to the supervisor (Dalton 1959; Izraeli 1975 and William *et al*. 1980). Third, there is the social network perspective. Katz and Tushman (1983) argue that employees reporting to different supervisors are promoted at different rates: those who work for a well-connected supervisor are promoted faster. In this chapter, I examine the mechanisms of promotion in publishing from the perspective of employer and employee. The key questions include:

1. What criteria do employers rely on when they decide to promote a member of staff?
2. Based on the interviewees' experiences, what are the mechanisms of promotion?
    - 2a. Will employees determined to achieve promotion take steps to enhance their human capital, nurture their company loyalty and establish a good network within the company?

This introductory chapter offers an overview of this thesis. In the next chapter, I am going to discuss the methodology I used for this research.

Chapter 2

Methodology

2.1 Introduction

My research is a case study of the labour market in the UK publishing sector. In particular, I study the ways in which, and to what extent, social ties have a role in the labour market. This chapter starts with explaining why qualitative methods are more suitable than any other method. That will be followed by a description of the methods I used to collect the information I needed in order to answer my research questions. These methods include semi-structured interviews and participant observation. In this section, I will discuss the processes of gaining access and snowballing, as well as my experiences in the field. I will also illustrate the types of information I collected during fieldwork.

2.2 Methodological justification

As mentioned in Chapter 1, I have adopted qualitative methods for the research. I believe qualitative methods are the best methodology to achieve answers to the list of questions I raise in this thesis. Qualitative methods help to identify mechanisms. My research aims to identify the mechanisms by which social ties operates in the labour market. The issues covered include: people’s career paths, job recruitment, job hunting, changing jobs, promotion, the processes through which people build up social networks, and the way they benefit from networks (consciously or otherwise). The qualitative method provides a rich source of data which emerges from people’s daily life experience.

Moreover, the qualitative method enables me to observe the interactions between individuals. This brings the quality of inter-personal interaction into job outcome analysis. Conventionally, scholars adopt a name generator method to identify an individual's level of social capital (Lin 1999, 2001). This involves posing one or more questions about contacts in certain role relationships (e.g. neighbourhood and colleague), content areas (e.g. work matters or housework) and intimacy (e.g. confiding or most intimate). These questions generate a list of contacts ranging from three to five or as many as volunteered by the survey respondents. This list of contacts indicates relationships between the respondent and contacts and sometimes among contacts, as well as allowing individual characteristics to be assessed. The name generator method is commonly used in social network research.[11] Nevertheless, I doubt whether this method can effectively review the mechanisms through which social networks bring about a positive job outcome. I argue that unless I observe and record how people interact and how they actually got the job (and recruit new staff), I will not be able to identify the core mechanisms involved.

On top of the insufficiencies of the name generator method, the absence of relevant quantitative data also explains why I adopted qualitative methods. The existing major quantitative datasets which relate to work and employment, such as the Labour Force Survey, the British Household Panel Survey, and Employment in Britain, all lack relevant variables to answer my questions[12]. Even if I had put together a survey and distributed questionnaires to people working in publishing, I would not have been able to answer my questions as effectively as by using qualitative methods[13]. As mentioned previously, I intended to provide information regarding the processes of recruitment and promotion and the interactions among recruiter, job-hunter and referrer. Such information is beyond the scope of a survey in which the respondent is asked, for example, to tick yes or no, agree or disagree, or rate a statement 1 to 5 on a 5-point scale. Above all, I needed rich sources of information to detect the mechanisms through which social ties operate in the labour market.

---

[11] For example, in order to examine the effect of social networks on job satisfaction, Hurlbert (1991) uses the 1985 General Social Survey. In this survey, respondents are asked to report the names of the people with whom they had discussed important matters during the past 6 months. Detailed (though potentially inaccurate) information, such as educational level and age were recorded for the first five persons named. Respondents were also asked the percentage of kin and co-workers among the named people.

[12] For example, in BHPS (wave 12), the index terms for social support networks are irrelevant to answer my research questions. Index terms such as age of the 1st closest friend, frequency of meeting people are irrelevant to the process in which social ties bring about positive or negative labour market

The objective of carrying out this research is not to derive numerical generalisations. Qualitative methods allow me to explore different dimensions of social ties and the effects on job outcome. As one single person can share several roles in the job market (for example, a recruiter can also be a referrer), qualitative methods are an efficient way of tracking information from an individual through different dimensions. Moreover, semi-structured interviews permit follow-up questions to be asked and allow the interviewee's situation to be understood more thoroughly. By talking to the respondents face-to-face, Neuman (2008) suggests that the researcher can be in a position to explain the questions to them where they have a point that requires clarification. Moreover, the researcher can ensure that the answers given by the respondents are relevant for the questions. I, as the researcher, can also probe for unexpected and uncharted lines of thinking and behaviour in the field.

2.3 Methodology

I used mainly two research methods: semi-structured interviews and participant

---

consequences. As for employment, the index terms comprise terms of employment, rather than getting a job or recruitment or promotion.

[13] The director of the human resources division of an Oxford-based publishing house suggested that I provide questionnaires to the staff – this, he said, was the best way he could help.

observation. I conducted four pilot interviews before starting the fieldwork. Afterwards, I shall discuss my experience of pilot interviews and the lessons learned.

2.3.1 Pilot interviews

In this part, I briefly describe the pilot interviews and the lessons that they yielded. I conducted four pilot interviews during September 2004. My main purpose was to ask the interviewees' opinions on the questions I proposed (refer to "type of questions collected"), to refine the questions[14] and to practice my interview skills. I located the interviewees through personal contacts.

Based on the pilot interviews, I found that social ties play an important role in favourable job outcomes, such as promotion and contract renewal. For instance, having good relationships with colleagues helps to obtain more work-related information and in turn, helps to achieve promotion and to hunt for a job. I also found that being equipped with relevant job-related skills was the key to success. The ability to perform well goes along side social ties in the workplace.

I learned practical lessons from the pilot interviews in several different ways. In terms of framing the questions, I got a better awareness of the issue of privacy (or even courtesy). I had to avoid asking questions that might sound too personal or appear offensive. For example, one interviewee said she disliked the way I asked about her relationship with her supervisor because the question sounded too pointed.[15] In face of such privacy issues, I used a different approach to get my answers. For example, this interviewee suggested that, instead of asking about the relationship directly, I could ask about the reference letter.

---

[14] Unfortunately, these interviewees are not entirely from the publishing sector.

[15] I asked the question directly – 'How is your relationship with your supervisor?'

In terms of interview technique, initially I feared that my identity as an Asian overseas student might cause a barrier against the interviewees who are white British professionals. Yet, during the pilot interviews, I realized that being confident, professional and cheerful can compensate for the potential inconvenience caused by my demographic and cultural background.

Here comes to the issue of trust, which is an important component to carry out an interview. Trust is integral to developing rapport, which refers to a harmonious relationship between the researcher and the interviewees (Feldman *et al.* 2003:35). Building up trust relies heavily on the researcher's personal and professional identity (Feldman *et al.* 2003). Categories of social identity such as demographic characteristics and professional identities can provide the basis for trust. For example, Daniel-Echols (2003:109) argues that her black ethnic identity helped her to gain credibility and trust from her black interviewees when she did research on the impact of politics on the day-to-day implementation of welfare-to-work programmes. There was absolutely no barrier between her and the interviewees when they talked. I did not have the advantage of sharing a similar personal and professional identity with the interviewees: it was my attitude that helped to build trust (or, during the initial contact, to break the ice), and this had grown out of my experience. I came to be seen as trustworthy when I listened to the interviewee attentively and showed genuine concern.

Similarity in personal and professional identity does not always increase the amount of information obtained. Sometimes people tell more because they assume that the researcher does not understand their perspective (Feldman *et al.* 2003). Interviewees may assume that the researcher has good background knowledge of the field and therefore skip background information and explanations. Because of the differences in personal and professional identity with the interviewees, I did not find myself embarrassed or stupid in pressing for all kinds of information. Sometimes I even took advantage of these differences to ask for something more detailed.

Indeed, this situation applies to subsequent interviews. As the interviewees assumed I was relatively ignorant about the UK publishing sector (in terms of social ties at least), and I was obviously non-local and harmless, they tended to gossip more. For instance, at the end of the interview, Elsa, one of my interviewees in editorial, became conscious of how much office politics and gossip she had told me and said, *"Oh... how could I tell you all this...!"*. Sue, a publisher, spoke more openly: *"You're a complete outsider. I'm not afraid to let you know everything."*

2.3.2 Semi-structured interviews

I mainly used two research methods: semi-structured interviews and participant observation. The semi-structured interviews were with 40 interviewees, tape-recorded and transcribed. Forty proved a saturated sample because the information I collected repeated towards the end of the fieldwork (see discussion in section 2.7). The research looked at behaviour in the labour market from the point of view of the recruiter, the job applicant and the referrer. The identity of the interviewees varies: some are purely job applicants; others are both recruiters and referrers; some are both job applicants and referrers. That means that a single interviewee often yielded information from more than one point of view. Most of the interviewees were working in book publishing at the time of the interview. The lack of rigidity characterised by the semi-structured interview structure enables the researcher to explore the gaps in the interview, so that the researcher does not leave any important point unexplored (Berg 2001).

In terms of sampling strategy, I used snowballing, particularly in the following three cases. First, I approached the Career Services Alumni Network of this University. I did an online search for alumni working in the publishing sector and sent an invitation email to each relevant alumnus. The responses were very positive: out of 7 alumni I emailed, 5 agreed to be interviewed, of whom 2 were willing to refer friends and colleagues. The first snowball began to roll. I also approached a publishing house in London which endorses a "diversity programme"[16] because I wanted to make use of my ethnic identity to get in touch with more potential interviewees[17]. The HR manager rejected my request to take part in the programme but she was willing to be interviewed and also to introduce one of her friends. The second snowball began to form as well. A third snowball was formed when I searched for an English teacher through DailyInfo (a website for Oxford residents). Initially, I had planned to search for a teacher to adjust my English pronunciation to something more easily understood in England. As it happens, the person who responded was working in publishing in Oxford. He was very happy to help me search for interviewees by putting an advertisement on his company's notice board. The replies were promising. Another snowball began to roll. These three snowballs started at roughly the same time[18]. The first formal interview took place on 26th July 2005 and thereafter interviews took place intensively over a period of three months. These were predominately Oxford and London-based, although two interviewees were working in Macclesfield at the time. The last interview was on 19 October 2006. Some of the interviews were done in batches. I did follow-ups with about half when I found during the analysis that I needed more information. Depending on how much more, the follow-up interviews were either on the phone or face-to-face. Most of the interviewees willingly agreed to a follow-up.

---

[16] An increasing number of publishing houses in London have launched diversity programmes. The aim of such programmes is to train and recruit more young people from ethnic minorities who aspire to work in publishing. It is believed that a publishing house is able to absorb more new ideas if it opens up to a higher proportion of ethnic minority employees.

[17] As a layperson in publishing, it was difficult for me to gain access to the sector. Making use of my ethnic background was a possible entry point. The trade-off may have been a "bias in the sampling pool" (using a quantitative term). Eventually, out of 40 interviewees, 5 were not locally-born: two Spanish, one Serbian, one American and one South American. Among all the locally born British, one was ethnically Chinese and one Indian.

The respondents were asked to pick their preferred venue for the interview, and most of the interviews took place in cafes or in the interviewee's office. The average duration of the interview was one and a half to two hours[19]. All interviews were carried out on an individual basis. All interviews were recorded on a tape recorder, so that I could retain the original data for transcription and analysis. In addition, immediately after each interview I wrote a summary of the background information on the respondents and my significant findings. This discipline did more than allow the efficient administration of data analysis in the later stage of the research: it also allowed me to identify points that needed further clarifications with the interviewees.

2.3.3 Participant observation

Another method I used was participant observation. It was important for me to interact with people in publishing before starting on analysis because I wanted a fuller picture of who these people were and how they saw their labour market. Moreover, participant observation serves to triangulate the information I obtained through semi-structured interviews. The triangulation procedures were as follows. First, I could triangulate the information from interviews, such as the responsibilities of an editor or the recruitment process of any publishing role, with the gossip I had heard during participant observation. People in the field like talking about their work from time to time.

---

[18] I contacted the Oxford Career Services in late July, the London publishing house in mid July and the DailyInfo teacher in early August 2005.

[19] Including the follow-up interviews, the longest was five hours and the shortest 45 minutes.

Second, a couple of months after the fieldwork had started, I discovered that two of my interviewees were members of the association of which I was a member too (see below). One of them was Eva, a commercial director, who was one of the speakers at the annual conference. According to a member of the association, she could not be contacted even the day before the conference. She appeared only a few minutes before the conference. Straight afterwards, she asked the chairman for the list of conference delegates, for the sake of communication in future. Her request reminded me what she mentioned during the interview: *"as a woman in marketing, you need to be very aggressive or otherwise you won't be able to occupy a managerial position"*.

I was a member of a publishing association, the Junior Publisher League[20] for seven months (from July 2005 to Feb 2006). This association is London and Oxford-based. In 2005, it had more than 300 members and is open to people aged 18-35 who are working, or planning to work, in publishing. Members of this association gossiped about their work life, such as their daily interaction with their colleagues and the way they survive in the workplace. Section 2.3.3.1 covers some of my experiences during the fieldwork I carried out while I was a member of the Junior Publisher League.

---

[20] Fictitious name.

2.3.3.1 Gaining access

Gaining access is a continuous and dynamic process (Feldman *et al.* 2003:x). Building rapport with the gatekeeper and having sufficient ability to relate to other people in the field is crucial. In the access gaining process, I needed to convince the gatekeeper (i.e. the chairman of the Junior Publisher League) the values of granting me access to the field. It is conventionally believed that similarity in personal and professional identity between the researcher and the people who are going be researched helps to facilitate the fieldwork (Feldman *et al.* 2003:39-40). Since I did not share much similarity in these regards, I needed to put more effort to persuade the gatekeeper to grant access to me.

I located the Junior Publisher League through the internet and learned that it was looking for a treasurer from among its members. Although I had not enrolled with the association, I sent an email to the Oxford branch offering myself as a treasurer. At that particular point in time, I wished to interact with the committee members of this association regularly and legitimately. As I had expected, there was no reply. I re-sent the email two weeks later and the secretary invited me to a committee meeting. At the meeting, people were courteous.

As I knew that it would be unwise for me to hide my identity and the reason for my attending the committee, I spoke openly about my research to the chairman (which is similar to Blau, 1963)[21]. Informed consent for me to become actively involved was gained, and I stayed with the Junior Publisher League for more than eight months. The main duties for which I was responsible included financial issues; helping to organise the annual conference and being in charge of its finances; and acting as a coordinator of the associational publication. This was a tough experience but the informal chats helped me to learn more about the culture in publishing. I never asked any of the committee members to become a formal interviewee because I was afraid it might spoil the relationship.

---

[21] It is generally argued that the people targeted by social researchers should be informed about the research in a comprehensive and accurate manner (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995, Babbie 2007, Neuman 2008). Covert research is not recommended. The importance of explaining the research accurately can also be supported pragmatically. Blau (1963) emphasised the importance of being honest when he did ethnographic research in two US government departments: substantial deception puts additional stress on the researcher that can eventually damage the research. Nevertheless, there is a consensus that researchers should maintain a balance between conducting covert research and telling

Initially, I had thought of enrolling in the association only rather than offering myself as a treasurer. Being enlightened by Whyte's ethnography, *Street Corner Society* (1954), in which he started with being a "non-participating observer" but ended up being a "non-observing participant" (1954:321), I, from an ethnographer's point of view, hesitated to get too involved with people in the field. But considering the frequency of the association's regular activities, such as monthly talks and annual conference, I feared that I would not be able to learn much about the publishing sector within a limited amount of time. Being a treasurer of this association enabled me to contact committee members (a total of eight) on a relatively frequent and regular basis because the committee meetings were held every two weeks. In a situation where I needed to learn the culture of publishing as quickly as possible, it would be more useful to be one of the associational committee members than an ordinary member. By enrolling as a treasurer, and carrying out the functions efficiently, I was in a sense able to repay the association in kind for their granting of access. The risk which Whyte describes is that by taking a more active role, one might influence the behaviour one is trying to observe. For example, the gatekeeper

---

people everything (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995; Hammersley 1998; Hirsch and Gellner 2001).

was so involved in Whyte’s research that he, as observed, began to change his behaviour. Whereas he used to simply do what he did, with other corner gangs around he had to think what was wanted of him and how to explain to Whyte what was happening. On Whyte’s side, he eventually went native and became part of the gang. However, I, as a treasurer, quietly did the job rather than making policy interventions. That would be least likely to affect the research results.

In addition to attending the Junior Publisher League’s committee meetings on a regular basis, I also went to the speaker’s monthly meetings. Topics included an introduction to the different types of publishing, their requirements, and how to get into publishing. I obtained a lot of background information through these events and spoke to many people. I also attended similar events organized by other publishing associations and, again, accumulated much background information.

2.4 Types of information collected

My central theme was to explore how the labour market operates in the publishing sector. In particular, I explore how ties play a role in recruitment and careers progression. I collected information from recruiters, job applicants and referrers. With reference to Burgess (1984), the interviewer should start with simple questions then follow with the more complex ones. I, therefore, began the interview by asking the interviewees some general questions. Questions ranged from the general to the specific and the sensitive, which allowed rapport to develop gradually between the interviewee and myself. Here are some of the guided questions I put when I interviewed recruiters within publishing:

- Can you tell me about your current job? What do you do?

- Have you been in a position to recruit new staff? When you last looked for new people, what method(s) did you use? Would you use that method again?
- Do you use different recruitment methods for different ranks and positions?
- How much do you trust the information given in a CV? and in the reference letter? In what ways are these documents useful?
- When do personal contacts and professional networks help you to recruit new staff? To what extent you find them useful?
- Who have been your most valuable contacts in your career so far? Why?
- What positions are likely to fall vacant soon? How do you intend to fill them?
- Can you give me the personnel structure within your company?
- What advice would you give to someone starting out in publishing about personal contacts?

Speaking to those currently working in publishing, my purpose was to explore how their career had developed**,** their job hunting experiences, how they had built up a network of professional contacts and the way these had been of benefit (consciously or otherwise). Here are the questions I put:

- Can you tell me about your current job? What do you do?
- How did you get this job (job advert, referral…)? Can you describe the process?
- Did you know anybody working in this company prior to the job application?
    - If so, who are they? What did they do?
    - Did they provide any information about this company?
- Have personal contacts been important to you in getting new jobs? Could you

give me other examples?

- Do you get along socially with people in publishing?
- Why? or why not? If yes, who are these people? How often do you meet?
- Would you say it matters to your career which manager you work for in your company? Why is this?
- To what extent is good work performance crucial in furthering a career?
- To what extent do you think getting a good reference letter is key to getting a job?
- Who have been your most valuable contacts in your career so far? Why?
- In this company, who writes your appraisal and decide your promotion? What is the mechanism?
- What do you want to achieve working here? How will you go about it?
- How good do you think your chances are of being given significant promotion with your present organization?

Here are the guided questions for referrers:

- Have you been in a position to help somebody to find a job? Can you tell me about it?
- Under what circumstances did you help people find a job?

2.5 The interviewees

As described, I interviewed 40 people working in publishing. The interviewees were predominately editorial but other people drawn from design, publicity and production were also included. These people ranged from junior to very senior. I hoped to establish whether the mechanisms by which people draw on social ties for their career differ from one level to another. The following table illustrates the role of each interviewee, whether applicant, referrer or recruiter. For details of each interviewee, please refer to the Appendix I and II.

Table 2.1 Role(s) of the interviewee

	Name[22]	Current job title	Role(s) in this thesis
1	Anna	Press officer	Applicant
2	Louisa	Commissioning editor	Applicant
3	Stephen	Freelance editor	Applicant, recruiter
4	Nancy	Primary literacy editor	Applicant
5	Elsa	Reporter	Applicant
6	Jane	Senior medical writer	Applicant, recruiter, referrer
7	Ben	Senior manager	Recruiter, referrer, applicant
8	Elaine	Art editor	Applicant
9	Elizabeth	Product development editor	Applicant
10	Tina	Editor	Applicant
11	Rose	Book design manager	Recruiter, applicant, referrer
12	Sonia	Primary literacy editor	Applicant
13	Ella	Freelance manager	Applicant, recruiter
14	Annie	Senior art editor	Applicant, recruiter, referrer
15	Angela	Senior editor	Applicant, recruiter, referrer
16	Catherine	Publication officer	Applicant
17	Susan	Designer	Applicant, recruiter
18	Simon	Communications consultant	Applicant, recruiter
19	Azura	Assistant production editor	Applicant
20	Julia	Staff writer	Applicant
21	David	Project editor	Applicant
22	Helen	Brand development director	Recruiter, referrer, applicant
23	Kathy	Publishing manager	Applicant, recruiter
24	Isabel	Publisher and managing director	Applicant, recruiter
25	Robert	Freelance designer	Applicant, referrer
26	Iris	Publisher	Applicant, recruiter, referrer
27	Eva	Commercial director	Applicant, recruiter
28	Sue	Publisher	Applicant, referrer, recruiter
29	Angelina	International editor	Recruiter, referrer, applicant
30	Kitty	Editor	Applicant
31	Michelle	Senior commissioning editor	Applicant, recruiter
32	Janice	Publishing manager	Applicant, recruiter, referrer
33	Wilson	Freelance lexicographer	Applicant, referrer
34	Edna	Freelance lexicographer	Applicant, referrer

---

[22] Fictitious.

35	Cherry	Production manager	Applicant, referrer, recruiter
36	Vicky	Senior editor	Applicant
37	Nelson	Head of production	Applicant, recruiter, referrer
38	Terry	Production manager	Applicant, recruiter
39	Calvin	Freelance editorial project manager	Applicant, recruiter
40	Peter	Director	Recruiter, referrer

2.6 Data analysis

As mentioned in section 2.3.2, I tape-recorded and transcribed every interview. After transcription, I used the qualitative software, MAXqda, for data analysis. Among commonly-used software for qualitative research, such as Nvivo, MAXqda is the easiest to handle[23].

First, I transferred all transcripts to the MAXqda program. With a hard copy of each transcript in hand, I identified the words that came up frequently. For example: ‘current job’, ‘reference letter’, ‘my line manager’, ‘recruit new staff’, ‘word of mouth’, ‘publishing’, and ‘referral’ etc. I grouped these words in ‘code’ and began to analyse under which circumstances these words appeared in the conversation. The codes (such as ‘word of mouth’) were listed right next to the text (i.e. on the original transcript) so that I could recognise quickly where the codes existed. The rationale of identifying codes is to organise interview information into themes. I printed out the transcripts again in MAXqda format. The whole process took about three months and I finished in March 2007. While I was organising the data into themes, my mind was scanning what should go into the thesis, with reference to the field notes as well. This was the beginning of the thesis writing process (and it also explains why coding lasted for three months). The coding process helped me to see deeper meanings in the transcripts and to build the structure of the thesis.

---

[23] I attended a CASQAD (software for qualitative data analysis) introductory course in late 2004 at Oxford University. The speaker (a qualitative researcher from University of Surrey) emphasised that MAXqda was the most user-friendly of the qualitative software and I filed this away in my mind. It was not until late 2006, when I really needed to get started on data analysis, that I attended a one-day course at the University of Surrey and got hands-on tips on how to use MAXqda. This software can be accessed in the Sociology Department of Oxford University and I installed it on my computer.

To summarise, here is the research process:

Table 2.2 The research process

Procedure	**Period**	**Rationale**
Pilot interviews	Late Sept 2004	To practise with drafted questions and improve my interviewing skills
Gaining access	Jan – Jun 2005	To prepare the fieldwork
Semi-structured interviews; transcribing (keeping field notes as well)	July 2005 – Oct 2006 (July 2005 –Feb 2006 was the most intensive period)	To obtain in-depth information on the mechanisms that operate in the labour market.
Participant observation (keep field notes as well): joining a publishing association as a committee member, organising annual conference, coordinating production of handbook and being treasurer	July 2005 – Feb 2006	To grasp a fuller picture of who was who in publishing; and for data triangulation
Data processing using MAXqda **Chatting** with several interviewees on various occasions	Dec 2006 – Mar 2007 Oct – Nov 2006	To organise the transcripts into themes (by coding) To receive follow-up information
Writing up the thesis	Initial stage: Mar – Jun 2007. Intensive stage: Aug – May 2008 Polishing stage: Dec 2008 – Summer 2009	To complete the research

2.7 Conclusion: An evaluation of the research design

In section 2.2, I explained why in-depth interviews and participant observation is the best methodology for this research. In the following, I am going to round up the pros and cons of such research design based on my fieldwork experience.

The strengths of the research design lies in the ability to generate rich sources of information to explore the mechanisms through which social ties operate in the labour market. A saturated sample was achieved when interviewees of various roles (i.e. recruiter, job hunter and referrer) repeated similar information. For instance, Ben, Kathy, Janice, Angelina and Peter worked in different types of publishing firms in different parts of UK (refer to the Appendix) and they all emphasized the insignificance of the reference letter in the recruitment process. Annie, Stephen and Robert (refer to Chapter 6) received a job offer not because they applied for a job but solely because they were referred by somebody they did not even know (i.e. a stranger). Angelina, Annie, Ben, Helen, Iris, Calvin, Sue and Rose drew on for information and advice as a shortcut for getting information that is not always seen in formal CV and as a way of avoiding the risk of recruiting a wrong person (refer to Chapter 4 and 5). The insignificance of a reference letter, referral *via* a stranger and the use of words of mouth as a shortcut to receive more information so as to avoid the risk of recruiting a wrong person constitute some of the key arguments in this research and they were vividly and repeatedly told by interviewees. The information I collected was not necessarily confined to formal interviews. I also collected information through informal chats with people in the Junior Publisher League; and this, too, was similar to what I learned in the formal interviews.

Having said that, there might be an undue reliance on the account of some particular interviewees, such as that of Angelina, Peter and Stephen. They are the interviewees who told me a lot of personal experiences in a very detailed way. But this does not necessarily mean that I ignore the account of other interviewees. Indeed, the information provided by them usually overlaps with that of the others. Since this thesis aims to explore the mechanisms and processes through which recruiters and job hunters use social ties in the labour market, I find it justifiable to rely on the detailed account of some particular interviewees based on the condition that their experiences do not stand alone from the others.

This chapter discusses the methods adopted for the research. Qualitative methods are used to explore the mechanisms under which recruiters, job hunters and referrers behave in the labour market. In particular, qualitative methods help to explore the role of social ties in the labour market of the publishing sector. Chapter 4 to 7 discusses the empirical results of the research. Qualitative methods, which provide detailed information about the labour market processes, help me to develop the typology of recruitment, job hunting and promotion in Chapter 4, 6 and 7 respectively. In the next chapter, I follow my interviewees' careers in publishing and reveal a clearer picture of the labour market through their experience. I will illustrate their current position along the career path in publishing. This will provide a clearer picture on the labour market situation of these interviewees.

Chapter 3

Setting the scene –

What are the career opportunities available in publishing?

3.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to review the labour market and career opportunities available in publishing. This chapter is divided into four. In the first part, I discuss the entry requirement in publishing. In the second part, I discuss the labour market in the UK publishing sector. I explore the opportunities for movement within the sector, whether up (or down) or freelance. In the third part, I identify the key roles in publishing: editorial, design, marketing, publicity and production – the areas in which most of my interviewees work. I draw on their personal experiences to review their career paths and examine other career opportunities open to them. In the final section, I will contextualize the sociological discussion of the nature of work with reference to different publishing roles and positions.

3.2 Entry requirement in publishing: qualifications and institutions

This section aims to discuss the general entry requirements in publishing. In particular, I will focus on the general qualification required and the institutions which would help to fit one into the position. The entry requirements of several different roles, which are relevant to my interviewees, i.e. editorial, design, marketing and production, will be discussed as well.

In general, most entry into publishing requires an undergraduate degree; and common subjects are English, History and Modern Languages (Clark and Phillips 2008). A degree in science, mathematics, law or medicine is at a premium for publishers in those areas. A teaching background or experience in English language teaching is particularly helpful to get a job in educational and ELT publishing. There has also been a large increase in the range of publishing courses available at undergraduate and graduate levels[1]. The number of students reaches as high as several hundreds per year. Attaining a BA or MA in publishing does not guarantee a job in publishing but it largely increases the chances as these courses provide basic and essential training for working in publishing[2]. As for fresh graduates, having experiences in school or university magazine, website work and short-term work in a bookshop help to enter into publishing. This will be further discussed in Chapter 6.

3.2.1 Differentiation in publishing roles

Traditionally, the only departments which require formal vocational qualifications are design and production (Clark and Phillips 2008). More recently publishers like to see a qualification from the Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) for marketing positions. The pre-entry publishing courses used to concentrate on copy-editing and production skills, and now it extends to the business and marketing aspects of publishing.

---

[1] The following universities provide undergraduate publishing courses: Bangor University, Coventry University, University of College Falmouth, University of Gloucestershire, University of Huddersfield. Loughborough University, Middlesex University, Napier University, North East Wales Institute of Higher Education, Norwich School of Art and Design, Oxford Brookes University, University of Reading, Swansea Institute of Higher Education and University of Wolverhampton. MA or Diploma in Publishing is provided by the following universities: City University, Kingston University, London College of Communication, Napier University, Oxford Brookes University, University of Plymouth, University of Reading, Robert Gordon University, University of Stirling and University College London (Clark and Phillips 2008: 288-290).

[2] But in fact, the level of degree is not very important. Those with doctorate seeking their first junior job may face the difficulty in competing with younger applicants (Clark and Phillips 2008).

3.2.2 Training schemes and short-term contract

Some large-scale publishers offer graduate recruitment schemes. To name some, they are Penguin, Macmillan and Harcourt. I visited Penguin in 2005 and found that the recruitment scheme is in a form of work experience placement, which is non-paid. The following is a brief introduction of the scheme:

> *"Work experience is a great way to get into publishing. Spending two weeks working with one of our teams gives us the chance to really get to know you and for you to learn more about us… Penguin offers 2-week Work Experience placements throughout the year. During this time you will support a team through various tasks and have the chance to meet people and ask a lot of questions. While our Work Experience placements are unpaid, we do offer a small payment towards any travel expenses." (Penguin 2005)*

In addition to graduate recruitment schemes, taking a temporary job in a publishing house is also a way to accumulate experiences in publishing and thus, getting into publishing in the future. According to Penguin (2005), "Temp work might not sound like the most glamorous route into publishing but the reality is that we end up hiring a lot of really good people this way." This publishing house will often work with recruitment agencies to fill temporary vacancies, especially with assistant level and administrative roles. These jobs will generally be longer term than the 2-week work experience placements and the employees are paid.

3.3 Promotion in publishing

An individual career path in the publishing sector varies depending on the size and structure of the firm. According to Clark (2001), it may be easier to move around the firm and learn different jobs in small firms with few staff members and fewer departments[3]. They are also likely to benefit from faster promotion. For example, Kathy was an assistant editor with an academic publishing firm in Oxford; she subsequently moved to a charity organisation and was promoted to editorial manager within less than two years.

In general, someone working in a middle ranking role in a large firm could achieve a more senior position in a small one. Clear career structures exist in large publishing houses. For instance, from junior editorial level to senior commissioning editor, production assistant to production controller, marketing assistant to marketing manager. In small publishers, the dividing lines are blurred and even cross over. A small employer may offer a more varied job. On the other hand, junior staff in large firms may gain the in-depth expertise afforded by the greater resources of the publisher.

Company restructuring and takeovers inevitably affect careers. For example, there was massive company restructuring in the sector in the 1980s. As mentioned previously, the UK publishing sector was involved in the wave of global media integration in the 1980s. Major UK publishing firms (such as Harper Collins and Macmillan) became part of international conglomerates. A lot of people were either sacked, forced to move to a lower position or went freelance in exchange for the opportunity to stay in publishing.

According to the interviewees, both men and women share similar promotion prospects in publishing. However, since there is a gender bias in different publishing roles, especially in big publishing houses, men are more likely to be found at the managerial level. The pattern is that women are concentrated in editorial and rights. The result is more female editorial directors and rights directors. According to Angelina, the editorial director of an international publishing house,

---

[3] What I mean here in publishing include those organisations that have a publications department. These organisations can range from commercial companies that produce some in-house newsletters to smaller charities that need to communicate with their employees or donors. Working as an editorial assistant in one of these organisations can often give people an insight into the whole process of publishing.

> *"In the international team there are more female managing directors. So there are more women at senior level just because they've started at the beginning and then they were moving up." (Angelina, interviewed on 9th December 2005)*

However, editorial directors and rights directors tended to be confined to their own sector: they cannot operate within other department of the company. It is the managing director who has the managerial power over the entire company, and it is often employees from marketing who are able to move up to this role. Coincidentally, marketing is male-dominated. Therefore, top managers in publishing are predominately male. Angelina said,

> *"Now what you see is women in all areas. The main thing is: editorial writers have been female and the male is in marketing… If you want to be a managing director, you'd better go to marketing." (Angelina, ibid)*

Another factor that affects promotion is maternity leave. A reasonable proportion of my interviewees mentioned how maternity leave affects women's careers:

> *"…In the end, a female will have a baby and go freelance so they can look after their children. I do what I do because I didn't get (maternity leave) because I had a child. I had six weeks off and I went straight back to work. So I didn't do a full maternity leave and there was no disruption in my career plan despite having children. A lot of very good editors, they're going to have children. So they're going to do freelance editorial. You can be a fantastic freelance editor but you*

> *don't become a head of the company." (Angelina, ibid)*

Jane, a senior medical writer was once an editorial team leader. She started her career as a medical trainee in 1997. Within six years, she had moved up from medical writer to editorial team leader in-charge of her own team of writers. She admitted that she had "moved quite quickly up the company". But she changed to part-time (three days a week) and moved back to being a senior writer after her second baby:

> *"Maternity leave! There are a lot more women than men. There are a lot of late 20s to early 30s, a really high number, on maternity." (Jane, ibid)*

Because of the need to care for her children, Jane voluntarily became downwardly mobile, from team leader to senior writer. In UK publishing, it is also common to see people going freelance, which is moving sideways. I am going to discuss this phenomenon in the next section.

3.4 Flexibility – employing freelancers

The traditional UK publishing employee was full-time, in-house and predominately female. There was no shortage of labour supply for publishing jobs despite the fact that the pay was generally low. This was especially the case in editorial. Since the 1980s, there has been a significant and large-scale shift from in-house employment to home-based freelancing (Stanworth 1997). This is a result of increased competition among publishing houses and company restructuring. People go freelance at different levels. For instance, in the editorial departments, proof reading, editing and project managing tend to be put out to freelancers. Freelance work is usually on a project basis.

Stanworth’s research (1997) suggests that there is clear segmentation within the freelance labour force, comprising ‘regulars’ and ‘casuals’. Some people are full-time freelancers (‘regulars’) while other freelancers actually have a different full-time or part-time job. Stanworth’s research also discovers that freelance employees were used mainly to provide specialist skills and to match manning levels with peaks in demand. Moreover, the recruitment of freelancers is predominately through personal networks – many freelancers are people the publishers have known for a long time and a lot of them are former employees. Further discussions will be found in Chapter 4, 5 and 6.

There are many freelance opportunities and most require relevant experience and knowledge of the industry. In these circumstances, there is always an alternative route in publishing in addition to ‘moving upwards’. Generally, freelancers accumulate a number of years of in-house experience before going freelance.

Stephen is a full-time freelance editor. His experience is that *“it’s quite common with my friends who are about the same age as me -- about late 30s, 40s, sort of leaving the job and going freelance.” (Stephen, interviewed on 2nd August 2005).* The reason is that people have accumulated sufficient experience by that time.

> *“Well when you get to that age, you get the experience to be able to go freelance. You can't go freelance when you're in your 20s ... well it's unusual to get enough experience. You may know a lot of people but to build up wide experience you have to take time…You have to do a good job otherwise you won't get work.” (Stephen, ibid)*

> *“I just build up my experience because, once you have a specialty, you get more work because there's less and less competition.” (Stephen, ibid)*

Based on Stephen's explanation, it is evident that experience is most important to a freelancer. If you are experienced enough, you will be able to out-compete others. Here are the assets for freelancers: experience, a good job, and a personal network. It is a combination of human capital and social resources. I will discuss this in more detail in subsequent chapters.

To be a freelancer, *"you have to work for more than one company" (Stephen, ibid*[4]*).* At the moment, Stephen is working for two companies; last year, he worked for four. Usually, a full-time freelance editor has to work on a couple of projects at the same time in order to survive:

> *"I mainly edit people's work. I've been working on a course book teaching business English. I'm editing the work of four writers for that. And also, I'm working on an online vocabulary course, teaching medical vocabulary. This is the main thing at the moment. I also write English teaching materials." (Stephen, ibid)*

Quite a number of full-time employees in publishing take on extra work freelance. The major reason is to secure more income. Such freelance jobs are usually "little things rather than a book". For instance, Rose is a book design manager. But she also does some freelance work:

> *"A lot of them are for Company A (a large academic publisher in Oxford) from different departments. So I have done a lot of marketing promotional stuff. Not the kind of looking at the bookshelf (Meaning?). Little things instead of a book: just short and small. (How long have you been working as a part time freelancer?) Off and on. But I don't want to do too much because I don't want my*

---

[4] Edna, Robert and Wilson also said something similar.

> *whole life taken over. So I don't go out of my way to find freelance work. If somebody contacts me, yes. It's normally the same person or the same group. Then I'll say yes or no." (Rose, interviewed on 24th August 2005)*

Rose's situation is quite common among designers. It is not unusual to see designers work full time in-house and carry out freelance assignments at the same time.

3.4.1 Reasons for going freelance

There is not much study of freelancing within the field of employment. Where there are such studies, they tend to initiate a case study in creative industries such as TV and audio-visual and to explore how freelancers use 'social capital' and 'informal network' to receive freelance jobs (Dex *et al*. 2000; Antcliff *et al.* 2005, 2007). The nature of freelance work and the perception of the freelancers are yet to be studied. Based on the interviewees' personal experience, there are a couple of major reasons for being a freelancer. The "push reason" is company restructuring (as mentioned above). There can be personal reasons for going freelance as well and I regard them as "pull factors".

The gendered dimension of employment in publishing

For the majority of the female freelancers, former or current, childcare is the main issue. They chose to go freelance after the birth of a child. For example, Angela initially worked as an in-house editor. But she went freelance after the birth of her children:

> *"The reason I went freelance in the first place was because I had young children and the childcare was very expensive. It cost half of my salary when I was employed full time. Half of my salary was to pay for the childcare. So my*

> *thinking was: I can go freelance for half of the time and not pay any childcare." (Angela, interviewed on 8th September 2005)*

Angela's explanation implies an idea of "choice" to become a freelancer. Here I will not follow the logic of an economic approach, such as the preference theory proposed by Hakim (2000), to interpret Angela's explanation. According to Hakim, different types of women make different choices in career development. Hakim identifies three types of women, namely, "home/ family centred" women (who give priority to their families), "work centred" women (who give priority to their employment careers) and "adaptive" women who shift their priority between family and career over their life cycles (Hakim 2000).

Rather, existing sociological researches illustrate that women's employment structures are the outcome of both choice and constraint (Crompton 1998, 2006; Gash 2008). It is the issue of the basis upon which women make these choices because choices are shaped/ constrained by the context within which choice is being made[5]. In Angela's case, she needs to bear most of childcare responsibilities (even if her husband is around). The traditional female role as a caretaker is assumed here. Women with childcare responsibilities make decisions relating to care and employment "with reference to moral and socially negotiated (not individual) views about what behaviour is right and proper" (Duncan *et al*. 2003). In this sense, "choices" are made within the confine of a moral framework (Crompton 2006). Becoming a freelancer is a decision made out of contextual (and even moral, adopting Duncan *et al.*'s point of view) consideration.

---

[5] Gash (2008) suggested that the opportunity structure for both preference formation and attainment vary by nation states when she compared part-time women in France, Denmark and the UK. Women with family responsibilities are particularly influenced by state policies that are relevant to maternal employment.

The desire for independence in work

Initially Stephen was a full time dictionary editor but he, too, went freelance. Stephen provided me an account of why:

> *"Because I wanted more variety in my work. I didn't want to just do dictionaries. I wanted to be more creative and work with different people. Also I wanted to be free: I didn't like work enforced by somebody all the time. I'd like to work in myself. (Work for yourself you mean?) Not have a boss. I didn't like having any boss. Sometimes the boss is good but sometimes not. I didn't like that. So there's always a little tension... Now I only work with people I like." (Stephen, ibid)*

The reason for changing to freelancer was the desire for independence in work – without intervention from any boss. Being a freelancer meant he would work only with people he liked. Being a freelancer is a choice. In this regard, freelancer is not marginal labour. It is a way out.

The other way round – from freelance to in-house

Existing literature tends to marginalise non-permanent jobs, treating non-permanent staff as those who are abandoned by the mainstream job market (Gallie and White 1994; Gallie *et al.* 1998; Kalleberg 2000; Felstead *et al.* 2001; Hoque and Kirkpatrick 2003; Felstead and Gallie 2004)[6]. These studies focus on part-time, temporary and short-contract work. Freelancers, however, are not popularly studied (Antcliff *et al*. 2005, 2007; Dex *et al*. 2000; Stanworth 1997). Based on my research findings, some freelancers moved from freelance to in-house. For instance, Angela who changed from permanent in-house editor to full-time freelance editor, changed back to in-house after ten years being a freelancer. The major reason is that her children did not need her to be at home when they moved up in school.

---

[6] For example, Gallie and White (1994) argued that those recruited into the secondary sector, i.e. a sector which offers poorly paid and insecure employment would be offered 'non-standard' employment contract. That includes temporary workers on short-term contracts and part-time workers whose hours of work made them ineligible for the most favourable types of employment protection.

Another point I want to make is that there is little effort in existing sociological research to study the mechanisms of how a freelancer moves onto the permanent staff and the other way round. How do they actually go back and forth in the market? In some cases, people do maintain two identities, i.e. being freelance and permanent at the same time, like Susan and Elaine, a designer and an art editor of Company A respectively. How does this labour market function? What are the mechanisms that make it function? Do social ties play a role? I will discuss these issues in subsequent chapters.

3.4.2 Evaluating the freelance status – from a freelancer's perspective

Few studies explore the freelancer. Stephen's comment on his freelance status points to both the good and the bad aspects of this way of life. On the good side, he has the freedom to choose with whom to work. On the negative side, the work is hard:

> *"(Are you satisfied with your freelance job?) Yes, very. It's a bit too hard sometimes: too much work and no sense of holiday. But the work is good. At the moment, if I want to get an hour's money, I have to work for an hour. There's no escape. You have to work for money." (Stephen, ibid)*

This illustrates the financial aspect of working freelance:, i.e. when they need x hours' money, they have to work for it, hour for hour.

As an alternative career route, going freelance full-time carries certain advantages.

The chief advantage is being one's own boss, with the freedom to choose one's working hours. Other advantages include a greater variety of work and potentially higher earnings, working from home and not having to travel, and having greater control over the work done. All in all, flexibility is a strong motivating factor for those juggling work and family responsibilities. Robert, a freelance designer, explains why he went freelance:

> *"…One of the nice things about it is that you do the work without all the office politics, without getting involved in all the meetings and all the other staff…If you actually enjoy editing, you don't need to do it in-house." (Robert, interviewed on 24th November 2005)*

Nevertheless, being a full time freelancer carries certain risks. The key risk is that it might not be easy for a full-time freelancer to receive sufficient work to earn a living. They may also find it hard to get a mortgage; and cannot put aside sufficient for a pension. There is also an irregular workflow of peaks and troughs and thus, an irregular income. There is a lack of employment benefits, such as paid holiday and sick leave (and a company pension). Freelancers also have the problem of cash flow. It can be difficult to receive prompt payment or there can be conflict between the company and the freelancer in terms of the number of hours recorded. Apart from the money issue, social isolation is also a major disadvantage. They have to work totally on their own at home, day and night.

Ella, who is a freelance editorial manager, also mentioned the negative side of being a freelancer:

> *"There was a big gap between people who work in-house and people who*

> *freelance. It can be quite scary because it's very vulnerable to be freelance because you have to learn to discipline yourself; you have to learn to be flexible. You have to go through the sort of fear of, Oh my God! where am I going to get my income from?" (Ella, interviewed on 2nd September 2005)*

In a nutshell, the positive side of going freelance is its freedom. The negative side is, obviously, the unstable income coming in every month and social isolation.

This section has summarised the labour market in the UK publishing sector. I first introduced the entry requirements of the publishing sector. I then discussed the general pattern of promotion in publishing. With regard to promotion, the size of the company and its organisational structure affect promotion opportunities. I will discuss promotion in Chapter 7. The type of job also determines a person's chances of promotion. Top managers (who manage the whole company), who usually started from marketing, are predominately male in this sector. Editorial directors and rights directors are drawn more equally from among the female workforce. The reason is that women tend to start their publishing careers in editorial or rights. Maternity leave also affects an employee's career development. With regard to the freelancer, I have discussed the nature of the freelance status, reasons for going freelance and the pros and cons of this career choice. In publishing, especially in design, it is common that in-house publishing employees take up freelance jobs.

In the following section, I examine the main job categories in publishing. I review the career path for each category of publishing and give a brief description of the nature of the job.

3.5 Career paths in the main publishing categories

3.5.1 Editorial work

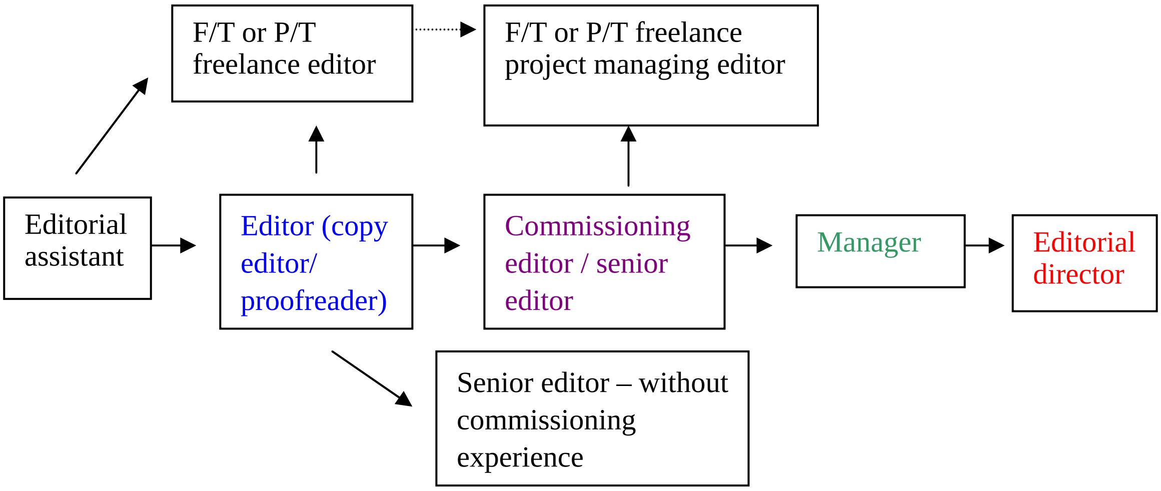
‘Editorial’ comprises the tasks of researching, conceiving the idea for a book, commissioning the author and editing the text. The editor is a key person in a publishing house. The editing process can be divided roughly into two parts (Owen 1993). The first part deals with the conceptualisation of a book, i.e. its structure and length, and assessing the consistency of the arguments once it has been prepared. This is the commissioning editor’s job. He or she reads the manuscript and discusses the structure of the book with the author. If the author agrees with the corrections, the manuscript moves to the next stage of the editing process which is known as copy editing. This is the responsibility of the copy editor, who goes through each line of the book, checking spelling and facts. Meanwhile, the commissioning editor works with other departments, such as design, production, publicity and sales, to prepare for the production of the book.

Across all the publishing sectors, editorial work is the most competitive area to break into. Jobs in editorial section are often viewed as being the most glamorous in publishing. There are few opportunities and competition is stiff. Angelina, an editorial director (titled ‘international editor’ in the company, which is equivalent to editor-in-chief) has been in the international publication for seven years. She commented:

> *“It has been quite hard to get a job in editorial because it is an intellectually prestigious and glorious job. If we do an advertisement for a junior editor here and say ‘somebody at entry level’, we'll get a hundred applications and there'll be people with five grade As at A-Level and they'll be from Oxford and Cambridge. It's still a business where people are prepared to put up with relatively very low pay. Because it's prestigious.” (Angelina, interviewed on 9th December 2005)*

The following figure depicts a typical career path in editorial.

Figure 3.1 Typical career path in editorial work[7]


F/T or P/T freelance editor
F/T or P/T freelance project managing editor
Editorial assistant
Editor (copy editor/ proofreader)
Commissioning editor / senior editor
Manager
Editorial director
Senior editor – without commissioning experience

-----------------→ 1-2 years

---→ at least 5 years[8]

--→ at least 6 years

---→ at least 8-10 years

(Time taken to attain the post in a well-structured publishing house)

It should be noted that the time lines in the above figure refer to ‘ideal types’ rather than averages (Graham 1993; Clark 2001; Lee 2004). I will look at all actual cases on P.60. I will fit in all interviewees in editorial work in Figure 3.2 in order to illustrate their career lines.

In the above figure, what I meant by “senior editor – without commissioning experience” is that usually senior editor would perform the commissioning task. But it is also possible that a senior editor does not work on commissioning but keeps on with the editorial task. The only difference between a senior editor and an editor in this sense would be the number of years an editor has worked on editorial and the stronger editing skills a senior editor demonstrated in the company.

---

[7] The title of position varies from company to company. The position names in this diagram are common in most of the publishing houses.

[8] However, Louisa is able to promote from trainee to commissioning editor within two and a half years (refer to Figure 3.2).

3.5.1.1 Responsibilities of each editorial position

The responsibilities of each job title vary from company to company. Even within the same title, they can vary in terms of pay, perks and authority. Titles tend to proliferate in the larger companies and drop away in the smaller ones. In smaller companies, an editor is likely to do a wide range of work, meaning that the distinction between titles is small.

Editorial assistant

Editorial assistant is the recognized starting point for a career in editorial. He or she assists senior editorial staff in the administration of the commissioning, planning and production of books or publicity materials. An editorial assistant can be promoted to editor and ultimately a higher managerial role, e.g. publisher or editorial director. Alternatively, an editorial assistant can go freelance.

Copy editor/ proof reader

As mentioned above, the role of a copy editor is to work on an author’s manuscript. He or she is required to correct basic spelling and typographical and grammatical errors, check facts and consistency of style, and undertake significant rewriting. They are poorly paid and underrated by senior management (Owen 1993). In-house copy editors tend to move between jobs frequently during the early years of their career in order to develop the widest range of experience and contacts possible. This is a stepping stone for those who want to go freelance. Increasingly, they are employed on a freelance basis and it is quite common for them to work for a number of employers at the same time.

Copy editors and proofreaders can move into the role of editor or managing editor if they are based in-house. They are also able to move into a project management role if they are freelance. These roles involve managing a publication over a longer period of time and allocating work to copy-editors and indexers (Davis 2003).

Selected case study – job description for a dictionary editor

Stephen is now a freelance editor but he worked as an in-house dictionary editor before. This is how he describes his responsibilities:

> *"Quite often, I work with more than one writer. This means that I have to make sure that each one is writing to the same style. The person who reads the book or who sees the course doesn't know it is written by more than one person: the editor makes it look as though it is written by one person. Also, you have to check the facts, check the grammar, and make sure that there are no mistakes at all." (Stephen, ibid)*

The work is independent, in the sense that everybody does a specific part of the job. Editorial jobs are more or less identical. This is how the division of labour operates in the dictionary section:

> *"At the top, there's a managing editor who overseas the whole department and decides who's doing what job. Underneath, each project has an editor-in-charge. Below that, there's a team of editors for each project. (How many people were there in a team?) In the department, there were about 20 people… You have a monthly meeting with a small group about the book you were working on and*

> *then the whole department would have a monthly meeting as well to talk about all the projects." (Stephen, ibid)*

The nature of the job of dictionary editor is to be independent. They work on their own and attend team meetings only occasionally. They have expertise and work independently. Dictionary editors tend to have close employment relationships as the job is about experience and they are not easy to replace.

Commissioning editor/ publisher

A commissioning editor is at the middle to senior level in a publishing house; a publisher is one level higher (Clark 2001). Yet, according to my interviewees, responsibility in these two positions is more or less the same[9]. As previously mentioned, a commissioning editor identifies and assesses the publishing market, develops and supports projects and authors, and maintains a publishing programme[10]. In essence, his/her role is to develop a publisher's book list and he or she is involved with a book at every stage of its production. There is close liaison with editorial, marketing and design colleagues and literary agents. In order to develop the publisher's book list, the commissioning editor researches the publishing field to keep up with the trends and identify gaps in the market. He or she attends book fairs and conferences, and even draws up surveys so as to identify areas of demand. Developing a professional network becomes crucial.

A commissioning editor is usually a graduate with at least five years experience in publishing. After one or two years, a commissioning editor may be promoted to publisher. Traditionally, a new entrant begins as an editorial assistant and then works his/her way up, through editor to commissioning editor[11]. But in academic publishing, academics with specialist subject knowledge may be recruited directly into the commissioning position. As mentioned earlier, opportunities for progression depend on whether the firm is a large or small. A clear career structure exists in a larger publishing house, from junior editorial level to senior commissioning editor; whereas the career structure in a small publishing house is relatively blurred. In general, commissioning editors are assessed by results, i.e. how much profit is brought in by their books. Peter, a founder of a publishing house, describes the work of a commissioning editor:

---

[9] In the following, 'commissioning editor' also refers to publisher.

[10] According to Clark (2001), a commissioning editor entails commissioning work as well as deciding which manuscripts to accept from agents and which to reject. The editor, given the go-ahead, negotiates the contract with the author or agent (agents present their own contracts weighted in the author's favour), agrees or invents the book's title (important for sales success), and on commissioned books ensures that the author appreciates what is expected (e.g. content, length, deadline).

> *"Actually, bookselling and publishing has actually become a matter of selling all the time; you as an editor will have to sell internally to a sales conference to convince the rest that this one is going to make it; and they have to go out to convince the book buyers in the chains, while the marketing department is probably having to support that." (Peter, ibid)*

Successful commissioning editors can progress to become publishers who will have control over the whole editorial team.

Editorial director

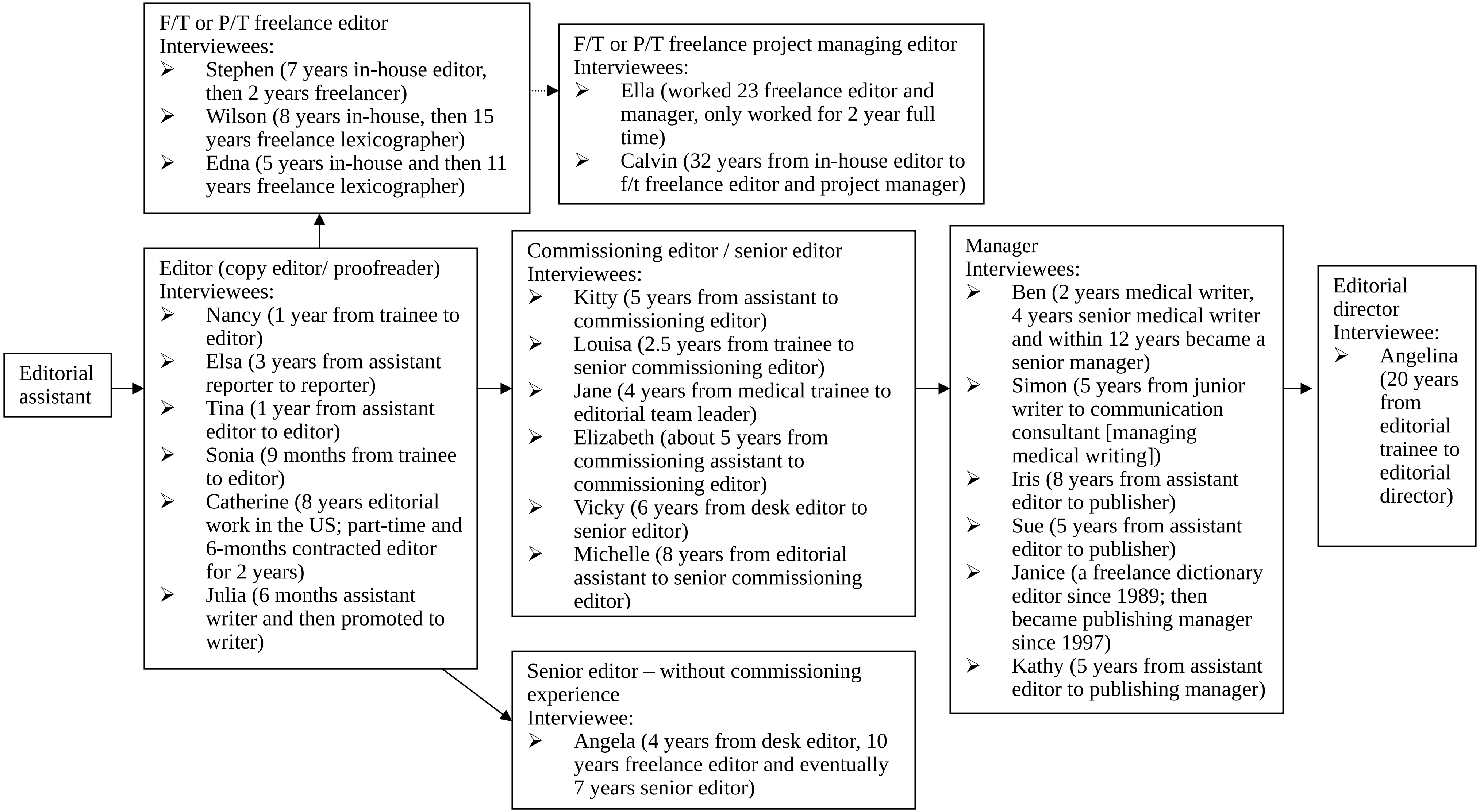
The editorial director is the head of the editorial team. Depending on the company structure, the major duties are to provide editorial leadership within the team, oversee the editorial content, add more editorial features and attend publishing conferences on a national or worldwide basis. He or she also provides line management to editorial managers and acts as an editorial consultant for projects.

---

[11] But it is still likely that some commissioning entrants start with sales and marketing, or contracts and rights background (AGACAS).

In the following, I am going to present the career lines of each individual interviewee who works in editorial.

Figure 3.2 Career path of the interviewees in editorial work[35]



Editorial assistant

Editor (copy editor/ proofreader)
Interviewees:
- Nancy (1 year from trainee to editor)
- Elsa (3 years from assistant reporter to reporter)
- Tina (1 year from assistant editor to editor)
- Sonia (9 months from trainee to editor)
- Catherine (8 years editorial work in the US; part-time and 6-months contracted editor for 2 years)
- Julia (6 months assistant writer and then promoted to writer)

F/T or P/T freelance editor
Interviewees:
- Stephen (7 years in-house editor, then 2 years freelancer)
- Wilson (8 years in-house, then 15 years freelance lexicographer)
- Edna (5 years in-house and then 11 years freelance lexicographer)

F/T or P/T freelance project managing editor
Interviewees:
- Ella (worked 23 freelance editor and manager, only worked for 2 year full time)
- Calvin (32 years from in-house editor to f/t freelance editor and project manager)

Commissioning editor / senior editor
Interviewees:
- Kitty (5 years from assistant to commissioning editor)
- Louisa (2.5 years from trainee to senior commissioning editor)
- Jane (4 years from medical trainee to editorial team leader)
- Elizabeth (about 5 years from commissioning assistant to commissioning editor)
- Vicky (6 years from desk editor to senior editor)
- Michelle (8 years from editorial assistant to senior commissioning editor)

Senior editor – without commissioning experience
Interviewee:
- Angela (4 years from desk editor, 10 years freelance editor and eventually 7 years senior editor)

Manager
Interviewees:
- Ben (2 years medical writer, 4 years senior medical writer and within 12 years became a senior manager)
- Simon (5 years from junior writer to communication consultant [managing medical writing])
- Iris (8 years from assistant editor to publisher)
- Sue (5 years from assistant editor to publisher)
- Janice (a freelance dictionary editor since 1989; then became publishing manager since 1997)
- Kathy (5 years from assistant editor to publishing manager)

Editorial director
Interviewee:
- Angelina (20 years from editorial trainee to editorial director)

---

[35] The title of position varies from company to company. The position names in this diagram are common in most of the publishing houses. Moreover, some interviewees share multi-roles. For instance, Catherine is a publication officer. She bears equal responsibilities on editorial and production.

3.5.1.2 Case studies of career lines in publishing

The previous section specifies a typical career route on the editorial side of publishing. The following section illustrates this with two case studies that describe the career trajectory of two editorial staff. The first case is Angelina, an editorial director of an international publishing house. She graduated from Oxford University with a BA in psychology. She started working in publishing in 1981 and has been climbing the editorial career ladder ever since.

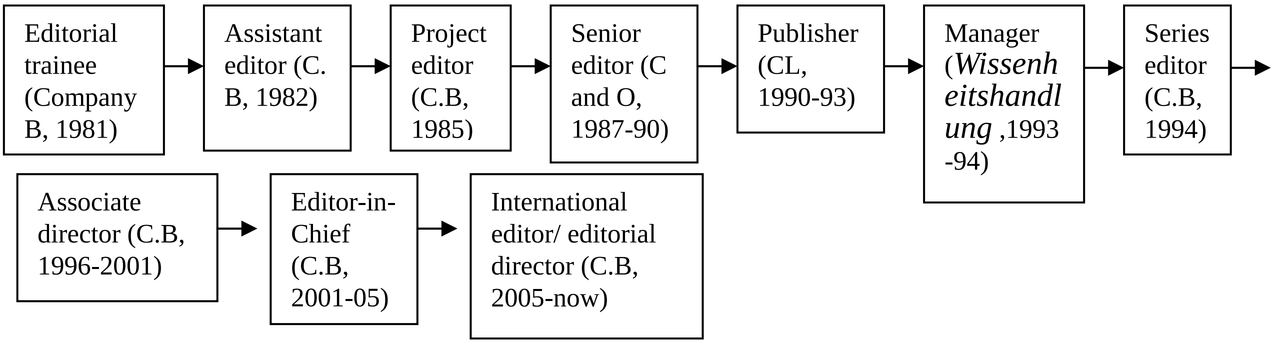
> *“My first job was here (*Company B (C.B), an international publishing firm). *I came here in Feb 1981 as a trainee. I had written one of those letters, attended interviews. Then after I think it was six and a half years, I decided it was time to leave. I went to a company called C and O where I was a senior editor. I had started as an editorial trainee and I finished as the project editor – it had taken six and a half years until I was promoted to that. I went to C and O as a senior editor.” (Angelina, ibid)*

Angelina’s career continues as follows:

> *“That led me to go to CL where I became a publisher. I went to CL in 1990 and would be there for two and a half years. Then a stage with a company called Wissenheitshandlung in Germany whom I knew from earlier work. They were looking for a development editor. The job was conceiving the ideas. It's a creative role, coming up with ideas for books and working with the designers to shape them. I had a baby by then and it was a freelance job but under contract. I did that for about 18 months. It was 1994. Then the people at Company B came back to me and said, ‘Would you like to come back?’. After seven years! The head of the department, who had been my head of department, was looking for somebody long-term to replace him as editor-in-chief of Company B Books.” (Angelina, ibid)*

To summarise, Angelina’s careers trajectory is as follows:

Figure 3.3 Angelina's career trajectory

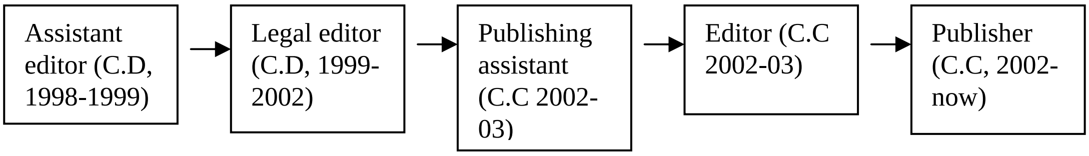

Editorial trainee (Company B, 1981)
Assistant editor (C. B, 1982)
Project editor (C.B, 1985)
Senior editor (C and O, 1987-90)
Publisher (CL, 1990-93)
Manager (Wissenheitshandlung ,1993 -94)
Series editor (C.B, 1994)
Associate director (C.B, 1996-2001)
Editor-in-Chief (C.B, 2001-05)
International editor/ editorial director (C.B, 2005-now)

Another case is Sue's. She is a publisher in a legal publishing house. She worked as an English teacher in Serbia from 1992-94. Then she moved to London and worked as a secretary from 1995-98. During this period, she did a publishing course. In 1998, she started working in legal publishing and after four years, was promoted to publisher.

> *"Before coming to the Company C (C.C), I worked for an organisation called the Company D (C.D). This is an association of lawyers and they have law department. I started my publishing career with them and wrote publications and journals for this organisation. Through the Company D, I got into the legal publishing industry and then moved on to a legal publishing house." (Sue, interviewed on 9th December 2005)*

In summary, Sue's careers trajectory is as follows:

Figure 3.4 Sue's career trajectory


Assistant editor (C.D, 1998-1999)
Legal editor (C.D, 1999-2002)
Publishing assistant (C.C 2002-03)
Editor (C.C 2002-03)
Publisher (C.C, 2002-now)

3.5.2 Design

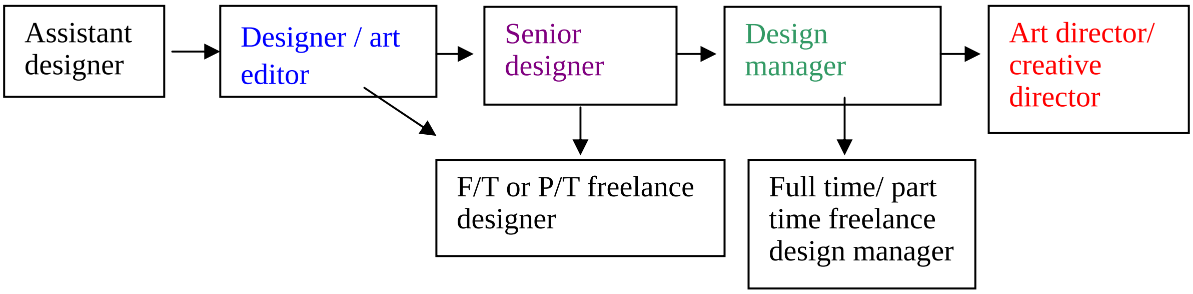
Book design is the conception, planning and specification of the physical and visual attributes of a book (Lee 2004). It is about creating and illustrating pages. Working with the client or account manager, a designer develops creative ideas and concepts, and chooses the appropriate medium and style to meet the objectives of the client. The work demands 'creative flair, up-to-date knowledge of industry software and a professional approach to time, costs and deadlines.'[1] The proportion of men and women is more or less equal.

In design, job offers are based on the standard of a portfolio of work rather than on educational qualifications. However, progress without formal training is very difficult and the vast majority of graphic designers have higher qualifications. The following figure depicts the typical career path of a designer.

---

[1] Design is a very competitive profession. The industry is slowly expanding but demands for quality are increasing (ACGAS 2005).

Figure 3.5 Typical career path in design


Assistant designer
Designer / art editor
Senior designer
Design manager
Art director/ creative director
F/T or P/T freelance designer
Full time/ part time freelance design manager

-----------------→ 1 or 2 years
--→ at least 5-6 years
---→ at least 6-8 years
---→ at least 8-10 years

(Time taken to attain the post in a well-structured publishing house)

It should be noted that the time lines in the above figure refer to 'ideal types' rather than averages (Graham 1993; Clark 2001; Lee 2004). I will look at all actual cases on P.69. I will fit in all interviewees in design in Figure 3.6 in order to illustrate their career lines.

In large publishing houses, it takes longer to achieve promotion from designer to management positions such as creative director. In smaller companies, the career structure can be blurred. Susan, currently a senior art editor at Company A, described her career trajectory when she worked in a small publishing house three years ago:

> *'Basically within just about three years, I've gone through being designer to art director. So I've been a designer, a senior designer and art director within three years.' (Susan, 13th September 2005)*

A formal position as designer is more likely to provide the opportunity to build up a portfolio and gain an insight into the industry.

3.5.2.1 Responsibilities of each position in design (or an art editor)

Again, the responsibilities of each job title vary from company to company. Even within the same title, they can vary in terms of pay, perks and authority.

Assistant designer/ designer

Designers are usually based in communal studios as some work involves team working. At junior level, work is mainly office-based. According to Susan, the senior art editor at Company A, progression from assistant designer to designer is possible within one to two years. At this stage, it is important to develop a good reputation and to make contacts. A designer may be in a position to apply for a senior designer post after five to six years.

Senior designer

A senior designer works in day-to-day partnership with senior editors, designers and art directors on the creative development of a book and also conceptualises new projects. He or she reports to the art director.

Selected case study – the nature of a job as design manager

Rose is a book design manager at Company A. She has already worked there for 14 years. According to her, a designer needs to work with the following people: art editors, illustrators, photographers and editors. By putting everything together and handing over the package to production, she has a quasi-managerial role. She does a lot of commissioning of freelance designers.

> *“We do have a studio. Within the studio, we have a group of freelancers that we*

> *have used before. We go back to them because they're reliable." (Rose, 24th August 2005)*

> *"The senior designer's role depends on your experience and on what you can do. The top is basically your project manager. So you deal with freelancers although you don't deal with the actual contracting of the freelancers. You deal with the day-to-day." (Rose, ibid)*

When a designer changes position, it may be no more than a change in the type of book they work on. For Rose, *"Sometimes I worked on family books, which are different teams. When I worked on secondary school books, I worked in different areas (of types of books)."*

This is how the freelance system works in Company A's design department. It is more or less systematised. There are 25-30 people in the studio. One person is in charge of the design studio, which is divided into several sections and which also includes the commissioning department for illustrations. Rose describes the division of the studio. She reports to the secondary school book design manager of her own studio.

Rose also mentioned the drawbacks of being a manager. The higher one climbs, the more managerial tasks one has to carry out; and, thus, the more one moves away from one's original field:

> *"What I'm doing now is a lot less design and a lot more management – probably 85%, maybe 90%, of my time is taken up with managing. Only 10% of my time is taken up with design, being creative. Unfortunately, the further up you go, …" (Rose, ibid)*

Being a manager definitely involves losing most of the creative elements of the work.

This is what Rose feels:

> *"Well, I'm a manager at the moment. I don't know. I really don't know. I mean I'm discovering that I'm quite enjoying the managerial side, which I had had hesitations about, but I do miss not being able to do the design. So I don't know." (Rose, ibid)*

She needs to handle much more administration but she dislikes it.

Art director

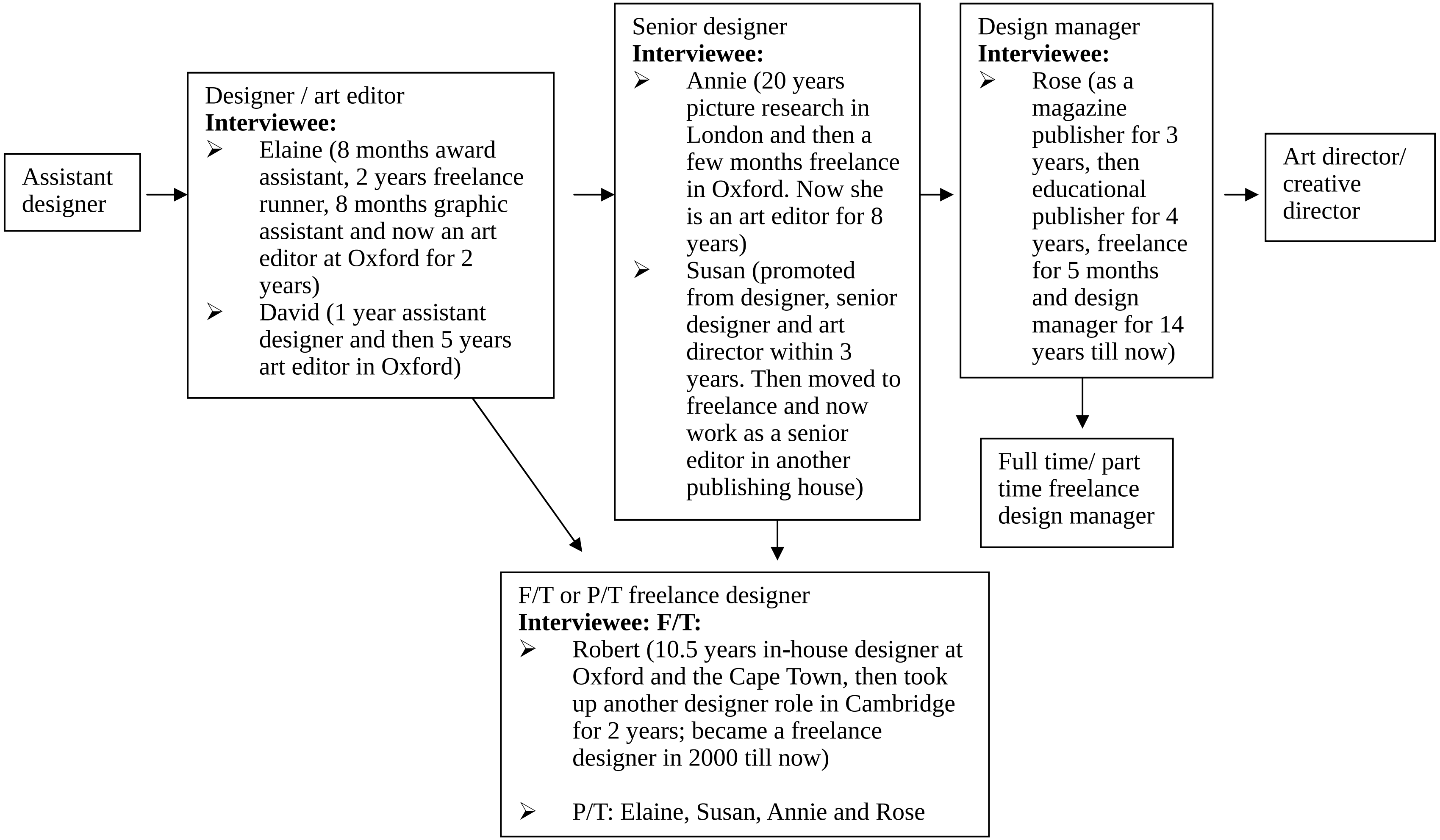
Art directors can usually be found in the larger publishers. Very often, an art director is simply the head of the department. An art director is responsible for monitoring the design of a book in cooperation with the editorial, marketing, production and art teams. The basic responsibilities include supervising design staff and monitoring the manuscripts prepared for design. He or she is responsible for ensuring a high level of design and creativity.

Freelance designer

Self-employment or freelancing is common in design. Those designers with several years experience and professional contacts are the ones most likely to freelance successfully. A good reputation is a pre-requisite for a freelancer. Freelance designers either share a studio or work from home. Generally, the routine design jobs are done in-house, leaving the more demanding and specialised ones to freelancers (Lee 2004). Freelance designers are regarded as entrepreneurs with an independent and creative spirit.

In the following, I am going to illustrate the career lines of the interviewees who work in design.

Figure 3.6 Career path of the interviewees in design[37]



Assistant designer

Designer / art editor
Interviewee:
- Elaine (8 months award assistant, 2 years freelance runner, 8 months graphic assistant and now an art editor at Oxford for 2 years)
- David (1 year assistant designer and then 5 years art editor in Oxford)

Senior designer
Interviewee:
- Annie (20 years picture research in London and then a few months freelance in Oxford. Now she is an art editor for 8 years)
- Susan (promoted from designer, senior designer and art director within 3 years. Then moved to freelance and now work as a senior editor in another publishing house)

Design manager
Interviewee:
- Rose (as a magazine publisher for 3 years, then educational publisher for 4 years, freelance for 5 months and design manager for 14 years till now)

Art director/ creative director

Full time/ part time freelance design manager

F/T or P/T freelance designer
Interviewee: F/T:
- Robert (10.5 years in-house designer at Oxford and the Cape Town, then took up another designer role in Cambridge for 2 years; became a freelance designer in 2000 till now)

- P/T: Elaine, Susan, Annie and Rose

---

[37]The title of position varies from company to company. The position names in this diagram are common in most of the publishing houses.

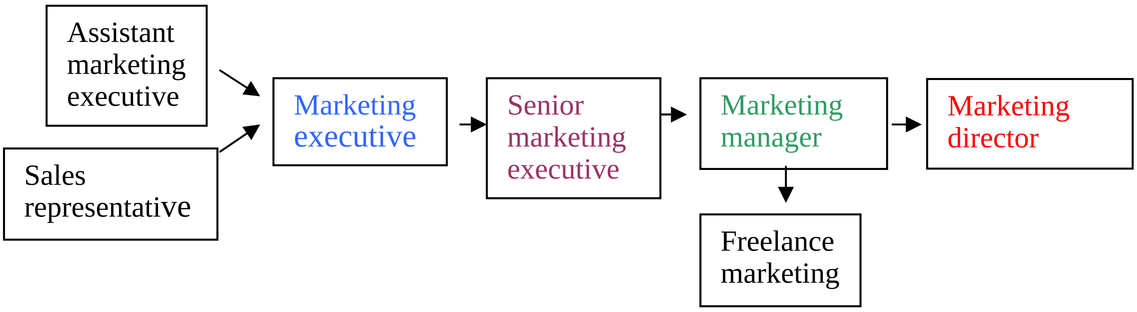
3.5.2.2 Case study of the career line of a designer

Rose is a book designer in Company A (see above). She oversees the design of English-language books on teaching Italian**.** She started working in Company A in 1991 and worked in Oxford for 14 years. Before that, she worked for Company A as a freelance designer in South Africa for six months. Immediately after her degree, she spent about three years as magazine publisher, then she worked as a designer with Longman South Africa for a further three years. After that, she went to a publishing company of general books – mainly trade books, most on natural history – where she spent another 3-4 years before joining Company A in Oxford. Her working career began in 1984.

3.5.3 Marketing and publicity

The marketing manager’s job frequently falls into two parts. The first is on the planning of marketing campaigns. Work includes planning, advertising, promotion, public/media relations, product development, distribution, sponsorship and research. Marketing staff manage the production of marketing materials, which includes leaflets and posters. The second is to be responsible for organising and attending events and exhibitions. The following figure depicts a typical career path in marketing.

Figure 3.7 Typical career path in marketing


Assistant marketing executive
Sales representative
Marketing executive
Senior marketing executive
Marketing manager
Marketing director
Freelance marketing

------------------------→ 1-2 years
--→ at least 3-4 years
---→ at least 4-6 years
---→ at least 8-10 years

(Time taken to attain the post in a well-structured publishing house)

It should be noted that the time lines in the above figure refer to 'ideal types' rather than averages (Graham 1993; Clark 2001; Lee 2004). I will look at all actual cases on P.74. I will fit in all interviewees in marketing in Figure 3.8 in order to illustrate their career lines.

In marketing, career progression is firmly linked to relevant experiences and key transferable skills. It is also becoming increasingly important to add further qualifications to a CV, such as those offered by the Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM), if one wants to achieve a more senior marketing position.

3.5.3.1 Responsibilities of each position in marketing

Again, the responsibilities of each job title vary from company to company. Even within the same title, they can vary in terms of pay, perks and authority.

Sales representative

Sales representative/ executives sell their company's products, with the constant aim of maximising sales. Their typical responsibilities include visiting potential customers to demonstrate new products and find new markets, maintaining relationships with existing customers through regular visits, acting as a contact between the company and its existing/ potential markets, staffing trade exhibitions and demonstrations, and gathering market and customer information (AGCAS, 2005). There is usually a target of sales to be met. The nature of the job is for the sales rep to work on his/ her own.

Having a degree in business/ management, media studies or modern languages can improve the chance of entry. In sales, promotion is often based on results. Rapid progression is common. The basic route to promotion involves moving up to sales manager and sales director. A common alternative route is to switch to publicity and marketing (as shown in the diagram).

Marketing executive

It typically takes at least ten years to be promoted from marketing executive to marketing director. A marketing manager works closely with the marketing director and supervises the marketing team. He or she brainstorms marketing campaigns. He or she is also responsible for planning and executing marketing campaigns against targeted goals.

Marketing director

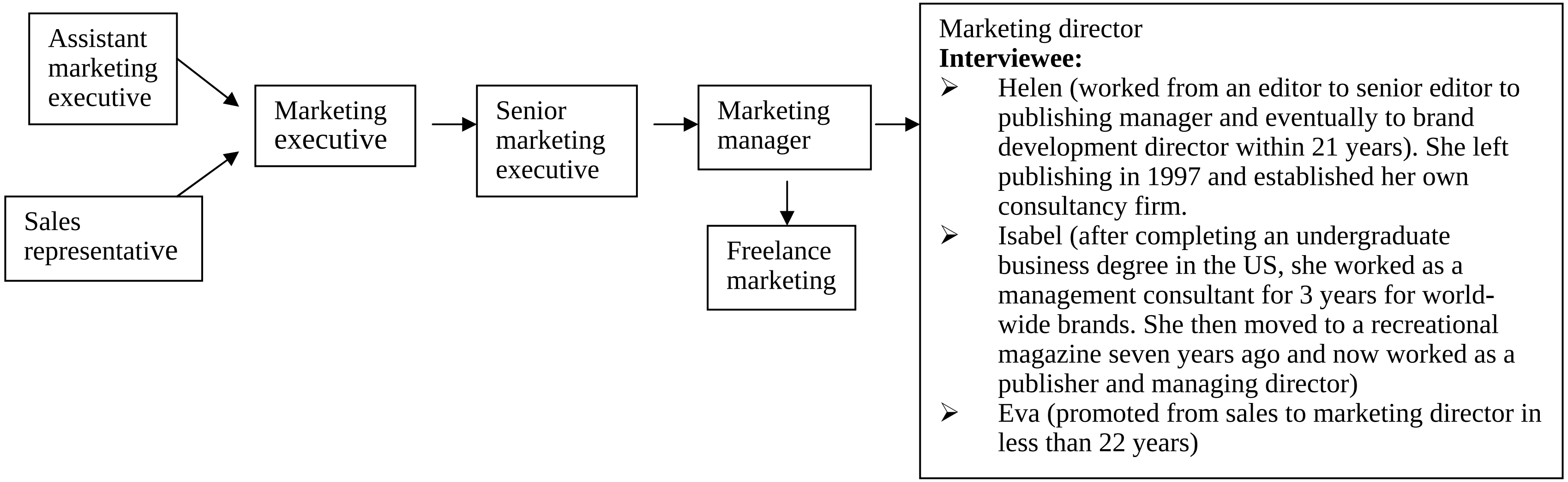
The marketing director oversees promotional campaigns and develops strategies for all advertising and promotion. He or she communicates with sales and customers for better marketing strategies and works closely with in-house editors and marketing staff.

Freelancer

Going freelance in marketing is possible, though not as popular as in the other publishing roles. Freelance marketing is more common when the marketing professional has experience behind them (ACGAS, 2005).

In the following, I am going to illustrate the career lines of the interviewees in marketing.

Figure 3.8 Career path of the interviewees in marketing[38]


Assistant marketing executive
Sales representative
Marketing executive
Senior marketing executive
Marketing manager
Freelance marketing
Marketing director

Interviewee:

- Helen (worked from an editor to senior editor to publishing manager and eventually to brand development director within 21 years). She left publishing in 1997 and established her own consultancy firm.
- Isabel (after completing an undergraduate business degree in the US, she worked as a management consultant for 3 years for world-wide brands. She then moved to a recreational magazine seven years ago and now worked as a publisher and managing director)
- Eva (promoted from sales to marketing director in less than 22 years)

---

[38] The title of position varies from company to company. The position names in this diagram are common in most of the publishing houses.

3.5.4 Publicity

The other function of marketing is publicity. Publicity is ‘the business of making goods or persons publicly known’ (Graham 1993). Publishing and publicity go hand in hand. The aim of publicity is to make the media, book trade and consumers conscious of the company and to stimulate demand. It concentrates on getting press exposure and organising promotional events such as book launches and author signing tours to establish a book when it is first published. In recent years, publicity has become more integrated than before into marketing and therefore into sales. At the same time, publicity, marketing and sales have become integral to the whole publishing and editorial process[1]. Since the 1980s, publicity has been dominated by ‘glamour girls’ (Graham 1993). The publicity girls ‘became stars in their own right, and one such even coined a new term – ‘puffette’ for her profession’ (Graham 1993). This is how Anna describes her profession:

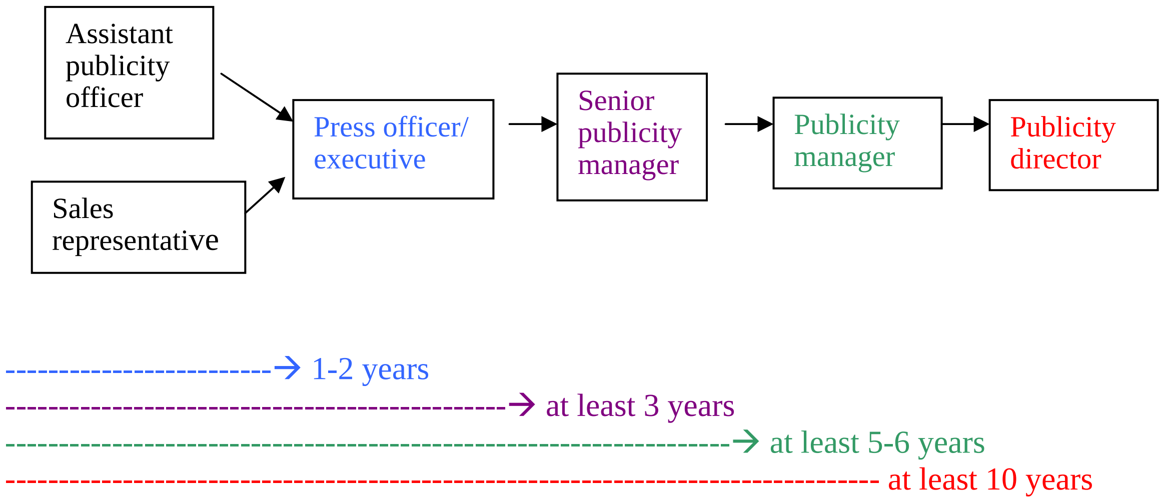
> *“It's quite a glamorous profession, publicity. It's mainly female, probably 90%; and there's lots of glamour and high heels and that kind of thing.” (Anna, interviewed on 26th July 2005)*

The following figure depicts a typical career path in publicity.

---

[1] According to Graham (1993), in recent years, whether a commissioning editor buys a book initially is often decided by just the publicists. This practice is in sharp contrast with the past. In more than twenty years ago, editors bought the books they wanted to buy and then passed the word to the publicist, to marketing and eventually to sales. In short, editors had much more power in the past.

Figure 3.9 Typical career path in publicity


Assistant publicity officer
Sales representative
Press officer/ executive
Senior publicity manager
Publicity manager
Publicity director
1-2 years
at least 3 years
at least 5-6 years
at least 10 years

(Time taken to attain the post in a well-structured publishing house)

It should be noted that the time lines in the above figure refer to 'ideal types' rather than averages (Graham 1993; Clark 2001; Lee 2004). I will look at one actual case on P.77. I will fit in all interviewees in publicity in Figure 3.10 in order to illustrate their career lines.

3.5.4.1 Responsibilities of each position in publicity

Again, the responsibilities of each job title vary from company to company. Even within the same title, they can vary in terms of pay, perks and authority.

Publicity assistant

The work of a publicity assistant is administrative. He or she is responsible for sending out galleys (early bound and typeset copies of a book) to book reviewers at newspapers and magazines, maintaining and updating lists of reviewers who should receive free copies of the published book once it's out; working with his/her boss to arrange radio, print and television interviews for authors; and may organise book-release parties and signings at book shops.

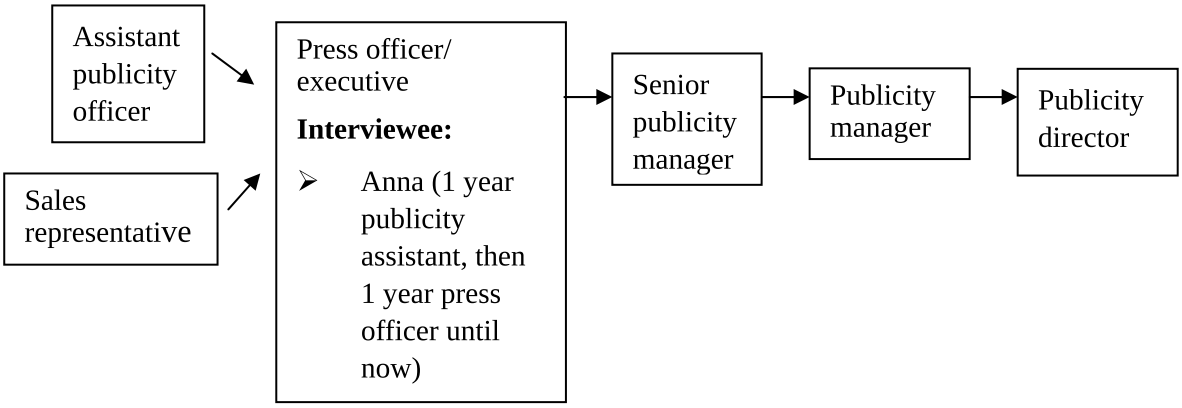
Publicity assistants go on to become publicity directors — and because good publicity is so important to book sales, the best publicists sometimes move on to the corporate marketing and executive publishing levels.

Press officer

A press officer develops contacts and ongoing relationships with key local media and provides additional press office support. He or she spends most of the time on the telephone talking to the press - spreading the news about a book or author - sending out books, writing press releases, setting up author interviews or tours, and then accompanying authors to interviews and/ or tours.

In the following, I am going to illustrate the career lines of the interviewees.

Figure 3.10 Career path of the interviewees in publicity


Assistant publicity officer
Sales representative
Press officer/ executive
Interviewee:
➢ Anna (1 year publicity assistant, then 1 year press officer until now)
Senior publicity manager
Publicity manager
Publicity director

Case study – job description for a press officer

Anna has been working as a press officer for 2 years. She deals with the following people every day:

> *"Journalists from newspapers and TV, TV producers, radio producers – as well as meeting with the media and working in the office; booksellers, internal people in all the different departments." (Anna, ibid)*

> *"Basically, the publicity role doesn't require any experience in publishing because it's largely an administrative role. If my boss feels that you're interested in the job and you can handle it, then you'll have more and more responsibility. So you don't actually need any proper experience in publicity but you'd need to show that you're interested in the media." (Anna, ibid)*

This is the structure of a publicity team:

> *"There are two press officers, a publicity manager and a publicity director; the director is my boss." (Anna, ibid)*

> *"I report directly to my boss. Someone else used to report to the manager, perhaps to give the manager more responsibility. We had a situation where the manager was managing one press officer and the director was managing the rest. Now we all report to the director" (Anna, ibid)*

> *"The publicity manager basically has more responsibilities and gets the hardest work – that's why she is called the manager. She's got more experience. So she would get more high profile books where there's lots of money involved and lots of prestige inviting. I don't report to that manager but I consult her all the time because we sit together; the director sits in the corner of the office on the other side of the corridor." (Anna, ibid)*

The above illustrates how a press officer coordinates with other staff members.

Publicity manager

The publicity manager works independently and closely with the press officer and publishing director to develop strategies for publicity campaigns. The basic task is to pitch the press materials, develop media contacts, create press releases and conduct media outreach. Usually, it takes about 5-6 years to get from the assistant position to management.

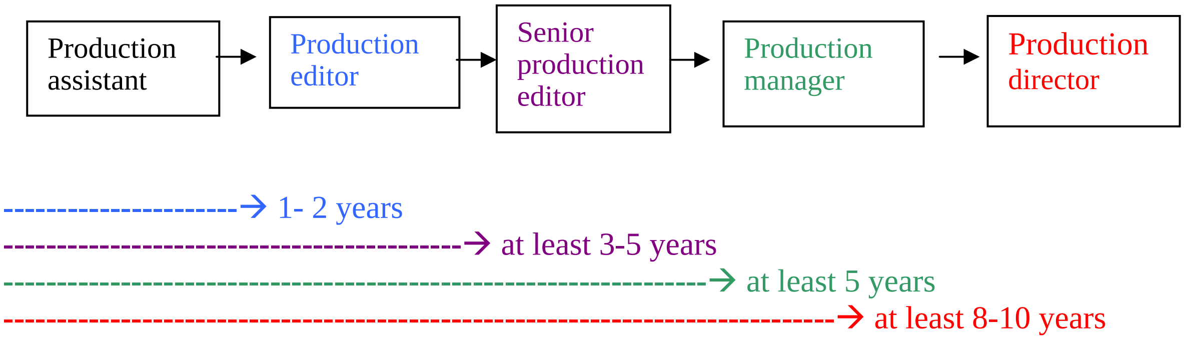
Publicity director

The publicity director is the key link with the marketing, editorial and sales departments as well as with the media and authors. He or she manages the departmental budget, directs the participation of the company's authors at book fairs or relevant social functions, oversees publicity campaigns, and handles key authors and projects personally. At least ten years is needed to get from assistant level to the directorial position.

3.5.5 Production

Book production is the execution of the design, i.e. purchasing materials and services, scheduling and routing the work, coordinating the manufacture of the book with distribution requirements, and maintaining records (Lee 2004). The production department is the link between editors, designers and external suppliers. It prepares the book for the printer. Production is responsible for the physical process of transforming the manuscript and artwork into the finished book. Production staff must be able to work with editors and designers. The following figure depicts a typical career path in production.

Figure 3.11 Typical career path in production


Production assistant
Production editor
Senior production editor
Production manager
Production director
1- 2 years
at least 3-5 years
at least 5 years
at least 8-10 years

(Time taken to attain the post in a well-structured publishing house)

It should be noted that the time lines in the above figure refer to ‘ideal types’ rather than averages (Graham 1993; Clark 2001; Lee 2004). I will look at all actual cases on P.83. I will fit in all interviewees in production in figure 3.12 in order to illustrate their career lines.

A production officer may experience all aspects of planning work such as administration, origination, print, bindery and dispatch. So production provides a good grounding for supervisory and management careers in all parts of the publishing industry (AGCAS 2005). Larger companies generally offer more opportunities for promotion to supervisory and management positions. Small companies sometimes offer greater responsibility earlier and the chance to gain skills and experience more quickly across a range of specialities. Entry without a degree is not unusual in production. Production staff members tend to receive a range of training after getting the job but related qualifications such as arts and design and IT are considered useful.

3.5.5.1 Responsibilities of each position in production

Again, the responsibilities of each job title vary from company to company. Even within the same title, they can vary in terms of pay, perks and authority.

Production assistant

A production assistant's work is varied. The major responsibility is to provide administrative support inside and outside the production office.

Production editor

A production editor works with production managers, authors, editors and typesetters. He or she is chiefly responsible for ensuring all aspects of production, from the delivery of manuscript (including pictures and indexes) to the final book. The basic responsibilities include setting the daily production schedules for typesetters, copyeditors and proofreaders; reviewing the accuracy of their work; and providing a day-to-day calendar of the production schedule. He or she usually has to undergo specific training.

Production manager

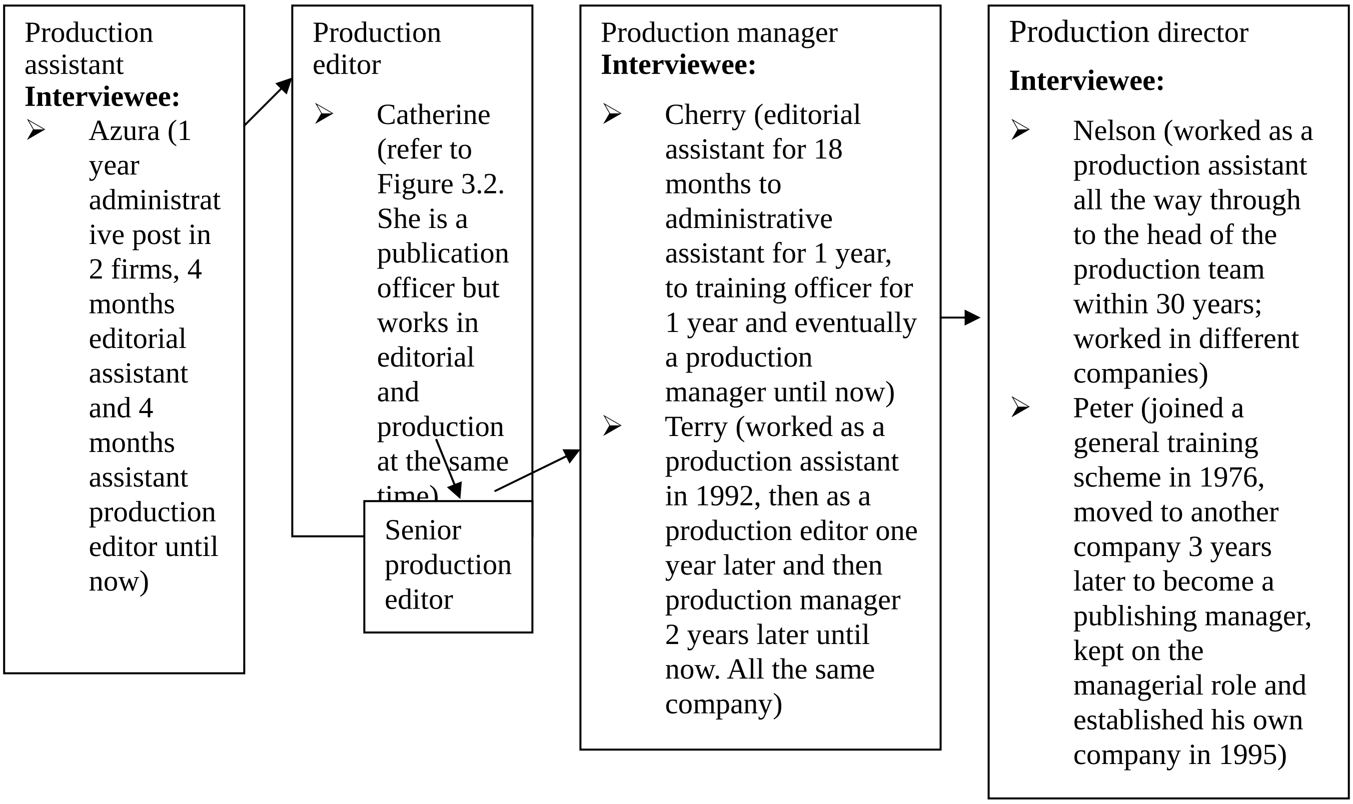
A production manager manages the production process. This includes drawing up a production schedule, allocating work and overseeing the work of the team, checking the quality of material in production and on completion, estimating the length of time and cost of a job and liaising with the printer, account managers and editors. Freelance in production is unusual.

Being a freelancer

In freelance production, there is no room for anybody but the expert (Lee 2004). If the large publishers send out production work, they do so only for books that require more attention than they can give in-house or that involve some kinds of special case.

In the following, I am going to illustrate the career lines of the interviewees.

Figure 3.12 Career path of the interviewees in production[2]



Production assistant
Interviewee:
- Azura (1 year administrative post in 2 firms, 4 months editorial assistant and 4 months assistant production editor until now)

Production editor
- Catherine (refer to Figure 3.2. She is a publication officer but works in editorial and production at the same time)

Senior production editor

Production manager
Interviewee:
- Cherry (editorial assistant for 18 months to administrative assistant for 1 year, to training officer for 1 year and eventually a production manager until now)
- Terry (worked as a production assistant in 1992, then as a production editor one year later and then production manager 2 years later until now. All the same company)

Production director
Interviewee:
- Nelson (worked as a production assistant all the way through to the head of the production team within 30 years; worked in different companies)
- Peter (joined a general training scheme in 1976, moved to another company 3 years later to become a publishing manager, kept on the managerial role and established his own company in 1995)

3.5.5.2 Selected case study of the career trajectory of a production manager

Cherry, a Spanish, is a production manager at Company E (an academic publishing company in Oxford), specialising in scientific publishing. She had studied geography and history in Spain and did not know much English before coming to the UK. She started working as a waitress and did an English-language course (GCSE). A year later, a fellow Spaniard, who was working as editorial assistant at Company A asked her whether she would be interested in replacing her because Company A was looking for native Spanish speakers. Cherry did not know this contact, who was a “friend of a friend”. They had never met. The contact passed Cherry's name to Judith at Company A, and three months later, Judith called her for an interview and gave her the job. The reason was because she spoke Spanish. Cherry worked in Company A for one and a half years, until her contract came to an end.

---

[2] The title of position varies from company to company. The position names in this diagram are common in most of the publishing houses.

After Company A, Cherry saw an advertisement for an administrator at Company E’s production department. The department specialised in electronic production and online medical, technical and social sciences journals. She has been working with Company E since 1997. There were only five people in the electronic production department at the time. One was the boss and the other four were the same grade. They were all technical people except for Cherry. At the end of the year, restructuring meant that some of them were made redundant and some left the job as it was not well paid. Cherry was the only one who managed to stay on. She was made training officer for one year. The following year, she became a production manager.

Cherry had been a teacher in Spain and then worked as a librarian (information assistant in the library) for electronic journals. So she had been consistently working with electronic journals. This was her expertise. Electronic journals are a new type of publishing and Cherry is a pioneer in the field. This means that whatever she does is experimental and there is plenty of room for development. In some ways, I would say that Cherry has known how to choose the right path for herself, and then how to market her skills.

This section reviewed the four major roles in publishing: editorial, design, marketing and production. I have reviewed the nature of these roles and the relevant career paths. Throughout this section, I have also indicated the distribution of interviewees through diagrams (of career path).

3.6 Contextualising sociological discussion on the nature of a job

In this section, I will relate the descriptions of jobs in different publishing contexts outlined above to the discussion on the nature of a job discussed in Chapter 1.

Obviously, the level of autonomy differs from junior to senior positions (see Sorensen and Kalleberg's discussion on control over the job in Chapter 1 and 4). Those working in junior positions cannot enjoy as much autonomy as those in senior positions (senior and managerial positions or above). Even in a more creative publishing role such as design, a designer needs to listen to the supervisor's briefing before setting to work. The autonomy enjoyed by people in senior positions basically lies in managing the team members (such as delivering the work). Although they have more say in the workplace, they share a heavy workload in administrative work. Work in publishing houses is routine in nature. Freelancers enjoy the highest levels of autonomy because no one monitors their work – with the trade-off that they lack control over access to work (see below) – and they can be easily replaced.

Regarding control over access to work (as suggested by Sorensen and Kalleberg 1980), the more junior the position, the easier the person is to replace. An open employment relationship is implied. This applies to roles ranging across editorial, design, production, marketing and publicity. There are very often more people in junior positions than in senior positions; hence, replacement should be easy. As I will discuss in Chapter 4, Angelina, the editorial director of an international publishing house, outlined in what way she was the best person for the position, given her experience in the field and her familiarity with the company. Her previous boss had called her back to take up the position because it was difficult to find someone else.

Freelancers, on the other hand, are much easier to replace and tend to be employed on a project basis. Once the project is completed, the publishing house can decide whether to keep on the freelancer or replace them, largely depending on the performance of the job. Annie, a senior art editor in Oxford, told me that she is happy to keep on a bad-tempered freelance designer because his work is high quality.

As for the difficulty in monitoring job output suggested by Goldthorpe (2000), I argue that there should be little difficulty in assessing the output of those in junior positions. They are given guidelines and supervision and they are expected to ensure that the work is up to standard. The performance for those in senior positions can take longer to emerge. Robert, a freelance designer, told me that the design manager of his previous company was a very poor manager but was able to stay on for a couple of years because it takes time before it becomes obvious that a manager is inefficient (provided the manager can pass responsibility for poor performance onto their subordinates and clothe him/herself in a convincing professional aura.)

Regarding the difficulties in monitoring output, I shall discuss freelancers separately from those working in-house; and this supplements the insufficiencies in Goldthorpe’s arguments. In the case of a freelancer, it is easy to check that he or she is delivering good quality product but it is difficult to monitor work in progress and is not easy to make sure it is not late. For example, even if the final output is excellent, the output might be delivered late because recruiters are difficult to monitor the progress of a freelancer. Goldthorpe (2000) mentions one dimension of monitoring (i.e. monitoring the output); but another dimension of monitoring, i.e. monitoring the progress of work could be difficult in the case of a freelancer.

The extent of teamwork should be roughly similar among a range of publishing roles. In publishing, people work in a team which comprises people from other publishing roles. For example, an editor needs to work with a production editor and a designer. Only freelancers have flexibility: instead of working with a team on a daily basis, like the in-house staff, freelancers meet once or twice with other team members over the period of the assignment.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter is divided into four parts. In the first I discuss the entry requirement in publishing. The second part of this chapter reviewed the current labour market in UK publishing. The third part of this chapter reviewed the career paths of selected roles in publishing. These roles included editorial, design, marketing and publicity and production. I described the time taken to reach each of these positions and the responsibilities involved. In general, it takes at least about ten years to move from assistant to head of the team (director). I argued that the time needed to reach each position depends on the size and structure of the firm. In other words, structural factors partially determine career progression. The last part of this chapter contextualises the sociological discussion on the nature of work with reference to different publishing roles and positions. Freelancers work to different employment criteria compared to in-house staff.

This chapter provides an overview of the labour market in the UK publishing sector. This sets up the context of discussion for the rest of the thesis. It helps to make sense of the context that will be mentioned in the following chapters. In the next two chapters, I will examine the recruitment and selection methods used by employers in the publishing labour market. I will discuss the methods an employer uses when he or she attempts to recruit new staff. I will also discuss the traits an employer looks for and materials they use when deciding whom to employ. I argue that informal referral (word of mouth) remains vital from an employer’s perspective as information obtained from an informal referee (a referrer) allows an employer to know more about the job applicant. Having considered the employer’s side of the labour market, the two chapters after these will examine job application methods and internal promotion mechanisms in publishing houses from the point of view of the job applicants and the employees’ experience of the labour market.

Chapter 4

Recruitment methods

4.1 Introduction

The recruitment process includes locating a number of candidates and selecting one who is appropriate. Recruitment is an important theoretical issue because it determines access to jobs (Braddock and McPartland 1987; Campbell 1988; Hanson and Pratt 1991; Marx and Leicht 1992). As Granovetter (1995) points out, “while people are finding jobs, recruiters are finding people to fill them, and their behaviours, strategies, and purposes play a central but often neglected role in the process of matching people to jobs.” The effectiveness of the job search method for an individual is contingent on the recruitment methods used by the recruiter. However, in most of the sociological literature, the way recruiters search for employees is neglected (Mencken 1998, Flap and Boxman 2000). The literature tends to analyse how people find jobs and makes only inferences as to how recruiters recruit. This is the value of studying recruitment. Studies of workplace and social networking rarely touch on the issue of how social networking helps recruiters recruit appropriate candidates. There is little study of the role of social networks in the recruitment process. In terms of methodology, these studies are predominately quantitative. We are yet to know the mechanisms by which recruiters hunt for employees.

A company’s effort to find new employees has two stages: recruitment, i.e. a period of extensive search; and selection, i.e. a period of intensive search (Barron and Bishop 1985, Marsden and Campbell 1990, Marsden 1996). It is the intention of this chapter to discuss these two stages separately in this and the next chapters. This chapter focuses on how recruiters recruit job applicants. The major questions are: Does the method of recruitment vary with the nature of job? If so, in what ways does it differ? Under what circumstances do recruiters use formal methods and informal methods respectively? What are the mechanisms involved with these methods?

4.2 Theoretical concern

Sorensen and Kalleberg (1980) argue that in the competition for vacancies, recruiters are assumed to hire the most productive employee at the least cost. The recruiter should be very much concerned about the relationship between personal characteristics and productive capacity because, once hired, the employee cannot be easily dismissed.

This is how the recruitment mechanism is expected to work: it consists of the matching of the queue of persons to the list of vacant jobs. It is the person's potential performance that matters. Previous experience, education and other ascriptive characteristics such as race and gender will be used as indicators of potential performance. Access to a vacancy will be determined by a ranking of job candidates[41]. A person's position in the labour queue will be determined by the rank order in relation to other job candidates according to characteristics deemed relevant by recruiters. The highest placed person in the labour queue gets the best job.

---

[41] According to human capital theory, differences in skills determine different levels of productive capacity resulting in different wage rates (Becker 1962, 1975; Bowles and Gintis 1975; Rosen 1987). Ability may be incorporated in the theory by recognising that persons with different abilities have different investment costs and hence need different earnings to induce them to undertake of training. The basic proposition of the neoclassical theory is that difference in earnings reflects differences in productive capacity of persons as a result of their training, abilities and training opportunities. Identical persons are assumed to obtain almost identical earnings, regardless of the characteristics of the jobs they are in.

It has been argued that the uncertainty about productivity and supervisory costs leads to methods of employee control. Sorensen and Kalleberg identify two aspects of control over the job. One is control over the activities involved in the work, resulting in more or less autonomy for the employee. The other is control over access to the job, resulting in a more or less closed employment relationship (Sorensen and Kalleberg 1980:53). The more training one receives, the better able he or she is able to gain control over access to the job. These two dimensions may vary independently. Control over access to the job is considered crucial as it influences the nature of competition among employees. The degree of control over access is a continuum. At one extreme, the employee "owns" the job and no one else can get access unless he or she voluntarily leaves it and a vacancy is established. In such cases, the length of employment is completely controlled by the employee and the employment relationship is closed to outsiders (Sorensen and Kalleberg 1980:53). This can be seen in the case of a production editor in publishing. The job requires specific production skills and there is a well-defined career ladder (as seen in Chapter 3). This demonstrates a relatively close employment relationship in production. At another extreme, the recruiter may replace the employee at any time. The employment contract is re-established at short intervals, and the employment relationship is completely open to outsiders. This can be seen in the case of a freelancer. As discussed in Chapter 3, the employment contract of a freelancer is on project basis. Once the project is completed, the employment relationship will be over.

Stinchcombe (1990:470) discusses the various uncertainties a recruiter can encounter during the recruitment process. The uncertainties are information-oriented. For recruitment decisions, a recruiter needs to measure the performance that will predict what kind of worker a person is likely to be in the future. The difficulty is that the performance the recruiter tries to measure may not predict the kind of performances that will be required in the future job. Another difficulty is that the performances measured previously may be systematically different from those required in the job for which a person is being recruited or promoted to. A third difficulty with recruitment information might be that people providing the information often have no commitment to the organisation to which they supply the information. A fourth difficulty is the lack of comparability in recruitment and promotion information. Within a company, it is common that some supervisors tend to give generally very high ratings to their subordinates while others might be tougher. There is no general translation to a standard degree of softness or toughness (Stinchcombe 1990:248). After all, the prediction of future performance is even more difficult than the measurement of past and current performance.

An organisation needs information about the immediate past work performance of a worker so as to allocate rewards fairly. It also needs information about future work performance in decisions about hiring, promotion and retention. (Stinchcombe 1990:245). Uncertainty is reduced through information, leaving any residual uncertainty transformed into risk (Stinchcombe 1990:5). In order to reduce risk, recruiters look for extra information. Job matching theories emphasise the incompleteness of information provided by criteria such as educational level, work experience and reference letters (Barron and Bishop 1985; Barron *et al.* 1985; and Barron *et al.* 1989). The opinion of the referrer is valuable to recruiters (for a full discussion of the referrer, please refer to the next chapter).

Goldthorpe (2000) has defined the relationship between the nature of a job and the employment contract. It is the form of employment regulation that determines class position. How employers regulate employees so that they act in the best interests of the organisation depends on the type of work involved. Employment contracts are tailored to different types of work. Goldthorpe identified three types of employment contract: the labour contract, the mixed form and the service relationship. Labour contracts exist in the following situations: when there are no serious problems either in monitoring the quality and quantity of work, employees can be rewarded in direct relation to their productivity. Also, when asset specificity is low in the sense that jobs require only general and non-skills, employees are easily replaced. These two circumstances fit the conditions of the labour contract. The labour contract entails a relatively short-term exchange of money for effort. Employees are closely supervised and give discrete amounts of labour in return for a wage. Those who are paid hourly also tend to have labour contracts. Employees in a labour contract are closely supervised and easily replaced.

A service relationship is a relationship in which “a principal engages an agent to act in the principal’s interest in circumstances in which the principal cannot observe the agent’s actions, nor share in all of the information guiding those actions.” (Goldthorpe 2000:217). Such contracts are usually found in professional, administrative or managerial positions. In this relationship, recruiters create a moral commitment to the organisation on the part of employees. With reference to Goldthorpe’s seven-fold class scheme, the service relationship effectively defines class one and class two. The recruiter depends on the autonomy and discretion of the employee and cannot feasibly monitor their performance further. Professionals are employed to exercise specialised knowledge or expertise which has been gained from lengthy training. Managers, administrators and higher supervisors are employed to exercise the recruiter’s delegated authority. In these circumstances, each of these situations implies an asymmetry of information between recruiters and the employees. There has to be an area of autonomy and discretion for employees into which monitoring by the recruiter cannot easily reach. According to Goldthorpe (2000:218), where difficulty in monitoring work arises, the commitment of employees is particularly important. This implies designing and implementing a form of contract that ensures, as far as possible, that their interests are aligned with the goals of the organisation as the recruiter would define them.

Based on this rationale, Goldthorpe defines two dimensions along which work is differentiated. These two dimensions of work define the sources of “contractual hazard”. The first dimension is “the degree of difficulty involved in monitoring the work performed by employees: that is, the degree of difficulty involved both in measuring its quantity and also in observing and controlling its quality.” The second dimension is the degree of specificity of the human assets or human capital – skills, expertise, knowledge – used by employees in performing their work: that is, “the degree to which productive value would be lost if these assets were to be transferred to some other employment.” (Goldthorpe 2000: 213). The low degree of difficulty of monitoring the work means that “employees can be remunerated in direct relation to their productivity” (2000:213). The low specificity of human assets means that there is no need to understand the job in advance, before employment. In other words, the first dimension is the extent of difficulty in monitoring the work and the second dimension is the degree of human asset specificity involved (2000:216). This chapter will discuss the implications for the particular situation in publishing in the section after next.

4.3 Empirical researches on recruitment methods

Basically, there are two main methods of recruitment – formal and informal. The formal and informal methods are not the "either/or" process often assumed in previous studies (Corcoran *et al*. 1980). Both methods can be used at the same time. Previous empirical studies tend to relate search cost and organisational structure to recruitment methods. The use of recruitment and selection methods varies across organisations and across positions within organisations.

Marsden and Campbell (1990) propose two major arguments with regard to recruitment methods. First, the "economising argument". In this argument, monetary cost and the cost of time help to explain why recruiters choose informal methods for recruitment[42]. Such low-cost channels can convey intensive information to both worker and company (Granovetter, 1986). These expectations are based on cost-benefit arguments asserting that firms seek to minimise the short-term and long-term costs of personnel administration. For instance, Barron and Bishop (1985) and Barron *et al.* (1985) have studied hiring costs from the recruiter's perspective. These studies focus on the time devoted to recruitment, the number of applicants *per* interview and the number of interviews *per* employment offer (altogether this adds up to monetary and time costs). The economising argument also implies that the least attractive jobs should require the most costly search methods, since such jobs are unlikely to call forth direct applications or unsolicited referrals (Marsden and Campbell 1990:63).

Second, there is the "organisational argument". The argument posits that differences in organisational structures, processes and environments imply differences in recruitment and selection processes. The characteristics of positions, particularly discretionary levels, are also consequential on the use of recruitment methods. Marsden and Campbell argue that the differences among organisations in terms of size and internal structure affect the recruitment methods chosen. In terms of the size of organisation, large firms tend to use more formal channels. The reason is that large firms will attract more applicants than smaller ones. At the same time, large size increases the chance that a firm might be unable to obtain a sufficient number of suitable employees within the labour market if it simply recruited through informal channels. In this way, larger firms will be expected to resort to formal methods. In contrast, small organisations should be more inclined to use informal methods because they have fewer positions to fill and have fewer resources for the overhead costs of recruitment (Marsden and Campbell, 1990:64). In terms of internal structure, the level of bureaucracy in a firm determines its recruitment methods. Larger organisations tend to have a more formalised and bureaucratic personnel administration that prefers formal recruitment and selection procedures. Levels of centralisation in each department also affect recruitment methods. Generally, the more decentralised a department is, the more flexible and informal the personnel processes (Marsden and Campbell 1990).

---

[42] Examples see Rees, 1966 and Rees and Shultz, 1970.

Marsden and Campbell reviewed Lincoln and Kalleberg's (1982) study of work organisation and work attitudes[43]. The study focuses entirely on the organisational argument of recruitment. In Marsden and Campbell's study, organisational, positional and control variables are used for analysis. Organisational variables include plant size and three indicators of bureaucratisation, i.e. differentiation of the personnel function, formal centralisation of personnel-related decisions and formalisation of personnel processes through written documents. Positional variables include distinctions among workers, supervisors and managers. They also include self-reported indicators of discretion levels: substantive complexity, autonomy and closeness of supervision. Individual-level control variables include age, race, education, gender and year of search (Marsden and Campbell, 1990:68).

---

[43] Here is the methodology of the study: the researchers first sampled plants in each of seven manufacturing industries and then sampled full-time non-temporary employees, including workers and managers, within each plant. Questionnaires were distributed and a total of 4,565 respondents were involved. Interviews were conducted with management representatives to obtain information on plant characteristics and organisational structure (Marsden and Campbell, 1990:67).

The study found that firms that have formalised personnel processes tend to rely on recruitment agencies and direct applications. Large firms are more likely to recruit through recruitment agencies than *via* informal referrals. Small firms, lacking a formalised personnel function, tend to use informal referrals and advertisements to find employees. With regard to positional factors, it is found that lower rank staff are most likely to apply directly whereas managerial employees tend to go through recruitment agencies. The use of informal methods is greatest when recruiting supervisors and least for managers.

The above study illustrates that there are indeed different recruitment methods, depending on the company’s size and organisational structure, and the employee’s position. Yet, there is room for further exploration. In the first place, the subjects of the study are employees themselves. The way Marsden and Campbell interpreted the findings are based on how employees got their current job. First hand information of how recruiters recruit new staff is absent. Second, the distinction between formal and informal channels is itemised quantitatively – the formal channel consists of advertisements, posters, direct applications and agencies; the informal channel consists of informal referral through friends or relatives.

Mencken (1998) makes an attempt to explore how recruiters assess the advantages and disadvantages of various recruitment methods. He also examines how organisational characteristics shape a recruiter's perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of recruitment methods. He used the Metropolitan Employer-Worker Survey (MEWS) of workers and their recruiters[44]. Questions include: "When seeking applicants from outside do you often ask your employees for recommendations?", "When seeking applicants from outside do you often ask business associates or professional colleagues for names of applicants?"

The study finds that recruiters who use the formal channel for recruitment do not see the enlargement of the pool of applicants as the advantage of this method[45]. Also, that the quality of applicants, rather than the cost of recruitment, is the primary advantage of the informal recruitment method. Cost of recruitment does not appear to be the major advantage, as previously argued by some sociologists and economists (Barron and Bishop 1985; Marsden and Campbell 1990). Employment agencies are seen as having the advantages of both informal and formal recruitment, i.e. they provide higher quality candidates and enlarge the pool of people. With regard to organisational size and recruitment methods, it is found that the larger the firm, the less likely that the recruiters would cite quality of the applicants as an advantage of informal recruitment. One explanation is that larger firms generally have bureaucratic personnel structures and, thus, are able to devote more resources to employee screening (Barron and Bishop 1985).

---

[44] The employee sample is based on 2,713 adults aged 18 or above who worked at least 20 hours per week and were not self-employed. The employer sample was based on 1,927 interviews with the managers responsible for filling the jobs held by respondents in the worker's sample. The latter were asked about the firm's general recruitment practices (Mencken 1998).

[45] 53.8% of those who use current employees and 68.3% of those who use colleagues and associates cited quality as an advantage. Only 5.5% of those who use current employees and 1% of those who use colleagues and associates cite cost as an advantage.

Smaller firms have fewer resources and therefore they must rely on the quality advantages of informal recruitment as a screening mechanism (Marsden and Campbell 1990). Mencken's study provides insights of how recruiters see each of the recruitment methods. This helps to explain why one method is more frequently used than the other. However, there could be room for further exploration. For instance, issues such as why recruiters use one or the other method or whether there are variations depending on job position are neglected. Questions such as, "What is the relationship between job characteristics and recruitment methods?" and "How does the recruitment process actually function?" could be addressed.

Simon and Warner (1992) study the effects of "old boy" networks on job match quality. They argue that recruiters use the old boy network because the referees can reduce the recruiter's sense of uncertainty as to the applicant's likely productivity. They are less likely to risk recruiting someone inappropriate. Moreover, employees found through old boy networks stay in the job longer than comparable employees hired without it. The old boy network helps the recruiters to screen out low-quality workers by providing subjective personal opinions about the productivity of potential employees.

4.4 Implications for publishing

The above theoretical frameworks and empirical researches suggest implications and expectations for recruitment in publishing. As reviewed in Chapter 3, there are different natures of job, i.e. in terms of roles and positions in publishing. These roles and positions vary in the ease of replacement (as stated by Sorensen and Kalleberg 1980), the level of difficulty of monitoring, specificity of assets and the need for commitment (as stated by Goldthorpe 2000) and the level of uncertainties (as stated by Stinchcombe 1990). In the following, I am going to illustrate how the nature of the job might have implications for recruitment. This chapter specifically discusses the extensive search.

As reviewed in Chapter 3, there is a hierarchy in different publishing roles. In general, I expect that recruiters recruit staff at the managerial level or above through informal channels as there is difficulty involved in monitoring the work and there is uncertainty in assessing the performance. It is also more difficult to replace them. Meanwhile, I expect that recruiters recruit staff at a junior level through formal channels as the job is not difficult to monitor and the staff is not difficult to replace.

In general, the editorial team comprises editorial assistant, editors, senior editors, commissioning editors, the editorial manager and editorial director (for details refer to Chapter 3). It also comprises freelance editors. I expect that recruiters recruit senior positions, such as commissioning editor and above through informal channels as these jobs are relatively difficult to monitor, require more specificity of assets and discretion and are more difficult to replace.

The design team comprises assistant designer, designer/ art editor, senior designers, design managers and art/ creative director. Design is a relatively more ‘creative’ role in publishing. I would expect that recruiters recruit designers or above positions through informal channels as it is relatively difficult to monitor the quality of work and there would be more uncertainty about assessing the performance of the work. As for the production and marketing team, I expect recruiters to recruit managerial staff through informal channels as there is a large amount of uncertainty in the nature of the job. It is also difficult to replace the person and difficult to monitor the job performance.

4.5 Aims of the chapter

Here lies the theoretical concern of this chapter and the next: the recruitment process is a process of extensive search (using different methods to search for potential job candidates) and intensive search (adopting different selection methods for the best candidate). This chapter deals only with extensive search. In this chapter, I address the following questions: what are the recruitment methods for different roles in publishing? What are the mechanisms for formal and informal recruitment methods? What are the mechanisms for recruiting freelancers? In the next chapter, I address the questions: what are the selection criteria for each role? How do recruiters select potential candidates, i.e. intensive search?

I will also discuss under what circumstances recruiters in publishing use formal methods and under what circumstances they use informal ones. The questions I am going to address include: what are the reasons for using these methods in publishing? In particular, what are the reasons for using informal recruitment? What leads a recruiter to choose one of these methods?

4.6 Formal recruitment methods

In the following, I will discuss formal channels: these include recruitment agencies and advertisements.

4.6.1 Recruitment agencies

Turning to recruitment agencies is common among recruiters. In medical publishing, recruitment agencies play a dominant role in recruiting medical writers and editors. In other words, recruitment agencies are the key actor in recruitment.

Ben was a senior manager in a medical publishing house in Macclesfield, in charge of developing editorial and strategic communications. The team was called the business management group. The group made all decisions about what the company should be doing, how many people would be needed, setting financial targets, and working out the strategies necessary to meet those targets. He managed 30 medical writers within the medical writing team before he "retired" (establishing his own company) at 40. This is the way he recruited medical writers:

> *"It is rare that the company will recruit directly. I am not sure quite why. Somebody got an administrative role that removed them from close involvement with staff. The result is that the recruitment agency took over." (Ben, interviewed on 16th August 2005)*

Essentially, the recruitment agency plays an important role in recruiting people. Ben continues:

> *They will know who is in what positions in different agencies*[46] *and benefit from people moving around. Each time somebody moves they get quite a big fee. They don't have any incentive to think long term — as we do. They probably want somebody to work in a place for two years and then move on." (Ben, ibid)*

One of the possible explanations as to why medical writers are recruited through agencies is that their job requires specialist knowledge. A person without sufficient knowledge of chemistry and medical knowledge cannot perform the job. In these circumstances, a CV that covers information about a person's education level, specialist training and work experiences would reflect relatively solidly if he or she is suitable for the job. According to Ben, all medical writers have to attend a test for screening purpose. The next chapter examines this in detail.

---

[46] Ben and Jane called publishing houses 'agencies'. They said this is the conventional name of medical publishing house.

Another possible explanation is that the recruitment agencies in medical publishing know *"very clearly who is going to move in and out of which company as medical publishing is a small sector" (Jane, field notes on 16th August 2005)*. The agencies may also have knowledge of the ability of editors in the sector. In this circumstance, recruiters can trust the agencies for their judgment.

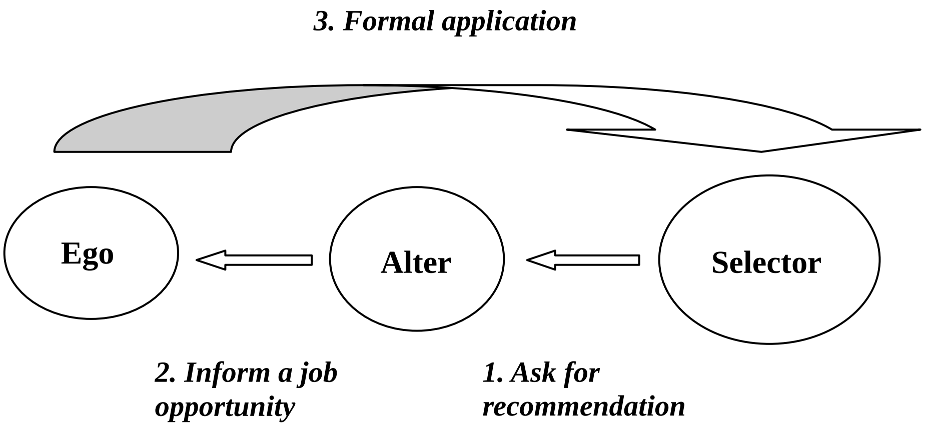
Apart from recruiting medical writers, another situation where recruiters go to recruitment agencies is when they recruit administrative staff. This is how Janice described the situation:

> *"In Oxford, it is quite typical. It's secretarial administrative work, not particularly well paid." (Janice, interviewed on 15th December 2005)*

It is not difficult to capture the worth of an administrative job using technical criteria. Here are the job natures of administrative work: low level of job autonomy, low level of difficulty to monitor the job and the staff can be easily replaced. It is easy to correct mistakes for this type of job and the cost of making these mistakes is not high. In this circumstance, it would be technically convenient to recruit administrative staff *via* agencies so long as the monetary and time cost of getting in touch with recruitment agencies is not as high as other channels, such as the word of mouth. I develop the typology of recruitment for full time staff member and Figure 4.1 illustrates the first type.

Figure 4.1: Typology of recruitment – full time

(Type 1)



Let ego refers to potential recruit, alter refers to recruitment agency; and selector refers to recruiter (i.e. Janice). Recruiters ask recruitment agency for recommendations and agency will approach a potential recruit for a job application. The entire processes can be formal.

However, there is another circumstance in which recruiters approach recruitment agencies for senior staff. There must therefore be some reasons other than the level of autonomy, the ease of replacement and monitoring the output. Angelina, an editorial director, who has long experience in recruiting editors, gave me her experience:

> *"Very often, at senior level, rather than putting in an advertisement, people go to a recruitment agency. If I am looking for a very senior editor – in fact, we were looking for somebody to replace the person who took over from a UK company. We went to an industry specialist, to the recruitment agency that specialises in publishing." (Angelina, interviewed on 9th December 2005)*

She recruits senior staff through recruitment agencies. One might say that the level of autonomy, the ease of non-replacement and the difficulty of monitoring the output for senior staff are so high that recruiters would possibly need extra information to make sure the candidates possess essential but invisible qualities (such as being flexible and having leadership ability) before recruitment.

Finlay and Coverdrill (2002) describe the role of head hunters as follows:

> *"(A headhunter) needs to be a true broker. A true middleman. … oftentimes when I've made initial contact with people that maybe are at a controller level of a VP of finance, we'll be talking for ten or fifteen minutes, and they'll say, 'I'm not sure why you're calling. Are you looking at me as a candidate or are you looking at me as a potential customer?' And I'll say, 'I'm the middleman. I'm looking at developing a relationship with you, and I'm sure something will fall, one side or the other, if I'm successful at developing that relationship" (Finlay and Coverdill, 2002:24)*

Finlay and Coverdill capture the role of a head hunter. Peter, a founder of a publishing house who recruited senior staff *via* recruitment agencies, gave me this account:

> *"The cost of recruitment is huge. I recently saw the comment that 'it is generally believed that the cost of recruiting the wrong person at a senior level of the company is roughly speaking twice their annual salary'. That is used to put in context the fact that a good head-hunter will charge probably 30 to 40% of the total annual remuneration package. So you are talking about buying a chief executive for a large sum: share options, bonus, etc, which might be one and a half million while a head-hunter would charge half a million for finding that person. It seems like a lot of money." (Peter, interviewed on 19th October 2006)*

It is to avoid the serious costs of a mistake when senior staff recruitment via advertisement misfires that companies rely on recruitment agencies to carry out the search: even given their high charges, an agency minimises the cost of recruiting a wrong person who might possibly make mistakes in the job. The labour market is like a pyramid – while there are a huge number of junior staff, there are only a small number of senior members. Among senior members, head-hunting is actually *"part of the network among the senior level" (Peter, field notes on 29th October 2007).* They have better information about personnel than the recruiters of any individual company. This explains why recruiters headhunt senior staff. Here, agencies serve the function of providing more useful information about suitable job candidates and to reduce the cost of recruiting the wrong person.

4.6.2 Advertisements

Advertising is a common method of recruitment. Advertisements in publishing are usually placed in newspapers, particularly in *The Guardian*, and in specialist magazines such as *The Bookseller*. As in other sectors, it is the large publishing companies that are more likely to advertise when they wish to recruit new staff (Marsden and Campbell 1990).

The recruitment practice at Company A (a large academic publishing firm in Oxford) illustrates the situation. Recruitment goes through formal channels in Company A. This is how Janice, an editorial manager describes the recruitment process:

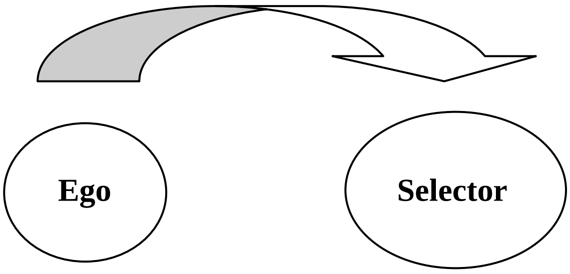
> *"When we are looking for people, we go through a traditional channel. Depending on the type of job, we go for this or that type of newspaper. If it's editorial, probably* The Guardian *or* The Oxford Times.*" (Janice, interviewed*

on 15th December 2005)

This is compatible with Marsden and Campbell's findings (1990) which state that large corporations tend to use formal channels for recruitment. The rationale is that, in large corporations, there is a well-established personnel department where recruitment procedures are formalised. Using advertising is regarded as routine procedure. Based on Janice's description, I now develop another type of typology of recruitment for full time staff member:

Figure 4.2: Typology of recruitment – full time

(Type 2a)



(Without formal procedure)

Whereas Janice is selector, ego is job applicant. In type 2a, a job applicant applies for the job directly and formally. The recruitment experience of Ben (in some cases) and Terry, which I will discuss soon, belong to type 2a as well. I call this type 2a because the process of recruitment for type 2a and type 2b (which will be discussed later) is more or less similar. The only difference between type 2a and type 2b is that the arrow goes to an opposite direction.

Advertising in newspapers is bureaucratic to the extent that it can be regarded as no more than a gesture. Susan, a designer at Company A, talked about her experiences with another large publishing company. After she had taken up the job at Company A, the creative director of a large publishing house in London called her. Susan's experience illustrates why putting out an advertisement is sometimes no more than a gesture:

> *"I met their creative director a couple of times. He had had an advert in* The Guardian *at the same time as Company A, and I went to meet him. Later, he called me and said, 'I've got to be honest with you. I fill in this job internally but basically and legally we have to advertise it. But will you come back to talk to me about something else?'" (Susan, interviewed on 13th September 2005)*

The recruiter intended to fill the vacancy internally but he or she placed the advertisement for purely 'basic' and 'legal' reasons. The person who approached Susan was actually planning to *"offer her something else"*. In this case, the advertisement was just a gesture.

Large companies regard advertising as a basic procedure. Both Marsden and Campbell (1990) and Mencken (1998) state that this is compatible with large-company resources and formalised personnel procedures, that allow them to follow formal procedures. Lack of resources could prevent smaller companies from using formal channels. Peter is the boss of a small publishing house in London with seven employees that he set up ten years earlier. He states that he has rarely recruited staff through formal channels (I will discuss the procedure later). This is the way he sees advertising:

> *"A small company is different to a large company. Obviously, if you're 200 people, you have a human resources department, and then you're going to advertise." (Peter, ibid)*

From Peter's point of view, it is large companies with a human resources department that advertise. Smaller companies, which do not run to such resources, cannot afford it.

As mentioned previously, there can be a mixture of methods when looking for staff. Some interviewees combined press advertising and agencies. Ben, who worked in a medical publishing house, said he used a variety of recruitment methods:

> *"It was a combination: So Guardian, New Scientist. We included the agencies: they have people on their books. They ring people up. They advertise themselves. It's a mixture. We also get a huge number of people through word of mouth." (Ben, ibid)*

Terry, a production manager of an academic publishing house at Oxford, repeated similarly:

> *"We advertised. But we also ask around if there's a high quality person to fill in the place." (Terry, interviewed on 16th May 2006)*

The use of formal methods, (press advertising and agencies), and informal methods, (word of mouth), co-exist. The use of advertisements sometimes depends on the resources of the publishing company. According to my interviewees, it is large companies that recruit new staff *via* newspaper advertising (mentioned by Janice).

Smaller companies do not have sufficient resources to do this. I also find that even when the company advertises a job, the recruiter may still intend to rely on word of mouth (mentioned by Ben).

4.7 Informal recruitment methods

This section aims to discuss the relationship between job nature and informal recruitment. From the recruiter's point of view, the hiring of people who are well and accurately informed about a workplace and co-workers probably lowers turnover (Granovetter 1986; Fernandez and Weinberg 1997; Coverdill 1998; Fernandez *et al.* 2000). Another consideration in the recruitment process is both the monetary cost and the cost of recruiting the wrong person. Recruiters find it effective to recruit staff through informal channels (sometimes especially in a small publishing house). Personal contact is important in this regard.

4.7.1 Recruiting previous employees

In many circumstances, a recruiter likes to recruit people who have worked in the company before. One of the uncertainties about recruitment, from a recruiter's point of view, is the possibility of discrepancies between the ability of the candidate in his/ her previous work or presented during the recruitment process and their ability after training with the new company (Stinchcombe 1990; Spence 1973). To a large extent, recruiting previous staff eliminates the uncertainty because the recruiters have track records of the staff's previous performance in the company. What is more, the "new" recruits have hands-on experience before they actually perform the job. This method usually cuts the cost of training. Angelina explains why she recruited previous members of staff (an editor) to fill vacancies:

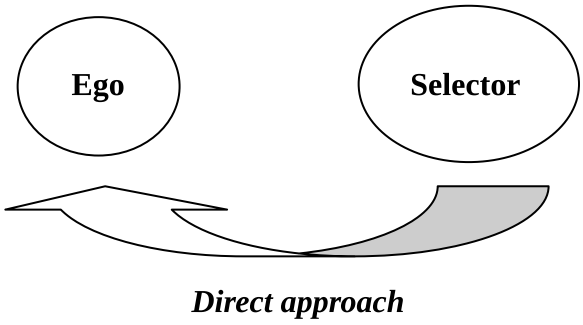
> *"We advertised in the press and ended up recruiting somebody who had worked with us before who was very good. She came back to us with an understanding of how the company works, which means that she got going immediately." (Angelina, interviewed on 9th December 2005)*

> *"We know this person is really good. We like to keep contact with people. One of the young editors is about to leave for example. But if we were looking for an editor, one of our first steps would probably be getting in touch with her and saying, 'Would you be interested?' Because there are huge benefits from not having to train somebody else." (Angelina, ibid)*

One of the benefits is to recruit somebody the recruiter knows is 'really good' already. This minimises the uncertainty of recruiting an inappropriate person who might make mistakes in the job in the future. Another benefit is the minimisation of training costs (which can include time and money). Previous staff are already familiar with the company and possibly his/her role as well. I now develop another type of typology of recruitment based on Angelina's experience.

Figure 4.3: Typology of recruitment – full time

(Type 2b)



Whereas Angelina is selector, previous staff member of her company is ego. Unlike type 2a, selector of type 2b approaches ego directly. The experience of Calvin, which

I am going to discuss also falls into this type.

Calvin, a freelance editorial project manager of an academic publishing house at Oxford, shares similar views:

> *"If you have to explain the whole thing it takes more than an hour. It's much easier to work with someone who knows how you work." (Calvin, interviewed on 27th April 2006)*

Recruiting previous employees can bypass some of the uncertainties in recruitment. The core function of a referrer (which I will discuss in the next section) becomes less effective. This kind of trust does not need to be established through a referrer because the recruiter is already familiar with the employee's ability. From the recruiter's point of view, they have first-hand knowledge: trust in the previous employee is a straightforward matter. Calvin makes further clarifications:

> *"You need someone who is reliable and you need someone who is quick and is able to make certain decisions on their own. If you have worked with them before, they have more experience. It is easier for you in the long run to work with somebody you know and you know what probably they have done." (Calvin, ibid)*

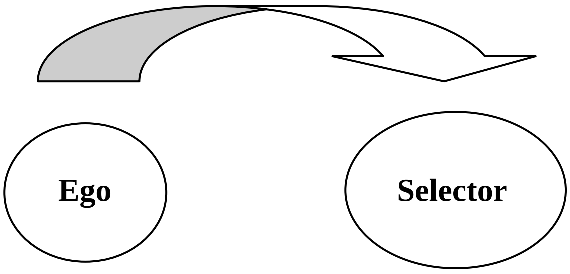
The recruitment of previous employees not only reduces the cost of training (as stated above): it also eases the way to a better working relationship between recruiter and employee because they have known each other from the outset (or from a recruiter's point of view, they know the employee).

Elisabeth is a commissioning editor of Company A. She started her career in publishing in Company A as an assistant commissioning editor (for details of her story, please refer to Chapter 7). But she moved to another company afterwards for one and a half years. As she wanted to move back to Company A again, she approached one of the managers of the company and eventually she got the job. She *"didn't apply for this job but I got this job in March 2005" (Elisabeth, interviewed on 19th August 2005).* She had never worked with this manager but they had stayed in the same company. Type 2c of typology of recruitment for full time staff member illustrates her situation:

Figure 4.4: Typology of recruitment – full time

(Type 2c)

Direct approach



(Without formal procedure)

Let Elisabeth be ego and the manager of Company A be selector. She did not go through formal application but perhaps her previous record in Company A had helped her to get the job. The difference between type 2a and 2c is that in type 2c, ego does not go through formal procedure before receiving the job offer.

In the next section, I am going to discuss another leading method of recruitment: the informal recruitment method. Conventional literature has focused on "who"; or on the intensity of relationship between the two parties, i.e. the referrer and the job applicant (Burt 1992, 2005; Granovetter 1995; Lin 1999; Peterson *et al.* 2000; Maman 2001). How such informal mechanisms work has yet to be discussed. In the following section, I will focus on how this method is reported to work by my interviewees.

4.7.2 Mechanisms of informal recruitment

A recruitment process can be two-way. Instead of job applicants applying for a job, it is not unusual that the recruiter takes the initiative to look for somebody to fill in the position. In this case, a recruiter approaches other companies for appropriate candidates. It is also common that recruiters receive recommendations from other people. There are different mechanisms in this process.

But first of all, let us discuss informal recruitment in general. This is what Iris, a legal publisher in London, describes:

> *"Firstly it is such a small industry. People know each other and that's also the way to walk from one company to another. Very often people know people and then offer them a position by virtue that they know them from a conference: they know they have the reputation of being good." (Iris, interviewed on 29th November 2005)*

The criteria for using the informal channel are: having a good reputation; letting yourself be known (by attending conferences, for example); and having worked in different companies. This is an interactive process in which the job applicant needs to make him/ herself known and have a good reputation. Then he or she is able to be spotted by the recruiter who then takes the initiative to invite them for a conversation.

Information circulation is also crucial in the sense that, if employees do not move between companies and if recruiters do not get in touch with different companies, the recruiter cannot identify a potentially good employee. This is one of the important functions of social ties: carrying and spreading reputation. Only when a person has established a reputation, he or she will benefit from the social ties that he or she constructed and reached.

Under these circumstances, however, the recruiter can recruit new staff *via* informal channels. This situation was re-confirmed by Ben:

> *"If somebody has a client that you think was good on paper, you look around for other people working in the company and ask what the person is really like. If they came across with a well-established CV and they think they can make an offer, they'll get in touch. People know because they move between companies. You do it by word of mouth." (Ben, ibid)*

The pre-requisite of such informal recruitment is that the employee "looks very good on paper" and has a "well-established CV". The social ties are used to check out the potential recruit's actual performance. The example above works where the recruiter takes the initiative to spot potential staff.

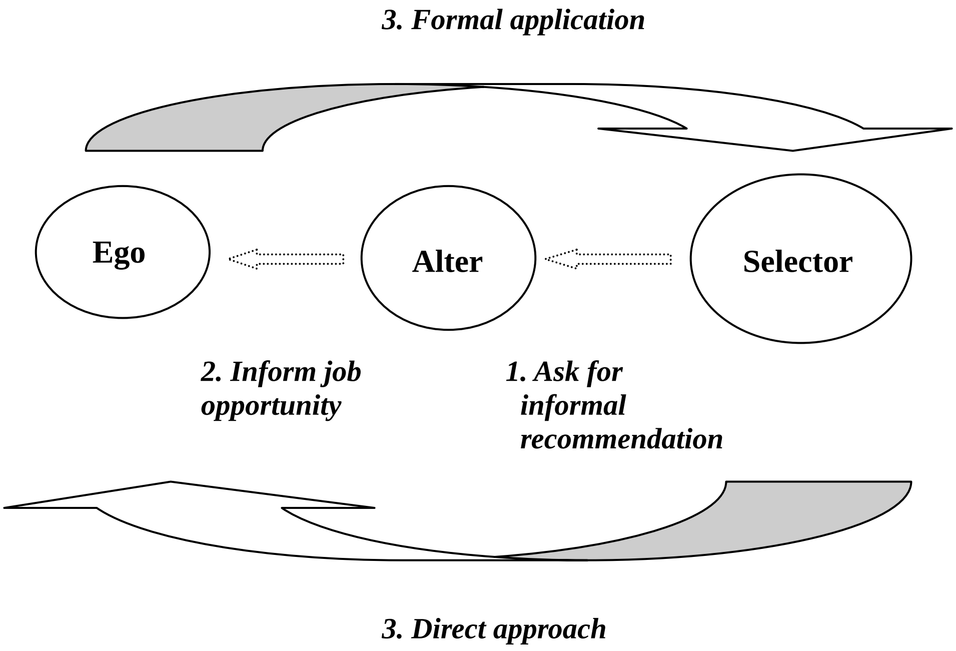
There is another kind of social ties in which the recruiter spreads the message (that they are looking for a new employee) to somebody they trust. The recruiter relies on the referrer to search for candidates for him/ her. Calvin described the situation:

> *"When you're trying to fill up a vacancy, the first thing you'll do is to contact anybody who may have somebody in mind." (Calvin, ibid)*

I classify Ben and Calvin’s experience as type 3a of the typology of recruitment for full time staff member. Figure 4.5 illustrates the situation:

Figure 4.5: Typology of recruitment – full time

(Type 3a)


3. Formal application
Ego
Alter
Selector
2. Inform job opportunity
1. Ask for informal recommendation
3. Direct approach

(Either ego approaches selector or the other way round)

In this type, selector informally approaches a third party (alter) he or she trusts for recommendation. Alter informs a potential recruit afterwards. Ben and Calvin were yet to tell explicitly whether the potential recruit applies for the job formally or the other way round, i.e. the recruiter approaches the potential recruit informally. Therefore, in the above figure, I indicate that either formal application (from ego to selector) or direct approach (from selector to ego) is possible. But the main issue is that information about the potential recruit should come from somebody the recruiter trusts. Another main issue is that if ego applies for the job formally, informality is indeed embedded in the formal application process because selector has already asked alter (the third party) for informal recommendation *prior to* ego actually applies for the job.

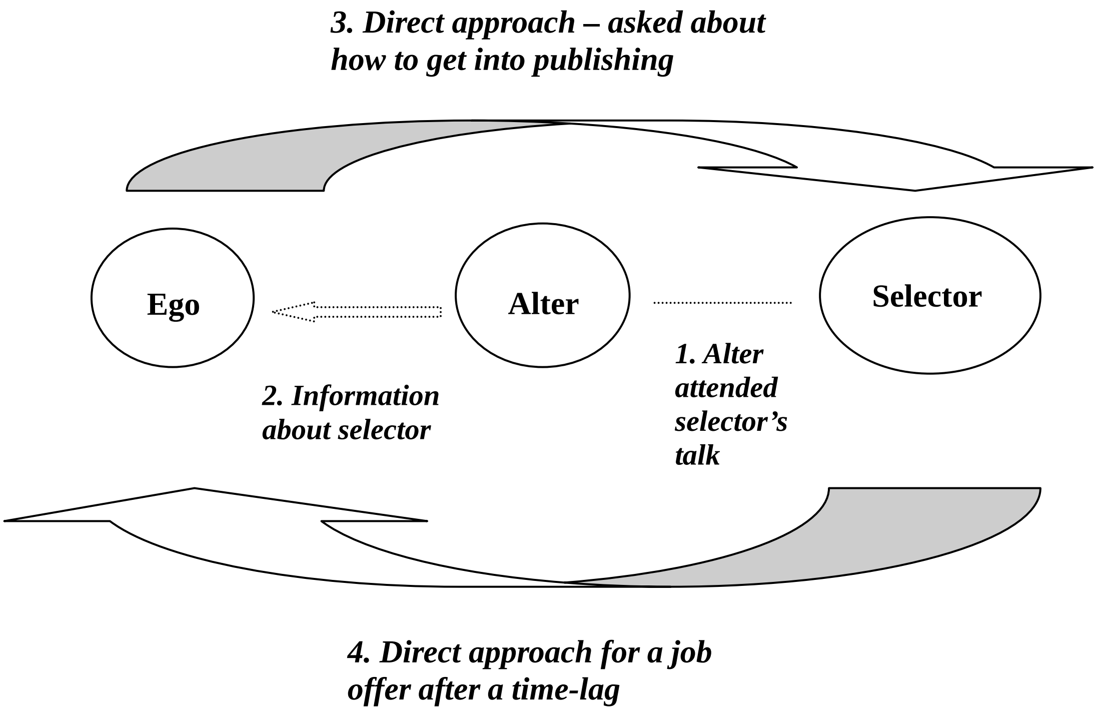
There can be a time-lag between the recruiter hearing of a potential employee and the moment they take the initiative to get in touch. The following illustrates a situation in which somebody interested in publishing came to the recruiter, whom the recruiter then invited to work in the company. Peter is the founder of a London publishing house. He graduated from Oxford in the mid 1970s and joined a general training scheme in a publishing house in 1976. Before getting into publishing, *"by the time I was 16, I had a micropress, and a printing/darkroom. I was making the plates to run on the micropress: odd little bits of printing and school papers, that sort of thing."* He has been involved in publishing for more than 30 years. According to him, he has always used word-of-mouth for recruitment and this is one of his experiences:

> *"If you enjoy what you're doing and you talk about it enthusiastically, people go to you. The next member of staff I got was because somebody knew that I'd been doing this talk here. So and So's godmother had a friend who was the godmother of another person who had thought she wanted to be a primary schoolteacher and hated it. Please could this person ring me and talk for 20 minutes or so about how to get into publishing. I'd never heard of her before. I get a phone call one evening and a voice says, "So and So said you wouldn't mind if I rang you. Can you tell me about publishing?" That was January 2000. In April 2000, I got offered a large contract to produce a load of papers. This was vastly more than I could manage and I thought, "Right: I need somebody full-time." And I rang back this person who had rung me and said, "Look: I never expected this to happen but I think that we might have a job for you. Please come and be interviewed." (Peter, ibid)*

The prerequisite of this situation is that the recruiter needs to remember the stranger. This is an interactive process – once the person who is interested in publishing has spoken to the recruiter (or somebody who is in publishing), he or she might have the chance of being contacted for a job in the future. On the other hand, the recruiter needs to make themselves known to others or nobody will get in touch. Based on the experience of Peter, I develop another type of typology of recruitment for full time staff members:

Figure 4.6: Typology of recruitment – full time

(Type 4)


3. Direct approach – asked about how to get into publishing
Ego
Alter
Selector
1. Alter attended selector's talk
2. Information about selector
4. Direct approach for a job offer after a time-lag

Whereas Peter is selector, the new recruit is ego; and alter is the new recruit's godmother. There is a time-lag between the time when the new recruit approached Peter and when Peter got back to her for the job offer.

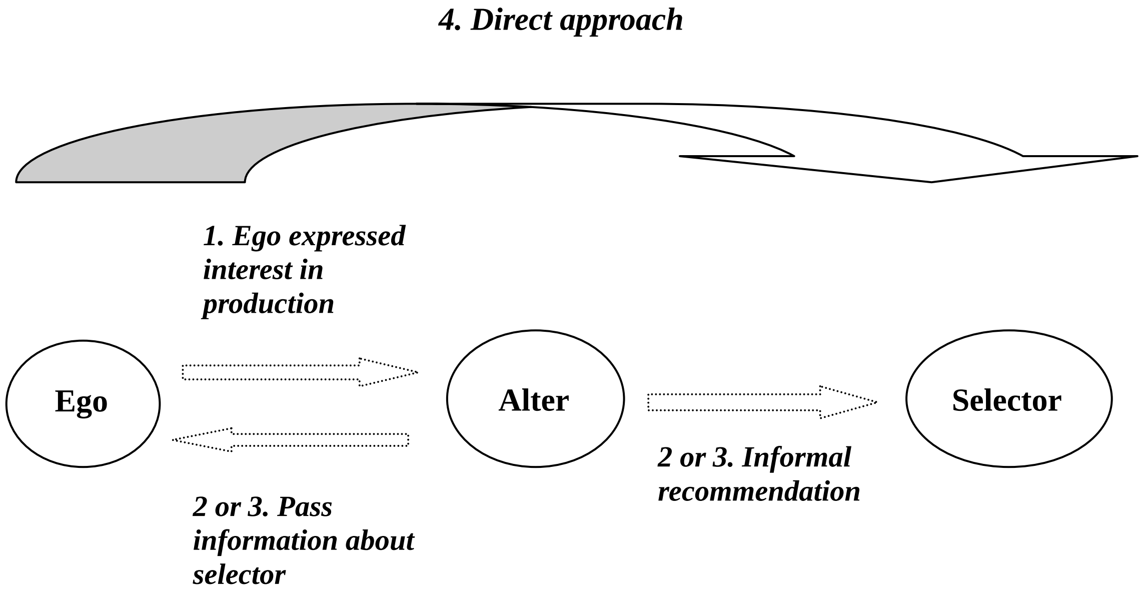
Another method for informal recruitment is referral. It is the situation where somebody introduces or recommends a potential employee to the recruiter. Here is Peter’s experience:

> *“I started working from my dining room – just me. Then somebody that I was working with, who asked me to produce books, said to me: ‘Oh by the way, you must meet my secretary. She has got very interested in the process of bookmaking. She would like to move from Word into Quark. You know, you should meet her!’ She became my first employee.” (Peter, ibid)*

Peter had done nothing. He had simply accepted the referral and got a new member for his production staff. The referrer was *“somebody I was working with”*. Based on Peter’s experience, I now develop another type of typology:

Figure 4.7: Typology of recruitment – full time

(Type 3b)


4. Direct approach
1. Ego expressed interest in production
Ego
Alter
Selector
2 or 3. Informal recommendation
2 or 3. Pass information about selector

Whereas Peter is selector, his working partner is alter and his working partner’s secretary is ego. Selector and ego do not know each other at all. It is alter who takes the initiative to recommend ego to selector. Parties involved in this process are all within weak professional ties. The same case applies to Angelina when she (alter) refers her colleague’s daughter to her previous partner; and when Eva got her job as a commercial director. I will discuss Angelina’s case in greater detail in Chapter 6.

According to Peter, it is necessary to recruit staff through referral for a small company as the risk of recruiting a wrong person will be relatively higher than in large companies – *“consider the situation where there are only five people in the company: if the recruiter recruits one inappropriate staff, it will be 20%” (Peter, field notes on 29th October 2007).* Only when the company expands, recruiters can afford formal channels. Based on Peter’s account, it is illustrated that it is not entirely due to the nature of the job, but the company structure itself also encourages the use of informal method. In order to minimise uncertainties of recruiting *any* staff, a small company prefers referral. He gave another example which illustrates referral:

> *“My accountant said, ‘You desperately need a bookkeeper. I suggest So and So who has just finished 25 years dealing with the BBC figures: I think she would make a good assistant.’ I thought, OK, let’s give her a try. We gave her a six-month trial contract and confirmed it after three months. The job wasn’t advertised. It was sharing information about who you are, the sort of people you are looking for. That happens all over the place.” (Peter, ibid)*

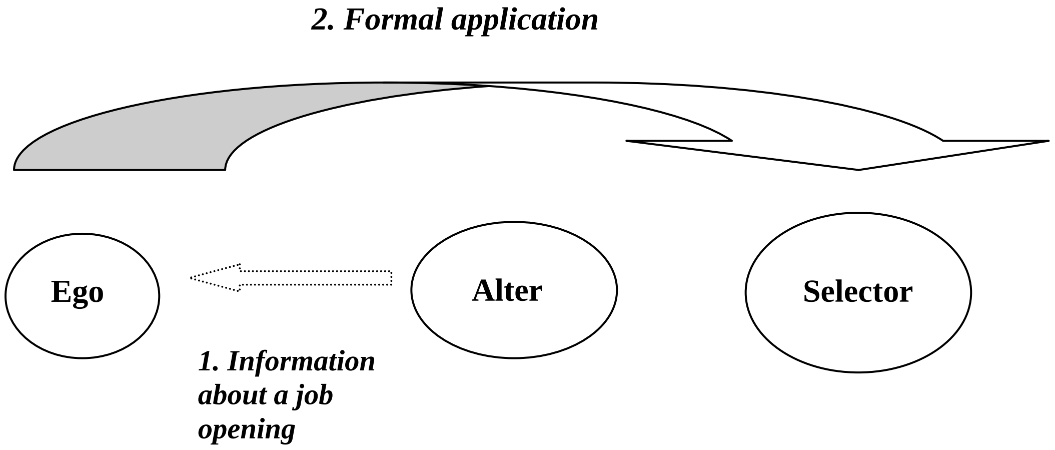
In this case, he recruited a bookkeeper through referral. Bookkeeping is not a job which is difficult to monitor or irreplaceable. But due to the minimisation of uncertainty (of recruiting *any one* staff), he chose to use referral. The nature of the job does not matter much. Rather, it is the minimisation of uncertainty that matters.

Peter is very active in all publishing events. As the boss of a publishing company, he gives talks to the Oxford students every year and attends all kinds of networking events. I argue that such informal recruitment might work effectively for recruiters like Peter, who has wide and well-established social ties.

Azura is an assistant production editor with Company A. According to her, the way she got her first publishing job was "accidental". When Azura did her MA dissertation, she needed to interview somebody working at Company A. During the interview, she was told there was a vacancy at Company A in the editorial team. This turned out to be a production position. She said she just applied for the job and got it. She denied that her interview had helped. Azura's experience demonstrates an example of classic weak ties. Although she denied her interview helped her to get a job, the interviewee indeed gave her information about job opening (though not actual influence). Figure 4.8 illustrates her way of getting the first job in publishing:

Figure 4.8: Typology of recruitment – full time

(Type 5)



Let ego refers to a job applicant (Azura) and alter refers to a referrer (her interviewee). Where ego is the information recipient, alter is the person who provides information. Azura did not know alter prior to the time she received the information. Alter did nothing to help ego other than providing information about a job opening. Ego applied the job formally afterwards. This illustrates Granovetter's weak ties argument, that is, information flow. No embeddedness is involved.

Angela, a senior editor, got her job in publishing through referral. When she was doing a course on publishing in a polytechnic, her tutor asked if she would be interested to become a sub-entry level editor in a publishing house at Oxford:

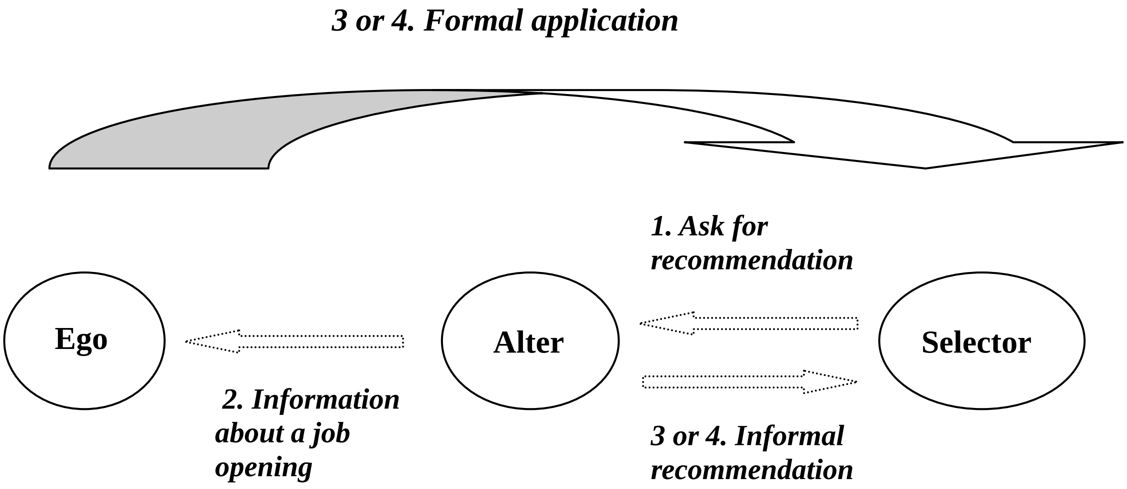
> *"The company got in touch with the tutor at my university and said, 'We have this vacancy. Do you have any people about to finish the course who could do this?'" (Angela, interviewed on 8th September 2005)*

But, according to Angela, the tutor did not tell every student doing the course. The tutor told her only because she was a mature student and she guessed the tutor *"trust me more"*. She said the tutor did not put a good word for her. The tutor *"just put forward my name."* Angela's experience illustrates that on the way of acquiring qualifications, she was led to social contact which gave her information about job opening.

The experiences of Angela (and later Angelina, alter; and Eva, ego) can be categorized into type 3c of the typology of recruitment of full time staff members. In type 3c, selector asks alter for informal recommendation. Information flows through informal ties, from alter to ego. After receiving information about job openings, ego applies the job formally and possibly gives informal recommendation to selector at the same time. The following figure illustrates the situation:

Figure 4.9: Typology of recruitment – full time

(Type 3c)


3 or 4. Formal application
1. Ask for recommendation
Ego
Alter
Selector
2. Information about a job opening
3 or 4. Informal recommendation

Type 3c illustrates an element of embedding in a formal recruitment process. Although ego applies the job formally, embedding exists as there are processes of informal recommendation. Informal recommendation can be very helpful to both ego and selector: whereas alter helps to bring ego's attention to selector (and possibly put a good word for him/ her), selector is able to collect extra information about ego so as to minimise the uncertainty involved when recruiting a potential staff (refer to chapter 4 and 5). Alter helps to pass his/ her assessment of ego to selector.

4.7.3 The superiority of informal method for a senior position

Word of mouth is often used in the search for more senior people too. Eva, the commercial director of a print-on-demand company said when she was looking for a senior marketing manager, the company initially went to an agency and put in an advertisement but she eventually found the person through informal channels:

> *"In the end, we located somebody who came from one of the big book clubs. That person was appointed senior marketing manager." (Eva, interviewed on 2nd December 2005)*

Eva approached this person and filled the vacancy of senior marketing manager. In the previous section, I described how recruiters approach recruitment agencies for senior staff. From Eva's experience, it is clear that, even where they approach agencies, at the end of the day they may choose somebody through the informal channel. The major reason, I would argue, is that managing directors have greater flexibility in their decisions (please refer to section 3.5.1.1 for the basic responsibilities of editorial director).

In this section, I have looked at the mechanisms of informal recruitment, which is rarely discussed as part of recognised labour market processes. I find one essential is necessary to make informal channels work effectively – both recruiter and employee need to reach out and make themselves known. This requires some effort to "socialise" with colleagues in the sector. Embedding exists in some cases where in spite of formal application by the job applicant, the third party (alter) provides informal recommendation to the recruiter. In the following, I shall discuss how the informal channel has become institutionalised in one of the publishing companies in which two of my interviewees work. Under the "finder's scheme", it is the employees, rather than the recruiter, who put in the effort to reach out and find appropriate potential colleagues.

4.7.4 Institutionalising the informal channel

It is possible for the informal channel to be institutionalised within a publishing house. One reason is that such schemes reduce the possibility of a bad match between position and employee and, thus, reduce turnover costs in the long run (Wanous 1980; Simon and Warner 1992; Mencken 1998)[47]. In Ben's medical publishing house, there is a "finder's scheme" which rewards company staff who make a referral to the company. This is how the scheme works:

> *"So you're working within Company B; if you introduce somebody to the company, you will be paid a fee. I think it is about £1,000, once they have successfully completed their three month probation period." (Ben, ibid)*

Medical publishing is a small sector. "*It is an industry where people move around",* according to Ben. The scheme targets experienced people from competitor companies. At the same time, it aims to search for people who know the company. Jenny is a senior medical writer of this company. This is what she said:

> *"I think the company might look more favourably on somebody who has a personal contact within the company." (Jenny, ibid)*

There are two major reasons for this. Firstly, this is to recruit "experienced people" (medical writers) so that they can do the work right away. Training is minimised. This saves the company resources. Secondly, this is to save the monetary cost of recruitment. According to Ben, his company used to go to recruitment agencies to search for new staff. But now, under the finder's scheme, the company pays less for the recruitment cost. Ben explains:

---

[47] In fact, apart from the publishing sector, companies in other industries also initiate similar scheme. For instance, Alliance and Leicester operates the Talent Spotters Scheme, where staff can recommend people they meet outside the company who have demonstrated outstanding customer service. Three-quarters of people who apply for jobs through the scheme are accepted, and the staff member who recommended them receives 705 pounds (Clapperton 2003).

> *"You have to pay more to the recruitment agency than you do (under this scheme). If you are recruiting somebody whose salary is going to be £15,000, the recruitment agency will probably take 30% of that, which is £10,000 (note: 30% of £15,000 should be £5,000). So if you're paying somebody £1,000 you save a lot of money." (Ben, ibid)*

Overall, the scheme cuts the cost of recruiting inappropriate staff. According to Ben, the scheme is "reasonably successful". Finder's schemes illustrate that informal and formal recruitment methods are not mutually exclusive: the informal method can be institutionalised formally. An institutionalised informal method such as this bypasses the conventional criticism of the informal channel: that it encourages favouritism (Simon and Warner 1992). It also bypasses the conventional view of recruitment strategies which regard formal and informal methods as two separate areas.

4.8 Recruiting freelancers

As discussed in Chapter 3, the freelance labour market flourishes in the publishing sector. Within the freelance labour market, networks are assumed to play an increasingly important part in the allocation of work (Antcliff *et al.* 2007). The use of informal recruitment is crucial to recruiters. A long-term relationship frequently develops between in-house employees and freelancers. The relationship is based on collaboration and repeated contracting among trusted freelancers and the firm.

As Rubery *et al.* (2002) mentioned, links between the growth of networks, changing organisational structures and the employment relationship remain under-theorised.

Antcliff *et al.* (2007) make an attempt to study how freelancers use the networks that have resulted from organisational restructuring to organise both individual careers and collective interests. They interviewed 37 freelancers working in the TV production sector and seven key informants[48]. None of the interviewees was a recruiter or owned a production company. They address the following issues: What type of networks do freelancers use? Do they use open or closed networks to fulfill different needs or can the same network fulfill a number of functions? What, if any, are the consequences of networks in the context of fragmented employment? (2007:378)

The study found that the type of network mentioned most frequently was typically referred to as an “address book”, i.e. a list of personal contacts that may be useful in finding work. This is an open network in the sense that the membership is heterogeneous and members do not necessarily know each other. In other words, weak ties were predominately used in freelance circles. Most of the respondents would pass on work to other members of their address book if they were not themselves available. In the context of short-term projects and repeated contracting, it often involves trust between parties and leads to long-term relationships. The “address book” networks are interlaced with reciprocity that has the potential to generate trust and dense ties between individuals. This is one step forward from Granovetter’s and Lin’s weak ties arguments because these stress that weak ties benefit only individual agents. In fact, there can be both co-operation and competition among members of the freelance “address book” network.

---

[48] Key informants include trade union officials, representatives from interest groups such as co-ordinators of internet-based networks.

Rubery *et al.*'s findings emphasise the use of the social network in freelance circles. Research carried out by Dex *et al.* (2000) has similar findings. Dex *et al.* studied the effects of contractual changes in the UK television industry. In the face of the uncertainties over contract renewal, freelance workers put in considerable efforts to diversify sources of income and build up informal networks for more opportunities. It is usually argued that weak ties are crucial in circulating freelance jobs. In this section, I will discuss the different mechanisms by which recruiters recruit freelancers in publishing. I will illustrate that freelance recruitment is not confined to informal channels.

Conventionally, most research assumes that freelancers are a small community and the freelance job market predominantly operates through informal channels. Networking is the core issue in the freelance labour market. In the following section, I will discuss the recruitment mechanisms used by recruiters. Although the use of informal channels is common in the freelance job market, quite a lot of interviewees told me that they also rely on formal channels, such as websites and agencies. It can be the case that the freelance job market is not (at least in publishing) much different from the non-freelance ones.

4.8.1 Mechanisms of freelance recruitment

Website recruitment

As mentioned in Chapter 4, one of the distinguishing features of publishing is a high instance of freelance employment. In-house staff need to find their own freelancers. In these circumstances, employees are given considerable discretion. Janice describes her experiences of freelance recruitment:

> *"It is an expensive way to get to freelancers through* The Guardian*. We've got quite a lot of people through Daily Information. In fact, we got a couple of Serbians living in Oxford who want to work, not high level work. We needed them here." (Janice, ibid)*

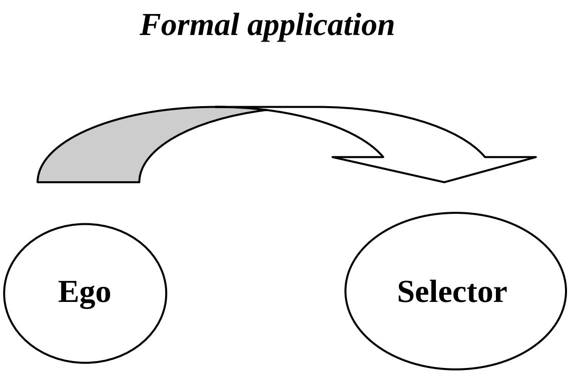
It is too expensive to recruit freelancers through advertisements in the national press. One of the recruitment channels for freelancers in Oxford is through Daily Information (DailyInfo), a local website. This is free of charge. Another Oxford-based freelancer, Stephen, also relies on DailyInfo to search:

> *"Sometimes they employ me. Sometimes I employ them – through DailyInfo etc. (So you make full use of Daily Info?) If you want somebody to do a basic job … Oxford has a lot of clever people and it's not difficult to find them. Only recently I've started doing that but it works well. It is very easy to find good people." (Stephen, interviewed on 2nd August 2005)*

Stephen provided me with an example of how to use a formal channel for freelance recruitment: where the recruiter is searching for someone to perform a "basic job" and where it is very easy to find good people (whereas Janice indicated the job is not high level; and thus, making advert on DailyInfo). He relies on DailyInfo as he found that there are a lot of good people in Oxford. Stephen's experience of recruiting freelancer actually belongs to type 2a of the typology of recruiting full time staff members. Figure 4.10 re-illustrates the mechanism:

Figure 4.10: Typology of recruitment – freelancer

(Type 1a)



Whereas ego is freelancer, selector is the recruiter who needs to employ a freelancer. This is a direct application process.

There is an "automatic" guarantee when the pool of potential candidates is so well-qualified (i.e. the recruiters minimise the risk of recruiting a low quality freelancer). This implies that a formal channel tends to be used where there is high level of certainty about the qualities of potential candidates, where the job is "basic" and mistakes can be easily corrected. Stephen adds a further comment:

> *"If I want somebody to help me to do some kind of low level work, then that's (advertising on DailyInfo) the way. (What kind of work do you regard low level?) I mean work that doesn't require very specialist knowledge like these medical jobs." (Stephen, ibid)*

As a "low level" job does not require much expertise or skill, recruiters find it easy to recruit people. The cost of making mistakes in the job is not high. Workers are easily substitutable because the nature of the job is easy and there is not much training involved. Searching through DailyInfo is a formal channel and no social connection is involved. If the work does not require specialist skills or, in Goldthorpe's term, ‘lower human capital specificity’, the recruiter will search for employees through DailyInfo. It should be feasible to locate a relatively large number of people quite easily. In this sense, there is no need for a referrer.

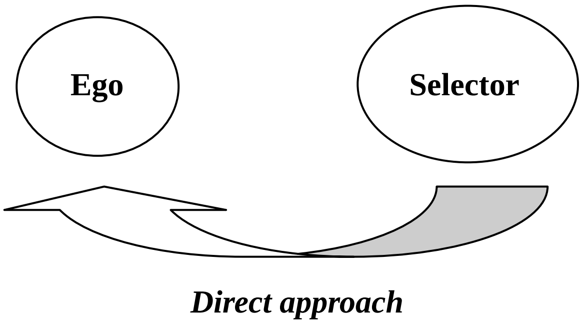
As mentioned above, recruiters take an active part in the search for freelancers. Sometimes, when a recruiter is looking for freelancers, cold call is the other way round: it is the recruiters that browse the internet and contact potentially capable candidates:

> *“Finding new illustrators, you have to go online and look at the books that hired the illustrators that you’re looking for. Then I phone them or email them and see if they are available and whether they would like to do the work.” (Susan, 13th September 2005)*

From the above, I found that recruiters take an active part in the search for freelancers. The cold call from selector is crucial in the recruitment process. I develop another type of typology of recruitment for freelancers here:

Figure 4.11: Typology of recruitment – freelancer

(Type 1b)



The difference between type 1a and type 1b is the direction of arrow: whereas ego approaches selector in type 1a, selector approaches ego in type 1b. This is actually the same as type 2b of the typology of recruitment for full time staff members.

4.8.2 Agencies

I have come across a couple of interviews in which the recruiter simply made a cold call to freelance writers or went to recruitment agencies to enquire for available freelancers. Jane approached recruitment agencies. This was her experience:

> *"I used to use a couple of freelance writers who had worked in medical publishing agencies and yet do perfect work. That person must be very smart, very particular." (Jane, ibid)*

Agencies are efficient in searching out freelancers with specialist skills (as discussed in section 4.6.1). The efficiency of searching out freelance medical writers and full time medical writers is on a similar level.

4.8.3 Word of mouth

As mentioned, word of mouth is common when recruiting freelancers. However, people do also actively look for freelance workers (and freelancers actively look for assignments. This will be discussed in the chapter after next). There are different ways in which recruiters look for a freelancer. The most common way is to "ask around" within the company. For instance, this is Angela's experience:

> *"You ask around (to make sure the freelancers are reliable and capable). You ask colleagues. I could ask someone that I personally have used before. I need someone that you know or that other people in the office have used; or I ask other freelancers who is available and they will recommend someone."*

> *(Angela, interviewed on 8th September 2005)*

Spreading the message and asking around is a way of recruiting freelancers. The referee can be a colleague or *"someone that I personally have used before"*. This is similar to the "address book" mentioned by Rubery *et al*. (2007).

Referring freelancers to other colleagues is also common:

> *"We have a studio. Within the studio, we have a group of freelancers that we have used before, that we go back to the list because they are reliable; and we are always introducing them to other artists." (Rose, interviewed 24th August 2005)*

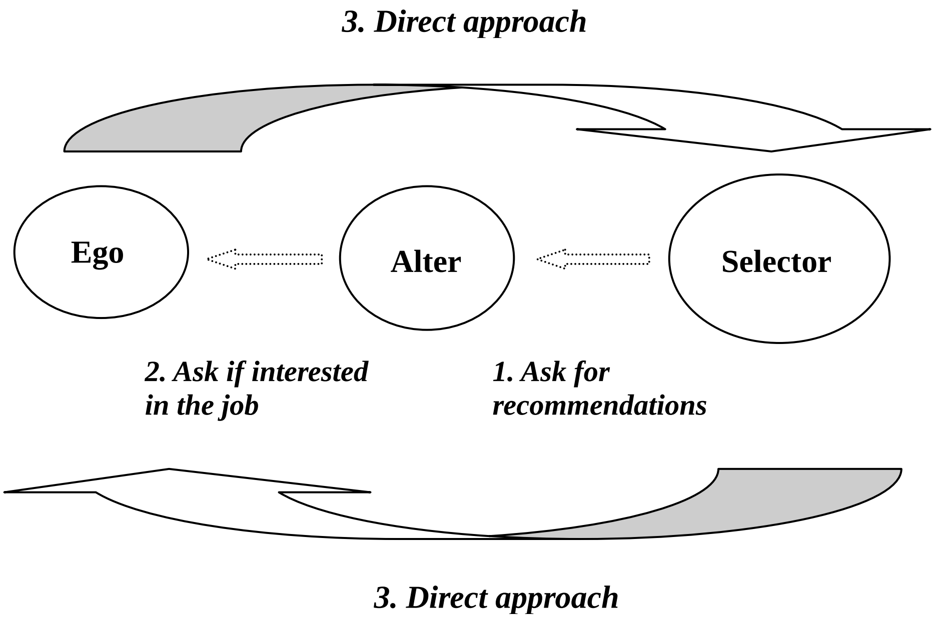
Sometimes, recruiters take an active role to search for freelancers. This is Helen's experience:

> *"I set up the editorial using freelancers entirely. One of the things I was doing was an encyclopedia. I had to find people who can write all these different subjects for children. I often knew other people. I asked people I had known before, Did they know anybody? Could they recommend anybody? We need experts. Or, we need people with lots of different skills for an encyclopaedia, to cover so many different subjects." (Helen, interviewed on 16th November 2005)*

Helen illustrates a double layer of freelance recruitment (Angela is in the same situation). She first sorts out who is relevant to the job and then asks people she knows who is appropriate. The recruitment experience of Helen can be illustrated in the following type of typology:

4.12: Typology of recruitment – freelancer

(Type 2)


3. Direct approach
Ego
Alter
Selector
2. Ask if interested in the job
1. Ask for recommendations
3. Direct approach

(Either ego approaches selector or the other way round)

Whereas Helen is selector, alter is somebody who was used by selector, somebody who recruits ego previously or a freelancer who is asked by selector for recommendation. There needs to be a direct working relationship between ego and alter; or alter and ego.

For jobs which require special skills and creativity, such as design, the use of the informal channel is important. Janice talked about her experience in referring Robert, another interviewee, who is a full-time freelance designer:

> *“Robert worked as a designer. He used to work in-house in Company A. He was away and came back – I knew he was back. So the other went to him in our department. They were looking for a designer and I said, ‘How about Robert?’ and he said, ‘Oh yes, please! He’s good.’” (Janice, ibid)*

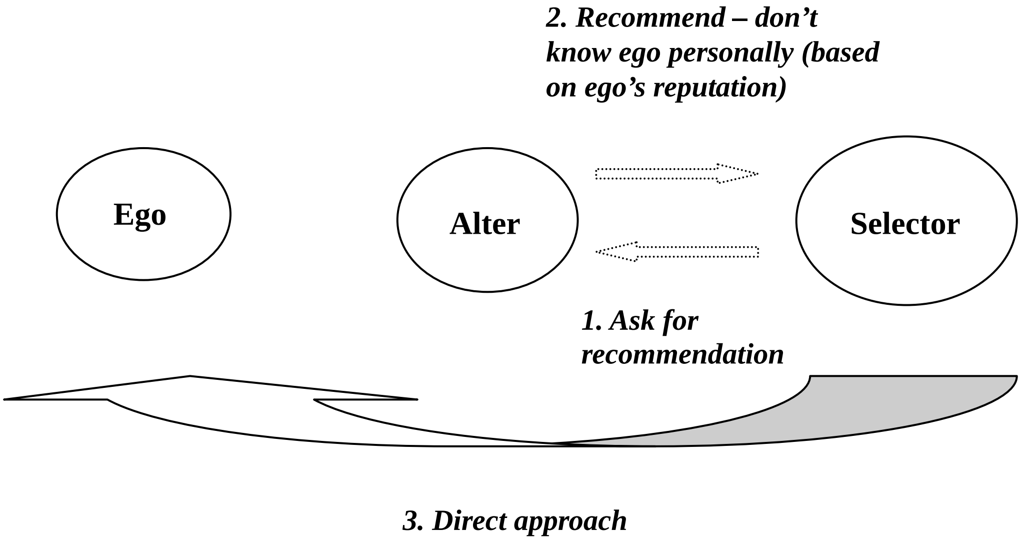
This is how referral works. It works on the condition that the person's reputation is good.

> *"(So you had been in a position to recruit Robert?) Yes, I had heard of him. I didn't know him personally but he was a friend of a friend. His reputation was good, obviously. It's the social connection. (You didn't know him personally before, did you?) No, I knew of him. I knew his name. I didn't know him personally because he worked in-house and lots of people working in Company A knew some names: they knew these people well without really knowing them. He's a friend's friend." (Janice, ibid)*

Janice's explanation illustrates two major issues. Firstly, people in publishing are somehow connected to one another ("knew some names", "knew these people well without really knowing them"). Secondly, based on reputation, Janice recommended Robert. What she meant here by "social connection" was that Robert's reputation had spread, i.e. that a lot of people in publishing knew his name. Reputation was more important than the strength of the relationship. Janice did not know Peter but she still introduced him simply because *"his reputation was good, obviously"*. The social network analysis traditionally focuses on the strength of ties, i.e. how weak ties and strong ties bring about different outcomes (e.g. Granovetter, Lin, *etc.*). In Janice's case, the ties were common membership of the company or the industry and they carry information about peoples' reputation. Based on Janice's description, I develop type 3 of the typology of recruitment for freelancer:

Figure 4.13: Typology of recruitment – freelancer

(Type 3)


2. Recommend – don't know ego personally (based on ego's reputation)
Ego
Alter
Selector
1. Ask for recommendation
3. Direct approach

Whereas Janice is alter, her colleague is selector, Robert is ego. Janice does not know Peter personally, rather, she knows of him through his reputation. He has worked with different staff members of the company (which is a direct work relationship) and they appreciate his high quality of performance.

Moreover, Janice mentioned that the most difficult part of the job was *"to find the right people to do the job"*. This implies uncertainty about being able to recruit good people. Janice searches for a freelance designer. As mentioned earlier, design is a skill that requires creativity and the ability to convey ideas. It is not easy to monitor the quality of the work and the designer has a relatively high level of discretion in work. Recruiters need to place trust in the applicant before really recruiting this person. In such cases, reputation is important. Here, reputation is information, which serves as a predictor of work ability.

4.9 Reputation and the labour market

Both economists and sociologists recognize the importance of reputation in economic exchange (Kim 2009). In economics, for example, one way of theorizing reputation is within the context of the game theory (Kreps 1990; Weigelt and Camerer 1988; Tullock 1985)[49]. For instance, Tullock (1985) argues: where the reputation of the individual is well-known, players would opt for 'the cooperative strategy since they "have a strong desire to establish credibility so that they can play in future games" (1985: 1076). Reputation is an asset and people can be expected to behave in some ways to protect their reputation. Similarly, Fehr *et al.* (2009) relates reputational incentive and reciprocity when they discuss the problem of moral hazard in the market. Their basic idea is that reciprocity is the basis of building reputation or otherwise there is no point to deliver good products. Reputational incentive is only built in repeated economic exchange. The notion of reputation is an individual attribute which can be clearly *reflected* in the actor's previous behavior (Kim 2009: 697)[50].

In sociology, however, reputation is understood in relation to the notion of trust which is embedded in a relational context (Burt 2005; Bacharach and Gambetta 2001; Granovetter 1992; Coleman 1990). This distinguishes the sociological interpretation of reputation from the economic discipline. There are two lines to understand trust, relational context and reputation. The first line is through the signaling theory (which was originated in the discipline of biology but was expanded to economics and then to sociology). Signaling took root in the idea of asymmetric information; and a signal's value lies in its ability to communicate information. According to Bacharach and Gambetta (2001), a basic trust game is a game of asymmetric information, concerning trustee's payoff. In order to be effective, signals have to be reliable and costly to the person displaying the signals. The cost of the signal separates the 'good' type from the 'bad' type because only good type would be prepared to bear the cost of displaying the signal, thereby achieving a 'separating equilibrium'[51]. People send signals in order to establish and enhance trust within valuable relationships. The signaling theory suggests that any costly action can be a signal, that is, a mechanism for establishing or preserving one's reputation (Ponser 2002). However, the signaling theory is not an analytical tool in this thesis.

---

[49] Kreps (1990) argues that there are three situations in which reputation is important in an economic transaction: firstly, there are contingencies that arise in ongoing transactions which cannot be anticipated. Secondly, transaction costs are thus real and can be characterized by the adjudication processes that meet unforeseen contingencies. Thirdly, reputation of individuals and firms is a key source of overcoming information problems.

[50] Recently, there is a trend in which reputation is systematically studied with relevance to online trade and auction (Bolton *et al*. 2004; Xie *et al*. 2006; Sampath *et al*. 2006; Dellarocas 2006; Zhou *et al*. 2008; Utz *et al*. 2009).

The second line to understand trust, relational context and reputation is through the idea of network embeddedness of social resources. For instance, Granovetter (1992) attempts to answer the following question: how does reputation get diffused and become salient so that it is necessary for economic life? To answer the question, he uses the concept of "structural embeddedness". He argues that "we can expect greater pressure against such cheating in the denser network; such pressures are an important part of incentives and related directly to economic and social costs of developing a bad reputation (1992: 44)[52]. In other words, the more closed the network, the better able to enhance mutual trust and cooperation. Burt (2005) provides similar argument. He argues that information can spread across the people in a community but there is clear evidence of trust being more likely in a strong than in a weak relationship, especially if the strong relationship is embedded in a closed network (Burt 2005:97). To Burt, reputation builds in the relationship. Over the course of repeated exchanges, two people build a sense of who they are in the relationship, a sense of what to expect from the other person as well as themselves (2005:97). To the extent that there are dense networks of relations, people are more likely to be cooperative. This creates incentive for good behavior and thus, to maintain reputation.

---

[51] There are two strategies that a good type can distinguish themselves from the bad type. Firstly, good types can develop reputation as a person who rarely or never cheats. They do this by not cheating in the previous game (in my case, the good type has a reputation of performing well in the previous jobs, according to the previous colleagues). This strategy only succeeds to the extent that information flows sufficiently freely and people's memories are good. Secondly, the good types send signals which require high cost. This strategy assumes that potential cooperative partners will believe that only a good type will invest in such a signal because only good types can reap high enough future payoffs to recover their costs. Bad types do not invest in the signals because the discounted value of future returns is not high enough to compensate them for the initial investment (Bacharach and Gambetta, 2001: 182).

Based on the previous examples, there is no personal link between a referrer and the potential recruit (Janice and Robert) at all. Reputation can be carried through weak ties, where people in the same professional community would recognized.

I argue that reputation is crucial in the recruitment processes. Job applicants need to establish a reputation in order to climb the career ladder more effectively. This is what Sue said:

> *"If you are somebody who has a good reputation …People know people who are well-established in their position in different companies. You will know who is the publisher, who is the counterpart of the one at Company A. If you look at the kind of products they develop, in a way you can judge how creative they are and how excellent they are. In that sense, you can have an*

---

[52] Granovetter (1992:44) goes further: "I may deal fairly with you not only because it is in my interest, … but because we have been close for so long that we expect this of one another, and I would be mortified and distressed to have cheated you even if you did not find out (though all the more so if you did)."

> *idea of how good this person is in the job." (Sue, ibid*)

Reputation is based on the portfolio (*"the kind of products they develop"*) of the person. It is based on merit. A person of reputation is likely to be referred and get a job. Referral is based on reputation rather than on the relationship:

> *"It is a vicious cycle because you have to work to be able to get a reputation. If you haven't got a reputation you can't get the work. So it's quite hard." (Annie, interviewed on 6th September 2005)*

> *"I think social relations rely more on reputation. Because it's a small community, you are more likely to be known – the story of the big fish in a little sea. If you know you have a bad reputation, it can be really difficult to get rid of it." (Rose, interviewed on 24th August 2005)*

The prerequisite for a person to be referred is their reputation. In a community where information circulation is active, people know each other well. If a person gets a good job, others know it, and if they make a poor decision, others will know it too. It is the former who will get the referral. In summary, reputation which is merit-based, flows through social ties within the industrial sector, and brings about a job offer.

This section discussed the recruitment mechanisms for freelancers. I found that recruiters use both formal and informal methods to recruit a freelance worker. The situation is not much different from recruiting in-house full-time employees. This observation differs from the conventional literature which sees freelance recruitment as predominately based on networks. However, in publishing, the formal channels which recruit freelancers are websites and agencies. The use of formal methods assumes a pool of high quality potential freelance workers (as mentioned by Stephen) and thus, the quality of potential freelancers is assumed. Recruiters tend to use formal channels, such as Oxford's DailyInfo, to search for freelancers who are able to carry out a "basic" and "low level" job. Since there is a large pool of potential good candidates, if the freelancer does not deliver high quality work, the recruiter can easily search for another freelancer as a replacement. They spread the word that they are looking for people or make referrals to one another. Usually, the recruiter turns to the freelancer based on his or her own reputation (mentioned by Janice) if the work requires higher levels of autonomy and requires more specific human assets – which implies more uncertainty in performing the job well.

4.10 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the recruitment mechanisms in publishing. In particular, I focus on the methods that recruiters use to recruit new staff. Previous sociological research has tended to ignore the mechanisms by which recruiters recruit new staff. When analysing recruitment methods, most researches draw on information from the employees and make inferences as to how recruiters recruit (Mencken 1998; Flap and Boxman 2000). This chapter has added value, in that I discuss the mechanisms of recruitment for different publishing roles and ranks and receive my information first-hand from recruiters. This chapter also adds value in that I discuss the recruitment methods in regard to the nature of the job. Based on the theoretical discussions of distinctions between jobs (Sorensen and Kalleberg 1980; Stinchcombe 1990 and Goldthorpe 2000), I go further to see if there is any difference in recruitment method.

Overlap between formal and informal

Both formal and informal methods may co-exist in publishing houses. According to my interviewees, formal methods can be regarded as a legally required procedure. Even if formal methods are used, recruiters might simply ignore the pool of candidates and approach the preferred one they already know.

There are two situations in which recruitment agencies are used by recruiters. The first situation is when recruiters look for administrative staff or an editor who has to possess professional skills (medical editor). Recruiters find it safe to approach agencies because they do not have to worry about recruiting a wrong person. Administrative staff is easily replaceable and the ability of a medical editor can be reflected on some black and white documents, e.g. CV. The second situation is when recruiters hunt for a senior staff member. In this case, agencies are regarded as headhunters. Approaching head-hunters seems to be a formal method but head-hunters can be *“part of their network”* (according to Peter). Head-hunters know the personnel at the senior level of each company better than the recruiters themselves (Finlay and Coverdrill 2002; Burt 2005). Using head-hunters is a way to minimise uncertainty of recruiting an inappropriate senior staff member. Social ties serve to provide information about the availability of suitable employees.

Based on the interviews, I find that the informal method is not entirely “informal” in nature. In one interviewee’s company, informal recruitment has been institutionalised in the so-called “finder’s scheme”. In this scheme, staff members working within the company are paid a lump sum if he or she introduces somebody to the company who is still working there after a three-month probationary period. Furthermore, I find that informal recruitment is an interactive process. Both recruiters and job candidates need to develop a good reputation, reach out and make themselves known. This is the prerequisite of using informal channels for recruitment.

The recruitment of the freelancer in publishing is not as informal as previous literature (Dex *et al*. 2000; Rubery *et al*. 2002; Antcliff *et al.* 2007) has suggested. According to my interviewees, freelancers are recruited *via* free websites, agencies and referral. In other words, both formal and informal channels are used. If the recruiters are confident of the potential candidates, they will use formal methods. This further establishes that informal channels are used when there is uncertainty.

Mechanisms of recruitment

Based on the mechanisms involved when recruiters recruit new full time staff members, I developed the typology of recruitment for full time staff members. There are five types in this typology. The first type refers to a formal application with alter (i.e. a third party) who serves as a bridge between selector (i.e. the recruiter) and ego (i.e. the job applicant). Recruitment through agencies is an example. The recruitment process can be entirely formal (though it will not be the case if agencies are “part of the community” among senior staff members). The second type is divided into three sub-types, which are distinguished by formal application by ego (type 2a), direct approach from selector to ego (i.e. a potential recruit) based on previous work record (type 2b) and direct approach from ego to selector based on previous work record (type 2c). There is no third party in type 2; and the decision of recruitment is based on either formal competition (type 2a) or previous work experience within the company (type 2b and 2c).

The third type of typology is featured by the fact that despite the job applicant applies for the job formally or the recruiter and job applicant approach each other directly, a third party is involved for informal recommendation. Type 3 is divided into three sub-types. Type 3a and type 3c are very close to each other in the sense that selector approaches alter for informal recommendation of ego; and alter informally provides ego information about job opportunities (i.e. S → A → E). What distinguishes Type 3a from 3c is that in type 3a, selector can also directly approach ego if alter suggests a potential recruit. Whereas for type 3b, although the structure is similar to type 3a and 3c, the direction of arrows differ: it is ego who takes the initiative to approach alter who then informally recommends ego to the selector. While alter informally recommends ego, alter also passes ego information about selector. Embedding exists if ego applies for the job formally because informal recommendation (to selector) goes alongside formal application. The relationships among the three parties, i.e. ego, alter and selector are predominately professional weak ties: in type 3a, alter is somebody selector trusts; in type 3b, whereas alter and selector are working partners, ego is alter’s secretary; finally in type 3c, whereas ego is a student of alter, alter establishes a professional link with selector.

The fourth type of typology, again, involves ego, alter and selector. Alter passes information about selector to ego who then takes an initiative to approach selector. After a time-lag, when selector really needs to fill a vacancy, selector approaches ego directly. Type 4 does not describe an open recruitment; and alter is indeed ego’s godmother – a close tie.

The fifth type of typology also involves three parties but this time, alter simply passes information about a job opening to ego – there is no link (e.g. informal recommendation) between alter and selector at all. The relationship between ego and alter is simply student and tutor.

Based on the mechanisms involved when recruiters recruit freelancers, I also develop the typology of recruitment for freelancers. Three types are developed. Type 1a and type 1b are actually the same as type 2a and type 2b of recruitment for full time staff members (i.e. formal application and direct approach). Type 2 is the same as type 3a of recruitment for full time staff as well. It is only type 3 that draws our attention. In type 3, based on the reputation of ego, alter, who does not know ego personally, recommends ego to selector. Reputation plays a role in this referral process.

However, the above mechanisms might possibly imply that there could be a limitation of the scope of potential candidates if social ties are used because recruiters can only reach candidates who are linked to their current professional community (or staff members who have worked in some particular publishing houses). Even if recruiters recruit a job candidate through referral and the candidate has a good reputation, this might still create a "homophily" bias in networks (Burt 2005:12).

Importance of social ties generally in publishing

This chapter illustrates that social ties serve the function of minimising the cost in the process of recruitment. In particular, social ties serve to minimise the cost of making a mistake in the future – the prior concern is to reduce uncertainty in the potential recruits.

The results of this chapter respond to the theoretical concern over the nature of the job, as expected at the beginning of this chapter. Based on Sorensen and Kalleberg's (1980), Stinchcombe's (1990) and Goldthorpe's (2000) theoretical discussions, I expected that the nature of a job has implications for recruitment methods. According to the interviews, I find that the prior concern of recruiters in my sample is to minimise uncertainties of recruiting an inappropriate employee who might be likely to make mistakes in the job in the future. Whether recruiters use formal or informal recruitment methods depends on the level of uncertainty around recruiting a wrong person and the cost of making such mistakes. For instance, Calvin and Angelina recruited previous staff because they do not have to train this particular staff all over again and they should know quite well the work ability of this staff. To a very large extent, Stinchcombe's argument (1990) on uncertainty and information is supported by the results of this Chapter.

The nature of the service relationship as discussed by Goldthorpe (2000), to a certain extent, sheds light on the recruitment process, at least in the process of extensive search. The “contractual hazard” mentioned by Goldthrope includes two dimensions: first, where the difficulty in monitoring work arises, the commitment of employees is particularly important; second, the high degree of specificity of human assets means that there is a need to understand the job before employment. I find that although the interviewees did not vividly raise these two dimensions, the degree of specificity (the second dimension) is roughly implied during some interviews. For example, Stephen said when he recruited freelancers whose jobs are relatively basic, he used both formal and informal methods rather than informal methods alone. The specificity of human asset determines the methods for extensive search.

The nature of the job, i.e. the level of control over the job and over access to the job as discussed by Sorensen and Kalleberg (1980), however, is not particularly mentioned by the interviewees. The level of control over the job and the employment relationship are not distinctive factors in the labour market of the publishing sector. Finally, the size of the company does not matter much either. For example, Peter and Angelina, whose companies are very small and grand respectively, used social ties for recruitment even for junior positions.

Reputation: relating social ties and desirable qualities in work

In this Chapter, I illustrated that reputation is a piece of information, which serves as a predictor of work ability. The basic assumption of relying on reputation is that in an economic exchange, information on both parties is imperfect; and, thus, resulting in uncertainty. This assumption is well captured and theorized in Spence’s job market signaling model (1973). In this model, the basic assumption is that there is information asymmetry between employers and job applicants. On the one hand, an employer has imperfect information about job applicants, i.e. does not know in advance which applicant is good and which one is bad. On the other hand, job applicants know if they are attempting to hide some disadvantageous attributes in recruitment or to dupe the employer. An employer needs to take time to learn about the employees' work capacity after hiring. In this sense, hiring is an investment decision and it places the employer under uncertainty. To minimise such uncertainty, reputation serves to provide extra information to fill in this informational gap, facilitate an efficient transaction and minimise transaction costs.

Following the sociological tradition (Granovetter and Burt), in this Chapter, I illustrated that reputation is an important piece of information carried through (weak) ties and used in the process of recruitment. Reputation is particularly important when recruiters recruit full time or freelance staff through referral.

My research findings further confirm Granovetter and Burt's discussion of reputation in a specific context. In my study of the publishing sector, I find two situations in which recruiters pay regard to reputation in the process of extensive search. First, recruiters take the reputation of a job candidate into consideration if the reputation is spread through people within a small industrial community. For example, Iris, who works in legal publishing, said that the industry itself is small and people know each other and they know who have "*the reputation of being good*". Legal publishing, a small industrial community, is the context where reputation is spread among staff members. The context I discussed here can be roughly equivalent to Granovetter's dense network and Burt's network closure.

Second, recruiters pay regard to the reputation of a job candidate so long as the person spreading the candidate's reputation belongs to the publishing sector at large. For example, Calvin said when he is about to fill up a vacancy, the first thing to do is to "*contact anybody who may have somebody in mind*". Another example is when Janice's colleague recruited a freelance designer and she introduced Robert whom she does not know personally: *"they (her colleagues) knew these people (freelance designers) well without really knowing them. He's a friend's friend".* The reputation of a person is based on his or her work ability. Reputation is spread through colleagues who have direct work experience of the person.

This chapter discussed the extensive search of a recruitment process. In the next chapter, I am going to discuss the intensive search of the process. In light of the above discussion of reputation, I am going to investigate the desirable traits in each publishing role. The basic question is: what attributes in the workplace are desirable and constitute a reputation? Following this line of thought, based on the nature of the job, would there be any difference in the attributes that recruiters look for? What do recruiters refer to when making selection decision? The next chapter is a continuity of the discussion on the relationship between job nature, social ties and recruitment process.

Chapter 5

Selection processes

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I discussed the early stage of the recruitment processes in publishing (the "extensive search" for candidates). This chapter explores the selection element of the recruitment processes. This comes at a later stage in the processes (the "intensive search"). Selection involves evaluating applicants from the pool of potential employees and choosing those apparently best suited for the firm's openings (Barron and Bishop 1985; Marsden and Campbell 1990; Marsden 1996; Bills 1999; Holzer and Neumark 2000; Welters and Muysken 2008). Herman (1994) identifies the following stages in the selection processes: screening, testing, interviewing and reference checking. The processes end with the negotiation of agreements between the organisation and employee. Whereas the recruiter seeks to gain information on as many applicants as possible during the recruitment period, selection typically involves obtaining more in-depth information on a limited number of 'shortlisted' candidates.

Very often, a recruiter does not have perfect information about the job applicants whereas the job applicants are likely to show their best side to the recruiter and are reluctant to disclose anything negative (see Spence's job market signaling model 1973; Stinchcombe 1990). Stinchcombe (1990) argues that screening is an "imperfect mechanism for evaluating the potential productivity of new employees". Akerlof (1970) argues that, "An untrained worker may have valuable natural talents but these talents must be certified". Thus, to the recruiter, uncertainties over the applicant's ability and other work-related traits are involved in the selection processes.

Objective criteria such as educational level and work experience of the applicant are only an imperfect and incomplete reflection of the true attributes of the job applicants (Simon and Warner 1992). The sensible way to counteract uncertainty is to gather information about the job applicants prior to hiring (Simon and Warner 1992). One of the theoretical questions raised in Chapter 4 continues into this chapter: does the difficulty in monitoring the job and different levels of commitment (Goldthorpe 2000) affect selection decision? This chapter aims to identify what attributes recruiters look for in different publishing roles and at different levels of seniority, and the processes by which they select an appropriate candidate. In the following, I will discuss literatures on different stages of the selection processes. These include formal methods, such as screening CVs, written tests and interviews; and informal methods, such as word of mouth.

5.2 Empirical studies of selection criteria under conditions of uncertainty

Kanter (1977) defines “homophily” as the homosocial reproduction of management that is the result of selection processes based on social similarity such as similarity with respect to gender and ethnic background. She argues that the under-representation of women in managerial positions might in part be due to homosocial reproduction whereby men select other men, with whom they feel familiar. Kanter discusses why homophily is an important element of being a manager, and the forces that lead management to become a closed, exclusive circle. The situation in large corporations is that there is a lot of evidence showing that leaders in a variety of situations are likely to show preference for socially similar subordinates and help them get ahead. Many managers look for traits such as loyalty, acceptance of authority and conformity to a prescribed pattern of behaviour. Those who run a bureaucratic corporation often rely on outward manifestations to determine who is the “right sort of person”. Managers tend to look for those they see as ‘their kind’ as they expect they can place trust on the newly recruited.

Kanter explains in great detail why this is the case. The basic reason is that much uncertainty is involved in managerial positions. She quotes Thompson: “Uncertainty appears as the fundamental problem for complex organisations, and coping with uncertainty as the essence of the administrative processes.” (1977:48) Thompson identified three sources of uncertainty in a bureaucracy. First, too little understanding of cause and effect in the culture at large (limiting the possibility for advance planning). Second, the contingencies caused by the fact that the bureaucracy is not alone, so that the outcomes of organisational action are in part determined by the action of other elements in the environment. Third, the interdependence of parts, the human interconnections inside the organisation itself, which can never fully be reduced to predictable action (Kanter, 1977:48). Because of these uncertainties, there needs to be some degree of trust in individuals. Kanter further explains the uncertainties managers face on a daily basis. For example, uncertainty can stem from either the timespan of decisions and the amount of information that must be collected, or from the frequency with which non-routine events occur and must be handled (1977:52).

According to Kanter, although there is increasing institutionalisation and a desire to impose routine in much of the work of large organisations, uncertainties remain. Decisions are made about a variety of unknown elements and issues such as direction and purpose cannot be reduced to rational formulae. Moreover, the criteria for good decisions and good management performance are less clear the closer one comes to the top (1977:52). According to Kater, wherever there is uncertainty, someone or some group must use personal discretion. The impossibility of specifying contingencies in advance leaves an organisation relying on personal discretion. The importance of discretion increases the closer the individual gets to the top of a hierarchical organisation. Such discretion raises the question of trust, and its origins in loyalty, commitment and mutual understanding based on the sharing of values (1977:48). Kanter argues that the greater the uncertainty, the greater the pressures for those who have to trust each other to form a homogenous group. In closed inner circles, trust is assumed. Trust is based on two kinds of homogeneity (homophily), i.e. similarity of social background and characteristics, and similarity of organisational experience. The basic question is: why should an owner give discretion over his or her property to strangers? The fact is that the lack of structure in top jobs makes it very important for decision-makers to work together closely in the harmony of shared understanding and a degree of mutual trust (1977:53). In this case, concerns about trust and loyalty must be major issues in any organisation.

Kanter argues that predictability and trustworthiness are desirable attributes in a manager because they serve the function of control: owners and directors appoint those whom they feel they can “count on”, whose loyalty and obligation to the system can be demonstrated (1977:52). The solidarity that can be mustered through common membership of social networks, and the social control this provides, is a helpful supplement for decision-makers. Homogeneity of class and ethnic background and prior social experience is one important commitment mechanism found to build a feeling of solidarity among top managers. To Kanter, there is a direct correlation between the degree of uncertainty in a position (which relies on personal discretion to do the job) and reliance on trust by reproducing a familiar scenario based on social similarity.

But Kanter also argues that there are more commonly known devices capable of carrying out managerial functions, such as management consultants. This reduces the uncertainty that is in the nature of the managerial role. The reduction of uncertainty reduces the need for homogeneity and makes it possible to accept more kinds of people in management positions. The stress on trust and loyalty becomes less important when society has developed a high degree of consensus about the functions and tasks of management.

As mentioned before, even a managerial job is not clearly defined. A manager is placed in the middle of a system of relationships, out of which he or she must fashion an organisation which will accomplish his or her objective (1977:55)[53]. Managers spend a lot of time meeting people in the office and making plans. Based on the nature of the work, a manager would be seen as desirable if he or she has smooth social relationships and communication skills. Moreover, since managers manage their own work time, they are required to exercise a considerable degree of personal attachment and a generalised, diffuse, unlimited commitment. The importance of loyalty is stressed (1977:63). In these circumstances, the organisation’s demand for commitment from a manager is another way of stating concrete measures of trust, loyalty and performance in the face of uncertainties. From a recruitment point of view, there is a need for a referrer to indicate whether the applicant is loyal and committed to work, because the referrer is assumed to know this applicant well.

---

[53] For example, four executives in England were found to spend 80% of their time talking.

From an internal promotion point of view, there is an expectation that people in management form their careers largely around one organisation. This is assumed to create loyalty as well as to ensure that the managerial personnel have a common core of organisational experience that should establish trustworthiness and translate into accurate and smooth communication (1977:65).

Another uncertainty is that there is no definite criterion by which to assess a manager's performance. An executive personnel committee has generated a list of characteristics that are desirable for a manager. Some of these traits included: empathy, integrity, ambition, intelligence, acceptance of accountability, ability to take appropriate risks, to be smart, and to have a good track record. The basic question remains: how can these traits be measured concretely?

Kanter argues that because of these uncertainties, social homogeneity is found to be an important selection criterion for managers[54]. Due to the need for broad discretion (as part of the nature of the job), recruiters choose managers who can be trusted. Recruiters look for commitment, trustworthiness and loyalty in a potential manager.

---

[54] To explain why women find it so difficult to climb to managerial positions, Kanter analyses the organizational constraints on the behaviour of managers, secretaries and managers' wives. As stated above, for managers, the critical issue is the importance of social conformity. Managers develop tight inner circles that exclude demographically heterogeneous people (those who are non-white and female) because of the uncertainty with which managers live on a daily basis. For secretaries, the critical issue is a patrimonial relationship in a relatively rationalised organisation (Huber, 1979:690). A secretary is promoted not for her work skills but because of her boss is promoted, as though she were part of a patrimonial dignitary's private retinue. The secretary's priority is to study the boss rather than the organisation and they are rewarded for particularistic behaviour. As for wives, although they are outside official boundaries, the company influences how they spend their time and what is possible in their marital lives. The few women managers are aware that the sexual potential of office relationships tends to set them at odds with wives. That wives operate behind the scenes further reinforces men's view of women as having social rather than intellectual ability. Kanter also shows how ambition and commitment relate to opportunity. People with low opportunity rarely develop motivation to improve their situations. Similarly, people in powerless positions become rigid, bound by rules, controlling and possessive (Huber, 1979:691). Kanter shows what keeps women down in business organisations.

Kanter's arguments have been echoed by subsequent researchers (Schein 1975; Rosen and Jerdee 1978; Schein *et al.* 1989; Anleu 1992; Schein and Mueller 1992; Burke 1994; Athey *et al.* 2000; Marongui and Ekehammar 2000; Browne and Misra 2003; Chattopadhyay 2003; Geddes and Konrad 2003; Bacharach and Bamberger 2004; Bacharach *et al.* 2005; Graves and Elsass 2005; DiTomaso *et al.* 2007; Chattopadhyay *et al.* 2004, 2008; Gustafson 2008; Petersen and Dietz 2008; Randel and Jaussi 2008; Stewart and Garcia-Prieto 2008; Gonzalez and Denisi 2009). There is a common assumption that a certain degree of misfit between women's personality and the personality required for a managerial position is likely to influence promotional decisions and advancement. The dominance of men within management has given the managerial role a masculine image. Perceived lack of fit may in turn lead women to select themselves out of competition for managerial positions. Schein and Mueller (1992:440) argue that "the perceived similarity between the characteristics of managers and men increases the likelihood of a male rather than a female, being selected for or promoted into a managerial position". Therefore, even though women aspire to promotion or become promoted to managerial positions, they may perceive a lack of fit between the self and the managerial role (Marongui and Ekehammar 2000).

Kanter and these subsequent researches explain selection criteria from an ascriptive point of view. These arguments were formulated so as to examine the differences in person-manager fit in terms of gender-related traits. Sex appears to function as a powerful bias in organisational promotion decisions, independent of other factors (Marongui and Ekehammar 2000). This line of thoughts emphasises homophily: how similarity in ascriptive characteristics enhances trust within a group and thus, determines position within a corporation. Homophily is what recruiters look for during selection. This is one perspective of the selection processes.

Other perspectives

As reviewed in Chapter 4, Goldthorpe's service relationship places the emphasis on job commitment. The service class is in a position that exercises relatively more discretion in the workplace and they have considerable control over their own work. As it is not easy to monitor managers, the emphasis is on job commitment. According to Goldthorpe (2000:218), where difficulty in monitoring work arises, it becomes especially important for the recruiter to gain the commitment of employees. This implies designing and implementing a form of contract that ensures, as far as possible, that their interests are aligned with the goals of the organisation as the recruiter would define them.

Jackson (2001, 2006, 2007) argues that non-cognitive characteristics, particularly personality traits and social skills, are important determinants of occupational attainment. They are relevant to the mechanisms by which individuals gain occupational and class positions. Sociological and economic literature overwhelmingly focuses on how cognitive characteristics, such as IQ and educational qualifications, and social background, such as social class origin, gender and ethnicity, determine an individual's position in the labour market (Jackson 2001, 2006, 2007). But some studies also show that non-cognitive characteristics are also relevant to labour market outcomes. Jackson poses the question: why this should be so? She argues that it is necessary to consider the micro-mechanisms governing the labour market to find an answer[55]. In particular, it is necessary to understand the connection between the types of characteristics rewarded in the labour market and the types of characteristics desired by recruiters in their employees. For example, if recruiters chose to reward only an individual's educational qualifications, we would not expect personality traits to have a major effect on their income or class position. In other words, the traits that recruiters look for depend on the nature of the job. Using the National Child Development Study (NCDS)[56], Jackson makes it clear that, on top of cognitive characteristics, personality traits and social skills deserve more attention in the recruitment processes. She provides a platform for understanding the relevance between the nature of the job and the non-cognitive abilities (i.e. in her study, personality traits) that the recruiter desires.

---

[55] Jackson (2001) provides similar arguments in another study on the importance of personality traits in the recruitment processes. The 'Increased Merit Selection' (IMS) theory, which states that modern

Based on Jackson's account, the next question that deserves attention in the recruitment processes is: how do recruiters gather information on the applicant's personality traits? To go further, cognitive characteristics, such as educational background, can be indicated on a CV. But job-related personality traits – presumably reliability, dedication, and responsibility – are more difficult to indicate. In these circumstances, how do recruiters know whether the candidate possesses these traits? How do recruiters gather information to judge whether the candidates possess the personality traits they look for? A more complicated issue arises: personality trait and social skills are crude concepts. To place this concept in the context of the selection processes, we find that some traits are identifiable and

---

societies should be characterised by a move from ascription to achievement when allocating occupational position, cannot be proved absolutely. Even after controlling for ability, effort and educational attainment, individuals in different classes are subject to inequalities in their mobility chances (2001:620). She argues that class inequalities in mobility chances are created in that they are the macro-level results of a whole range of micro-level decisions made by recruiters and prospective employees. Hence, it is necessary to study the recruitment processes (on a micro level) in order to explain the longstanding inequality in mobility chances among different class origins. The question "What do recruiters require in their employees?" is relevant. What kind of non-meritocratic characteristics are valued by recruiters in the recruitment processeses?

[56] A nationally representative cohort study of all children born in Britain in one week in March 1958.

observable before selection whereas some are not. For example, punctuality can be a desirable personality trait from a recruiter's point of view. It is unobservable during selection (except where the candidate is unpunctual at the job interview but this is probably considered irrelevant) but it is observable once an individual takes up the job. Punctuality is an attribute which is irrelevant to "uncertainty in monitoring the job" (Goldthorpe's word) but is more relevant to uncertainty in selection. While uncertainty in monitoring the job can be one of the considerations for recruiters during selection, uncertainty in selection is another.

Based on this, recruiters presumably seek to use both cognitive and non-cognitive measures during recruitment because they like to have as much information as possible about their potential employee. The more information a recruiter has, the more likely it is that they will be able to judge whether the potential employee is suitable for the job: uncertainties, information and referrer – where are they to get the information? Jackson provides two possible explanations. First, some personality traits may aid recruiters in their control of the workforce. When workers possess these traits, they will be rewarded[57]. Second, the functional requirements of some occupations might be served through the employee's possession of specific types of personality traits which cannot be measured directly through cognitive abilities such as educational qualification (2006:2).

The differences between organisations in terms of resources and structure should influence the likelihood that they make use of formal approaches to selection (Marsden, 1996:137). There are also occupational variations in selection methods.

---

[57] For example, recruiters might like to have helpful and obedient employees, and therefore the trait of conformity is rewarded through higher wages.

For example, skills or performance tests are more applicable to some positions than to others. For example, drug and alcohol tests are more defensible for safety-sensitive jobs than for jobs in general (Herman 1994; Marsden 1996). There is also a difference in the intensity of selection processes, depending on company size: in smaller companies, the intensity is lower. In contrast, larger companies which have formalised human resources (HR) departments devote relatively more effort to the selection processes. Companies with formalised personnel departments are likely to use formal selection methods (Cohen and Pfeffer 1986; Baron *et al.* 1986; Marsden 1996). For example, formal selection methods, personality tests and reference letters are more common in organisations that have a formalised HR department (Baron *et al.* 1986; Marsden 1996). Similarly, it is to be expected that substantial selection efforts be devoted to hiring employees who are to receive additional training within the organisation (Barron and Bishop 1985; Marsden 1996).

From the above, we find that Kanter discusses how an ascriptive background puts an individual in a certain structural location in a corporation. Kanter identifies various kinds of uncertainty. As managers look for homophily from each other, they tend to recruit white middle class men into a managerial position. Kanter emphasises the exclusive inner circle among managers. Goldthorpe looks at the employment relationship from the job-employee level. It is the nature of the job that determines what recruiters look for in a job applicant. This explains why commitment is emphasised in a service relationship because there is uncertainty around how to monitor a job. Jackson emphasises personality traits and social skills in the selection processes and how the importance of personality traits and social skills varies depending on the nature of the job.

The above studies emphasise how differences in the nature of job and organisational structure shape the recruiter's ideal attributes in an employee[58]. Nevertheless, these studies ignore the empirical aspect of workplace interaction. For example, Kanter and subsequent researchers stress homophily but recent researches are beginning to discuss diversity in a corporation (Schaubroeck and Lam 2002; Williams *et al.* 2007; Cannella *et al.* 2008; Chavez and Weisinger 2008; Miller and Triana 2009). Goldthorpe discusses service relationship and job commitment only on the theoretical level – commitment to the job might help to reduce uncertainty only in monitoring. What recruiters consider in selection processes (other than ranks and roles) can include other dimensions. For example, uncertainty in selection can be more relevant than uncertainty in monitoring (punctuality is an example). Jackson provides only a crude argument on cognitive and non-cognitive traits in recruitment. "Personality trait" is a broad concept that needs better definition. The empirical workplace could be more interactive and complicated than what she describes as person-to-job or customer-to-client relationships. I propose that, in a workplace, people neither necessarily work on an individual basis, nor with people of the same rank. In real life, people usually work in a team which comprises people of different roles and ranks. I have already discussed the empirical situation of teamwork in publishing in Chapter 3. In the following, I am going to review the existing human resources literature that suggests what recruiters look for in a team player. The idea of a team player has implications for the attributes that recruiters look for in recruitment processes.

---

[58] Personnel selection literature has also traditionally focusd on person-job fit (P-J fit): an individual having the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) to perform the job (Adkins, Russell and Werbel 1994). Paunonen *et al.* (1987) discuss the impact of personality and the reference letter to hiring decisions. They suggest that the applicant's personality characteristics are interpreted by recruiters as important components in the hiring processes: the higher the perceived person-job match, the greater the ratings about the candidate regarding the suitability for the job and expected success, and the greater the recruiter's willingness to hire. All else being equal, people sharing preferences, attitudes, temperamental characteristics and behavioural dispositions might work together more productively than when such commonalities are absent. In these circumstances, personality conflicts would be minimised and mutual cooperation and morale would be increased. In sum, personality information is an accurate benchmark for predicting how well a candidate will perform a job.

Selecting a team player

In a team, the recruiter is expected to work collaboratively and interdependently, even though team members often have diverse backgrounds and work styles (Harrison *et al.* 2002; Hobman *et al.* 2003; Mello and Ruckes 2006; Williams *et al.* 2007; Zellner-Bruhn *et al.* 2008; Kalve 2009). Research on management has given rise to substantial discussions about teamwork. This, in turn, has implications for selection criteria from a recruiter's point of view. Stevens and Campion (1994) review the literature on groups to determine the knowledge, skill, and ability (KSA) requirements for teamwork. To recruit an employee who is going to work in a team, it might be the KSAs rather than personality traits or cognitive abilities, which are more determining in the selection processes (Stevens and Campion 1994, 1999; Lee 2008). These KSAs are attributes such as initiative, trust, openness, helpfulness, flexibility and supportiveness (Stevens and Campion, 1994:504). They are routinely mentioned as desirable team-member characteristics. A focus on KSAs emphasises attributes which management can influence, rather than traits or dispositional attributes, which are presumed to be more stable characteristics of individuals that cannot be as readily influenced. The enhanced requirements for flexibility and versatility in teamwork settings and the demand that team members have a breadth of technical KSAs is important when selecting a job candidate who is ready to work in a team. As the amount of interpersonal interaction inevitably increases when individuals are placed into work teams, it seems that the need for interpersonal competence is increased. In this regard, interpersonal communication ability is important in a team[59]. Within a team, individual team-member performance must also be monitored in order to avoid free-riding (Stevens and Campion 1994).

Steven and Campion (1994:520) suggest that teamwork KSAs may have implications for recruitment. Recruiters tend to look for teamwork KSA attributes. Recruiting for teams should clearly communicate the importance of these requirements. However, they argue that research is needed on the development and validation of selection procedures to measure teamwork KSAs. Also, more efforts should be put into exploring whether heterogeneity or homogeneity in abilities is the more suitable for a team.

Steven and Campion look at selection criteria from the perspective of teamwork. They suggest that human resources and management studies focus on formal tests but much effort has already been given to the study of social networking in labour recruitment in sociological research. This research suggests that selecting a job candidate where uncertainty is a factor does not necessarily depend on formal tests; instead, other methods can play a greater role. I will discuss this in a later section of the chapter.

5.3 Implications for publishing

My understanding of the recruitment literature led me to make various assumptions as to how recruiters build a job profile. As reviewed in Chapter 3, there are different types of job in publishing. The level of difficulty in monitoring performance, specificity of assets, and the need for commitment (as stated by Kanter and

---

[59] Stevens and Campion (1994) categorise three subcategories of interpersonal KSAs which help team contributors to be effective. These subcategories are: conflict resolution KSAs, collaborative, problem-solving KSAs and communication KSAs.

Goldthorpe) varies; so, too, does the level of uncertainty in selection. In the following sections, I am going to explore how the nature of the job carries different expectations and has implications for recruitment. This chapter specifically discusses intensive search.

As reviewed in Chapter 3, there is a hierarchy to the different publishing roles. In general, I expect that, for managerial positions or above, recruiters look for non-cognitive traits such as job commitment, trustworthiness, similarity of background to the recruiter's and loyalty to the company. It is the nature of a manager's job in publishing that their role involves more discretionary power and gives rise to less clarity when assessing performance. I expect recruiters to look for cognitive traits in junior staff because such positions give rise to less uncertainty in monitoring.

Because publishing offers several kinds of role, I expect recruiters to look for different traits for different roles. I expect recruiters to look for more cognitive traits such as accuracy in the use of English and editorial experience when selecting an editor. Because design is a relatively more "creative" role, I would expect recruiters to look for cognitive abilities such as creativity, awareness of trends in the arts, and design training. For junior members of the production team I expect recruiters to look for cognitive skills such as knowledge of production processes. Moreover, in line with Steven and Campion (1994, 1999) arguments, I expect recruiters to look for traits in roles that require team work: for example, that an editor is able to communicate well and work with a team. This applies to design and production as well because these departments also need to communicate within themselves and with other publishing departments. Teamwork KSAs are important to perform the job well.

After identifying the desirable traits for an employee in different publishing roles, how do recruiters ensure a candidate possesses these traits? How do they make sure whether they have actually made the right decision?

When a recruiter looks for cognitive traits, he or she will refer to “black and white” documents, such as CV, covering letter and reference letter. These documents indicate solidly the candidate’s work experience, relevant training and educational background. For example, a recruiter refers to the CV and covering letter when selecting an editor. Similarly, a recruiter refers to the CV and design portfolio when he or she selects a junior designer. At managerial and senior grades, I explore whether word-of-mouth plays a relatively more important role. Since the traits (such as leadership ability and responsibility) recruiters look for are not easily identifiable, I ask whether recruiters turn to a third person for a referral. In these circumstances, the reputation of the candidate is crucial.

5.4 Aims of the chapter

The recruitment process is a process of extensive search (using different methods to search for job candidates) and intensive search (adopting different selection methods for the best candidate). This chapter is a continuation of Chapter 4 and covers only intensive search.

I will explore the traits that recruiters look for in a job applicant. Different roles in publishing require different qualities. I will examine what each role requires. I will then examine how recruiters decide who should eventually be selected. This is the selection processes. There are different stages in the processes. I ask whether the final stage is usually where networking steps in. Networking provides insider information that documents such as CV and covering letter cannot provide. In the final part of this chapter, I will discuss the role played by networking in the selection processes.

5.5 What traits do recruiters look for in the intensive search in publishing and to what evidence do they refer?

In this section, I am going to discuss the attributes recruiters look for in the publishing sector. I will discuss the attributes required by the different publishing roles, namely, editorial, design and production. In parallel, I will also discuss the materials recruiters rely on to make a selection decision. In this section, I will mainly concentrate on the formal materials, i.e. CV, interviews and written tests.

5.5.1 Selecting editorial staff

As already mentioned, being an editor requires relatively little discretion. As someone in charge of the editorial team, Vicky, a senior editor of a publishing house in Oxford, looks for candidates with the following attributes:

> *"We are normally looking for people who have studied English at university level. We don't necessarily want somebody who has studied English but we want somebody who is good at English. So we would look very closely at their CV and the letter they write." (Vicky, interviewed on 9th May 2006)*

Vicky looks for an editor whose English is good. What she refers to are the candidate's CV and covering letter because these indicate the degree of fluency and use of accurate English, both strong indications of the candidate's ability to use English. This is a cognitive skill. A CV and covering letter without mistakes in

English presumably indicate that someone handles English well. Nevertheless, Vicky also needs more to confirm a person's ability:

> *"The interview is influential because the interview shows whether they can articulate the written ability and whether they're good enough." (Vicky, ibid)*

Vicky also judges performance at interview. When the candidate speaks to the employer face-to-face, it offers a second opportunity to assess the standard of English. Since Vicky said she looks only for cognitive skills, it is important to test this ability. These skills are easily identifiable.

In recreational publishing, good English is the most vital attribute needed in an editor: the cognitive skill that the recruiter looks for above all else. For editors who work in a specialist field, the requirement is more complicated. The following is what Ben, a senior manager in a medical publishing company, looks for in a medical writer:

> *"The basic skill you need is a medical or medical science degree. You have to have very good command of the English language and also a very good ability to communicate. You have to be able to write accurately and quickly. The other (skill I look for) is more subjective: whether people would fit into the team. That's really based on chemistry." (Ben, interviewed on 14th August 2005)*

In addition to good English, Ben lists the other crucial traits that he looks for: a specialist degree, good communication skills, accurate English, quick writing and being able to "fit into the team". These skills are both cognitive and non-cognitive. Recruiters can check the CV to find whether the job applicant has a specialist degree. Good and accurate English are apparent from the CV and covering letter, as stated previously. Applicants are also required to do a written test if they are not known to anybody in the company[60]. Herman (1994:93) argues that tests are “the most useful screening device in predicting an employee’s success on the job”. The written test can check if the applicant can “write accurately and quickly”. Ben also mentioned that he looks for a particular transferable skill, i.e. the ability to “fit into the team”. He uses a test to check for this more hidden, less easily-identifiable attribute:[61]

> *“There’s a formal psychological test. People do it on themselves on management training courses. Once somebody ticks all the boxes for skills, you give them a written test.” (Ben, interviewed on 14th August 2005)*

In theory, the higher the score a job applicant obtains in a psychological test, the higher the ability he or she has demonstrated to fit into a team. After the formal interview, Ben told me more about the test: job applicants are given a standardised psychological test, which comprises of questions that imply work ethics and personality. They are required to tick the boxes they find suitable for themselves. From the above, we find that recruiters look for professional skills/ expertise in the selection processes. This is cognitive ability. A good command of English and a specialist degree are crucial but so are attributes such as the ability to “fit into the team”. Moreover, when an organization implements work teams, the teams are often given some degree of self-management (Stevens and Campion 1994, 1999). This means that the team has significant control over the direction and execution of its tasks. This explains why Ben emphasises on “fit into the team”. According to Ben, this “fit into the team” is “based on chemistry”, though he found it hard to describe what is “chemistry”. This attribute is irrelevant to what Goldthorpe (2000) mentioned “difficulty in monitoring” the job. The recruiter can only learn if the applicant “fit into the team” after he or she is recruited and really work with other team members. This is an interaction with other team members, which could be context-specific, that matters in the selection processes. Perhaps being able to fit into the team and having chemistry with team members is a function of similarity. In this circumstance, my interpretation elaborates Kanter’s homophily argument.

---

[60] In the later part of this chapter, I will explain the situation where job applicants do not have to sit a written test if they apply for a job in this company through referral.

[61] Recruiters can only find this out after the employee actually starts work.

5.5.2 Recruiting art editors/ designers

There is relatively more autonomy to a designer’s work than in editorial jobs, according to several interviewees. As mentioned in Chapter 3, design is about creating and illustrating pages. The work demands creative flair, up-to-date knowledge of industry software, and being able to meet a deadline. The job is also easily monitored. Top of the assessment list is whether the candidate is capable of doing the job. Annie, a senior art editor, emphasises that the criterion for recruitment is ability, and this is predominantly indicated by the CV:

> *“It's more about the CV and how the CV is phrased, designed and compiled. If there are any spelling mistakes we just bin them… We had 98 people apply for one job and we went through them rigorously. It's you who has to score them, the CV against your list.” (Annie, interviewed on 14th September 2005)*

The CV illustrates particular skills in the job applicant, such as the level of skill in the design of page layouts and accurate detail. Although Annie stressed the importance of professional skills, her recent experience in recruiting an art editor demonstrates that she requires more:

> *“The person we recruited had a lot of skills. We were amazed at the skills we*

> *needed. But also she was a really good communicator and she instantly got on with you. (The professional skills as well?) I'm not sure that's professional skills. She's just very presentable. And she had the professional skills too. She had very good experience of the area we needed.” (Annie, ibid)*

Annie also looks for a person who “instantly got on with you”, presentable and offering good experience in the field. These are both expertise-related and non-cognitive related skills. This is actually beyond the usual job description for a designer, who is supposed to demonstrate only creativity.

> *“You have to see the candidates. You can get a lot out of how they respond to a situation and what kind of questions you ask.” (Annie, ibid)*

The employer has to talk to the candidates face-to-face in order to get a full idea how interactive and responsive they are. The employer needs to observe communication skills through face-to-face conversation. This shows that the verification of non-cognitive skills, such as being a “good communicator”, is through formal interview rather than through networking. Another recruiter, Cherry, also mentions this and I will discuss it in the next section.

Recruitment can be subjective. Just as Ben previously mentioned the criteria of “fitting into the team” and “chemistry”, Annie also described the subjective but crucial part of recruitment:

> *“What happened to me was you got a picture in your head of what this person looks like, which is pretty odd. To me what’s most important is CV and personal impression” (Annie, ibid)*

Whereas the CV is an objective indicator, personal impression is a subjective preference. Recruiters look for practical skills in job applicants. But they also emphasise whether they actually “like” the person. The word “like” is subjective. Annie relies on CV plus interview for selection.

5.5.3 Recruiting production staff

As discussed in Chapter 3, production is the technical side in publishing. Technical skills are a prerequisite to becoming a production editor or higher. Cherry, a production manager, listed the criteria she looks for in a production editor: moral attributes, i.e. trustworthiness, honesty, attentiveness, sensibility and calmness. More importantly, she needs to employ somebody “who is similar to me”. She is confident that experience allows her to sense a person’s moral attributes. She is a production manager but, ironically, what she stressed are moral attributes (though technical skills are also important). Performance at interview goes a long way towards revealing the non-cognitive attributes of a job applicant. With regard to the selection processes, she said:

> *“During an interview you can tell if the candidate is trustworthy, honest, paying attention, and sensible. It’s based on experience. You’ve got to look at people’s eyes. If you come to me for an interview, I’d be very likely to employ you. (Why?) Because you look honest and pleasant. And your body gestures... when you were fixing up the tape recorder, you looked calm. I need to employ people who are similar to me.” (Cherry, ibid)*

On top of moral attributes, Cherry mentioned “people who are similar to me”. What she refers to are character-related attributes because she is a Spanish woman and it is not sensible to interpret “similar” from an ascriptive angle. This similarity is character in nature. This modifies Kanter’s homophily argument in which managers look for ascriptive homogeneity. Cherry’s words show that similarity is in a character/work-style sense, not necessarily an ascriptive one. In the next section, Peter also talks about similarity.

Most of the recruiters refuse to articulate on what they base their judgements[62]. They only emphasise they can “sense” it. Cherry describes the processes:

> *“As a manager, I believe I should have my own judgement. The best way to judge people is from an interview. During interviews, I set up case studies and let the candidates provide solutions. Then I can see how smart that person is.” (Cherry, ibid)*

Peter put more emphasis on the personality of employees. He stressed enthusiasm and people sharing a similar outlook:

> *“That’s true of a lot of people in publishing; and, I’m sure, in other businesses as well. I mean, how do Formula One engineers find people to go and work in racing? Horrible life! You’re travelling all over the world and you’re working under intense pressure. You’re going to go with people who share that enthusiasm.” (Peter, interviewed on 19th October 2006)*

> *“Here was somebody who cared passionately about what I was doing; and my standards, if you like. It was a small company. You pick people who are going to develop the same sort of outlook.” (Peter, ibid)*

Production is a relatively technical aspect of publishing. What recruiters look for are both cognitive and non-cognitive skills. Peter mentioned enthusiasm and *“people who are going to develop the same sort of outlook”* as ideal characteristics. This is to search for homogeneity in employees who share similar qualities: the search for committed individuals.

---

[62] Similarly, Peter also said he could “sense” during the formal interview whether the candidate is really desirable.

5.5.4 Recruiting graduate trainees

The above emphasises how recruiters regard practical, work-related and social skills when they select applicants. Below, I will discuss a different situation. When recruiters choose a trainee, they look for a different set of attributes. Peter is the boss of an audio book company. He recruited a graduate trainee in early 2007. What he looked at was the track record of the applicant's extra-curricular activities at school[63]. The trainee position covered training in different areas: editorial, production and marketing. Peter said it is important to search for a person who has a sense of publishing and is enthusiastic about it.

Again, these attributes are not easily identifiable. In January 2007, Peter gave me his selection experience. The following is part of our email dialogue:

> *"We had 47 applications. We ignored their backgrounds as far as possible, yet we selected for interview – blind – 5 from Oxford, 3 from Cambridge, and one from Liverpool via a year in publishing work. Very interesting, what this has to say about poise, general knowledge and confidence. A Cambridge candidate joins us in January, so I can honestly say I am not biased!" (Peter, email 11th January 2007)*

Peter looks for *"poise, general knowledge and confidence"* in a trainee. Later, Peter spelled out the selection processes: he put an advertisement in a couple of university career centres in late 2006. These universities were located nationwide. The advertisement instructed job applicants to email him for an application form. Over the next couple of weeks, he received more than 100 applications. Based on the track record of extra-curricular activities and experience of publishing, he shortlisted nine candidates for interview. He said he intentionally ignored the name of the university and simply focused on the track record in the candidates' profile. It turned out there were *"5 from Oxford, 3 from Cambridge and one from Liverpool"*.

---

[63] He looks for *"an all-rounder and somebody who has general knowledge" (fieldwork notes, 29th October 2007).*

During the interview processes, Peter asked some questions, which are common sense in nature, to test whether the candidates were really "all rounders". He said that experience had taught him to judge who was of genuine high calibre. But he did not elaborate concretely how it comes about.

In this section, I discussed the traits that recruiters look for in the selection processes. I examined the screening of CVs and covering letters during the initial stage of selection. I also discussed the selection procedures: these include screening CVs and covering letters, a written test (for editors), and interviews (for editors, art editors/ designers and production editors). At each stage of recruitment, recruiters look for specific traits. When screening CVs, recruiters check for hard skills. Depending on what role in publishing they need to fill, recruiters look for different skills. The head of the editorial team will emphasise excellent English while the head of the production team will look for knowledge of production. But recruiters commonly look for non-cognitive skills as well, such as the ability to "fit into the team", "similar to me" or "enthusiasm".

A written test confirms whether the job applicant for an editorial position has genuinely good English. For all positions in publishing, the interview confirms whether the applicants really have their stated specialist skills. For example, the head of the production team asks technical questions to test whether the applicants are able to solve technical problems on their feet. The interview also exists to check whether job applicants possess the non-cognitive traits such as honesty, trustworthiness and sensitivity the recruiter is looking for. During the interview, recruiters look for those attributes that they regard highly. These traits cannot be captured in a CV: they are revealed only through the movements of the body, spontaneous reactions, and eye contact.

To a large extent, recruiters trust CVs and interview performance – otherwise they would not use them for screening. As discussed previously, recruiters rely on interviews to confirm the applicant’s ability. In the next section, I am going to discuss what employees see as the “value-added” element of the recruitment processes. This is the use of networking, i.e. the referrer.

5.6 The use of reference letter

In most of the established publishing firms, there are always recognised selection procedures. I have discussed some of these in the previous section. The bureaucracy and structure of a company play a role in selection. People from other departments sometimes sit in and interview the candidates. Usually the personnel department plays an administrative role in the selection processes. Here is how Annie describes the administrative processes:

> *“There are human resources staff at ELT but when we actually recruit, the people who will be working with the new person usually get involved in the*

> *recruitment: the human resources people are more hands off. They are more involved in organising the actual meeting: it is more an administrative role than actually doing any of the interviews. They are involved in the second interview." (Annie, ibid)*

The final decision-making power is still in the hand of the recruiter. The existence of the personnel department is administrative rather than for decision-making. What are the administrative responsibilities of a personnel department? A major responsibility is filing the reference letter. It is common sense that a reference letter is the conventional indicator of the job applicant's ability. When a person leaves a current job, he or she asks an employer for a reference letter to have to hand when they are looking for a future position. Yet, according to my interviewees, a reference letter actually plays little part in the recruitment processes in publishing[64]. The recruiter in publishing sees reference letters as administrative procedures. Sometimes, recruiters did not even read the reference letter. This is Annie's experience of reference letters:

> *"When I was involved in recruitment here, we didn't even look at the references. I think that is done by our personnel department. That's why I don't remember any of them – because we hadn't actually seen them." (Annie, ibid)*

In practice, the importance of a reference letter is so minor that it is reduced to administration, i.e. only the personnel department needs to deal with it. Recruiters who do read the references do not view them highly. My interviewees could cite the reason why they set no value on them. Annie and Isabel, a publisher and managing director, respectively, in Oxford explain[65]:

---

[64] It has generally been observed that a reference letter is not predictive of job performance and ability (Muchinsky 1979; Paunonen *et al.* 1987). In most reference letters, most applicants are characterised as desirable. This results in little ability to discriminate among the candidates for job suitability; and, hence, a low correlation between reference letter and actual job performance (Paunonen *et al.* 1987:98).

> *"When we give references for ex-employees, which I do, they have to go through our personnel department. I think there is a legal issue about what you can say about ex-employees. I'm not clear about what it is. I don't think you can say, 'This person is bad'." (Annie, ibid)*

> *"Somebody quitted their job. The new company intending to employ them asked for a reference. The recruiter from the original company said: This person is completely bad. Don't employ them! The job offer was withdrawn. The person being offered the job sued their former company because their reference meant they lost the job." (Isabel, 19th November 2005)*

In the publishing sector, it is the norm to "avoid saying this person is not good" in a reference letter. This is because recruiters are afraid of being "sued". This is the case where, as we saw, the merits of a reference letter were initially taken for granted. From the sender's point of view (the one who is the subject of the letter), the letter *should* be a good indicator of his/her ability. The sender does not have to do anything to present this ability. Otherwise, we cannot explain why somebody takes legal action against the previous company for failing to write a good reference for him/her.

Nevertheless, the request for a reference letter seems to be a must in the selection processes. So what is the function of a reference letter? In general, recruiters regard a reference letter as a document which proves the job applicant had worked in a particular company for a certain period of time.

> *"I think the references were more about saying that this person has been here*

---

[65] This explanation was suggested by a couple of other interviewees. Peter, Kathy, Angelina and Ben repeated the same story. The story of "suing the previous company" is widespread within publishing.

> *for this length of time." (Annie, ibid)*

A reference letter now serves to validate the job applicant's work experience on the CV. Angelina summarises the function of a reference letter as follows[66]:

> *"Increasingly the references are not telling you anything except confirming who they are. They said they did work at C.B. in this job so you were able to confirm what they had done. We would always send out for a reference, just in case that person cheats" (Angelina, ibid)*

A reference letter serves as the job applicant's double glazing: the first layer is the CV and interview, the second the reference letter. This applies to all the roles in publishing. The reference does not clearly indicate whether a candidate is good. In terms of transmitting information as to whether a person is good or not, a reference letter fails to serve its purpose. In the following section, I am going to discuss another common method of selection in publishing, which is the use of networking (word of mouth).

5.7 The use of networking

Quite a number of empirical studies put forward information mechanisms when discussing social networks and recruitment. Fernandez and Weinberg (1997) propose four mechanisms to explain why referrals enjoy advantages at each stage of the hiring processes, i.e. selection for interview and post-interview.[67] Among the four mechanisms they propose, two mechanisms can be applied in the context of recruitment. One is that referrals will provide extra information to both sides of the hiring processes. The mechanism is twofold. To the employers, the social network (the contact) will provide employers with information on a candidate's skills or attributes, e.g. diligence and honesty, which are difficult to observe before someone is actually hired. This will provide a "leading indicator" of post-hire outcomes[68]. The second mechanism is the social obligations between newly hired workers and employees who have referred them. This mechanism suggests that newly hired employees may be concerned with how their job performance affects the reputations of the people who referred them. This will pressurise the employee to work better. Meanwhile, contacts have to be honest, otherwise it harms them as well as their "friend". They might feel some obligations to help new recruits to be better equipped in their employment.

---

[66] This view is echoed by all interviewees.

[67] From the study of the hiring processes for four entry-level branch office jobs at a US retail bank between 1993-95, Fernandez and Weinberg (1997) find that referrals are 45% more likely to be interviewed than are external non-referrals, even when applicants in these two groups have the same resumé characteristics and send in their application at the same time. Indeed, referrals are even more likely to be interviewed than internal candidates. When it comes to the job offer stage, they find that

Fernandez *et al.* (2000) also explore the mechanisms that link referral and better hiring outcomes. They identify three major mechanisms but it turns out that only two are valid. Fernandez *et al.* studied the hiring processes for talk phone customer service representatives at a large talk phone centre. They found that the first mechanism (the expansion of the firm's recruiting horizon) stands. This mechanism suggests that referred applicants would be more qualified and more readily hirable than non-referral applicants because there is a tendency for people to refer others like themselves (2000:1291). Since referring employees have survived prior screening processes, such homophily would lead the referred applicants to be better qualified

---

referrals are 28% more likely to be offered jobs than are external non-referrals, controlling for resumé advantages, application timing and performance during the interviews.

[68] To the applicants, the social network might transmit information about the job that is not otherwise available. The extra information might lead applicants to make fewer mistakes when accepting a job and thus end up with a better applicant-job match.

than non-referred applicants. Besides, since employees might think that their reputations within the company could be affected by the qualities of the person they refer, they would refer only qualified applicants.

The second mechanism that proves to be valid is social enrichment. Thanks to the referrer's assistance with the unvoiced aspects of the work environment, and to informal training on job tasks, social relationships may create new human capital in the referred person (2000:1297). This shortens the time in formal training and is eventually of direct benefit to the firm. Moreover, the relationship with the referrers improves the new employee's workplace experience. This increases the sense of workplace satisfaction, commitment and attachment. Eventually, this may decrease the firm's rate of employee turnover. The firm's costs of recruitment fall as well[69]. These suggested mechanisms raise an issue which also applies in recruitment. The emphasis on hiring outcomes for the firm indicates that social networks exert an effect not only on the "owner", but on other parties in the company. In Fernandez *et al.*'s study, the referred applicant, the employer and the contact all benefit from the informal connection. This reminds us that we have to take different parties into consideration when examining the effects of social networking in the labour market.

Having grasped basic ideas about how social networks might create social capital and hence determine recruitment outcomes, I am now going to discuss the most relevant empirical studies on social networks and the selection decision. The discussion will help to refine the set of possible mechanisms by which social networks can operate in the particular context of recruitment in publishing.

---

[69] The better job-person match mechanism proves to be inappropriate. This suggests that with referral, the labour turnover rate will be lower since the referrer knows whether the job suits the referee. Yet, the researchers find that the turnover rate of referred and non-referred employees is much the same.

5.7.1 How recruiters see networking in selection

According to my interviewees, publishing is a small community. People are familiar with each other in the sector. They widen their network in the industry by moving from one company to another. In these circumstances, a person who is known to others might be better able to be spotted and recruited. For example, Peter agrees that knowing the person in advance helps the person get the job, given that this person is as good as other applicants:

> *"If you're a recruiter and you're offered a whole range of people with equal skills, and you know somebody, and you know you can get on with that person, you know they are reliable and dependable etc, and share your values of what the company stands for, you are going to pick them. If you don't have that person then, fine, you should choose equally. It's occasionally better the devil you know: somebody who isn't perfect, who are there." (Peter, ibid)*

When applicants share similar abilities, it is the one with personal linkage who can stand out. This is Peter's attitude towards the word of mouth: *better the devil you know*. Word of mouth is significant when applicants are equally good. Michelle, a senior commissioning editor, comments on networks and the labour market:

> *"There is a lot of chance involved in networks. I don't see networks as something which are consciously built up. If you are intelligent and enthusiastic, these are qualities which are actually relatively rare. People are going to pounce on them." (Michelle, interviewed on 14th December 2005)*

Given the condition that someone possesses merits such as intelligence and enthusiasm, recruiters will *"pounce on"* them. This illustrates the interactive nature of networking – it is not so much job hunters who network and seek out employment opportunities; rather, it is the recruiters who reach out and search for an appropriate employee. This view is shared by other recruiters. For example, Isabel, a managing director, and Helen, a brand development director explain clearly their selection processes:

> *"If somebody comes to you whom you trust and says, 'This person is good,' usually we'll take this person." (Isabel, 19th November 2005)*

> *"If a job is advertised and says you need three years experience, everybody will apply. What makes the difference between them isn't who they are but who they know." (Helen, 16th November 2005)*

Here lies the value of the social network: the job applicant with the relevant social networks is likely to stand out among those possessing equally good attributes. In the previous section, I discussed how recruiters refer to CV, written test performance and interview performance in the selection processes. But it does not necessarily mean that having a good CV will guarantee a job. Angelina said that knowing the applicants for a while plus a "gut feeling" increases a particular job applicant's chances.

> *"If you know anything about somebody – if they have been in the admin office for a week doing work experience or something like that – then, when you face 100 or 150 applicants, you've got the gut feeling that, 'I know a bit about this person.'" (Angelina, ibid)*

Here, Angelina emphasises "know". To know a person in advance implies networking, otherwise the recruiter cannot really "know" you. If the recruiter already knows you, you will be more likely to stand out from other job applicants. The significance of being known, lies in the fact that recruiters feel safe to recruit this particular person. Networks are widely used in publishing recruitment. According to my interviewees, they pay particular regard to those who are referred by a friend. The following illustrates the ways of checking out a job applicant informally:

Jumping the queue (skipping some procedures)

A job applicant with a referral is able to jump straight to the interview stage without being screened by written tests. This is the experience of a recruiter selecting a job applicant:

> *"If you knew that someone was highly regarded, well recommended, you wouldn't make them do a writing test." (Ben, interviewed on 14th August 2005)*

Referral can help in skipping some procedures in recruitment. With referral, the stage of doing a written test is likely to be skipped.

Cross-checking

Word of mouth guarantees that someone's capabilities are cross-checked. Where a recruiter has doubts about the job applicant's ability, he or she would turn to their social network for reassurance. Here is Helen's experience:

> *"Someone recommends someone. Or someone sends me a CV, and I see they have worked in certain companies and I know someone in that company: I would phone them up." (Helen, ibid)*

This is a combination of formal and informal selection criteria. The way to be reassured is to make a phone call. Helen continues with how she sees reassurance:

> *"It always helps. It makes you feel more comfortable because, if I know you, I trust you. If you say, 'She's all right,' you've got to feel more comfortable. It helps an awful lot." (Helen, ibid)*

From the recruiter's point of view, the essence of the informal channel (word of mouth) is to be able to trust the referrer and the reputation of the job applicant. As mentioned, recruiters look for non-cognitive traits which cannot be reflected in a CV or at interview. Word of mouth becomes a safety valve. The notion of trust will be discussed in the next section.

Sometimes, word of mouth not only confirms who is selected but helps to decide whom to reject. Elaine, an art editor, said her colleagues will also *"warn me of people to avoid"*. Jane shares a similar experience:

> *"If somebody asks, 'Do you use this writer? Were they any good?' and you say, 'No, they weren't', they wouldn't use them." (Jane, interviewed on 16th August 2005)*

The informal channel provides not only a positive recommendation to recruiters: it also places a concrete barrier in the path of some candidates at the final stage of selection processes.

Word of mouth and seniority

According to the interviewees, it is not the position of the job applicants that varies with the use of word of mouth at the selection stage. Rather, it is the seniority of the person in other companies that matters. For example, Angelina said:

> *"You have to go on interviews. For some companies, we'll approach somebody senior. We'll look at the CV, then we'll get them to interview. On the basis of that we'll make our offer. So what'll happen is that somebody will say, 'Did anybody know anything about this person?'." (Angelina, ibid)*

The efficiency of word of mouth depends on the seniority of the vacant position. Some job positions need validating by word of mouth more than others. This is how Ben explains it:

> *"It depends on the level. A lot of information you can find out. But if somebody senior says, 'I worked with this person for 10 years, they were my manager, they are great, they worked very hard and they get it right,' we would go for them. You have to make these kinds of explorations." (Ben, interviewed on 16th August 2005)*

This section explores how word of mouth operates in the selection processes. I argue that, despite the fact that recruiters use formal selection methods, when they make the final decision, they search for somebody they trust for the final opinion. Theoretically, normative expectations of trust are attached to a job recommendation (Granovetter 1985). Individuals only pass along job information to those whom they are confident can perform well in the position (Mencken 1998). The normative expectation of trust that accompany informal recruitment also give recruiters a certain degree of control over workers (Wood 1985; Windolf 1986; Granovetter and Tilly 1988; Fevre 1989). Peter makes an analogy of trust in the selection processes:

> *"If you know somebody and you know how they do things, you come to trust*

> *your judgment. How do you decide to go and see a film on a Saturday night? You look at a reviewer. If it is a reviewer that you know is likely to say, 'Yes, this is a good film,' and you are likely to agree, then you will follow it up. There are other reviewers which you ignore because you don't count them. That sort of trust is crucial between a seller and a buyer, a book publisher." (Peter, ibid)*

Trust in recruiting is similar to trusting a film reviewer. The next issue is: the referrer in whom the recruiter can trust. Who is this referrer?

5.7.2 Referrer and referral processes

A referrer is the middleman in the selection processes. He or she usually gains nothing, in material terms: he or she is not the one who directly benefits – it is the recruiter and the job applicants who benefit. The question is, why does the referrer get involved in the recruitment processes? In terms of social capital, it is regarded as a matter of reciprocity – one does a favour to another in the hope of future benefits. Offering a referral is caught up with obligations, expectations and trustworthiness. If one person does a favour, he or she will expect the other to reciprocate in the future. The act has established an expectation and an obligation between two people (Putnam 1995; Coleman 1998). Coleman (1998) argues that social relations which generate social capital take the following form: a sense of trust is involved in this kind of social environment; if it were not, this kind of bonding could not be substantiated[70]. To what extent is reciprocity the reason for being a referrer?

---

[70] Another form identified by Coleman is the potential for information transformation within social relations. Since obtaining information is costly without social networks, the generation of social capital helps to channel information at a lower cost. A third form is that there is social capital in the effective norms and sanctions that exist among people within a social relationship. In other words, effective norms and sanctions, which facilitate and constrain people within a social network, can constitute a powerful form of social capital.

Referring people for a job is common in publishing (and in the job market in general). It is not unusual for people to refer one another if somebody knows of an opportunity. Sue explains:

> *"It is not only publishing. It is generally. People help people and try to identify contacts for them. Somebody is working for a job and I will say, 'I know this agency,' or 'I know this company,' or 'Look at this website'. I think it's very common, not just in legal publishing." (Sue, interviewed on 9th December 2005)*

Sue actually got a job through referral by one of my interviewees. *"You met Iris and interviewed her – and she recommended me as a result. That sort of thing happens quite a lot."* Sue has been a referrer before and this is what she thinks about reciprocity on an individual level:

> *"In terms of individuals, it depends on whether people are happy to talk to somebody without having anything in exchange. I am that kind of person. If someone says, 'I need a recommendation,' I will do it. Maybe somebody else will not. I think that, generally, people are willing to help and provide information and networks, sometimes in return for nothing." (Sue, ibid)*

This is a kind of *altruism* that explains the referrer's behaviour[71]. Sue explains how she sees altruism:

> *"The return doesn't have to come directly to you. It's the principle of life: you do what you can and maybe something will come to you from some other source. You cannot just think, 'What can I get from this person if I give x,' because life doesn't work like that. If you are open-minded and ready to*

---

[71] In the next chapter, there is the example of a stranger referring a stranger (Annie and Stephen are the examples). The person who is being referred does not know who referred him/her.

> *extend yourself and help where you can, you never know when you'll be in a position when you have to be helped. It doesn't have to be necessarily the person you help." (Sue, ibid)*

Jane referred her friend to her company under a referral scheme. The reason for the referral was because she thought her friend would be suitable:

> *"I know what the company is looking for and I still thought that person should go for it… She was a friend from school whom I lost contact with, then I got back in touch. I knew her when I was 18. We lost touch for a few years, probably when I was about 23." (Jane, ibid)*

The above grew out of the relationship between Jane and her friend. They were not close but Jane refers her friend for the job because she judged her suitable. Below, Jane describes in what capacity her friend worked after joining the company, where she stayed for two years:

> *"She went to the project management side, not to medical writing – more on the budget and logistic side of the company. Then she left the company but she's still in the same business. She's working for a medical agency in London." (Jane, ibid)*

In this section, I illustrate how interviewees see referral and their actual experiences of making a referral. Some referrers simply help others out of altruism while others made a referral for a friend or wife. The notion of reciprocity (stressed by Putnam and Coleman) is not necessarily valid when it comes to referral behaviour in publishing.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter is a continuation of Chapter 4. In this chapter, I discussed the selection processes (intensive search) in recruitment. I started with Kanter (1977). This is to explore whether recruiters look for homophily (i.e. homogeneity in social and ascriptive backgrounds) in selection processes. In line with some of the theoretical concerns covered in Chapter 4, I discuss whether selection criteria vary with the difficulty in monitoring the job and the different levels of commitment required (Goldthorpe 2000). I also discuss whether it varies with the nature of the job. The current literature examines quantitatively the factors that affect what desirable traits recruiters look for during recruitment (Marsden 1996; Jackson 2006). These factors include the nature of the job and the provision of training by the company. This chapter adds value to current writing in that it examines qualitatively what exactly recruiters look for in a job applicant and the reason they do so. Following the discussions of Chapter 4, this chapter also attempts to define what exactly reputation involves in the workplace. The examination of the selection processes contributes to an understanding of the mechanisms of social networking in the labour market, which has not been systematically studied (Flap 2004).

I begin this chapter by examining what recruiters really look for with respect to the different publishing roles. I focus on whether the desirable traits vary with publishing roles. Based on the interviews, I find that all recruiters look for both cognitive and non-cognitive abilities in an applicant. Professional skills are a must but they are insufficient. For example, for a position which is “technical”, such as production editor, the production manager put the priority on moral (and personality-related) attributes such as honesty and trustworthiness. For an editor, a recruiter looks for “the ability to fit into the team”, which is different from cognitive ability. In a junior position, such as graduate trainee, being “all rounder” and having “common sense” is crucial from the recruiter’s point of view. These different attributes bring out the importance of teamwork in the selection processes: whether a person fits in the team is based on “chemistry”, rather than other attributes. With designers, whose work requires more discretion, recruiters look for both cognitive abilities and communication skills. In summary, I argue that recruiters look for different cognitive traits that are tailor-made for each role. At the same time, non-cognitive traits such as being able to work in a team and communication skills are desirable for all positions.

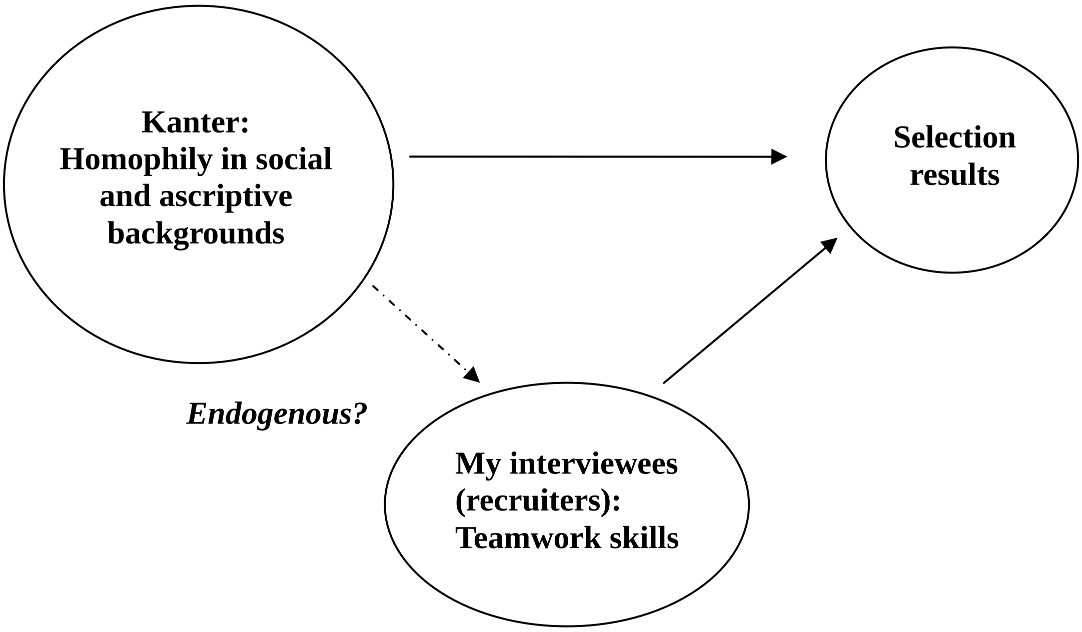
As well as reviewing the traits desirable in job applicants, I discuss the selection procedures for each publishing role. These selection procedures include screening CVs and covering letters, written tests (for editors), and interviews. At the final stage of the selection processes, it is reference checking and informal references. At each stage of selection, recruiters look for specific traits. When screening CVs and covering letter, recruiters check for cognitive abilities. During interviews, recruiters examine non-cognitive and moral attributes, such as trustworthiness and honesty. The formal reference letter is viewed as ineffective, being seen as little more than a certificate that confirms the period of employment of the candidate with the previous company. Instead, the informal reference plays a crucial role. In a later part of this chapter, I examine the possible steps of informal reference. These steps include the candidate’s jumping the queue and bypassing the procedures of checking up formal reference. I find that, despite the fact that recruiters use formal selection methods, by the end of the decision-making processes, they will search for a referrer or a guarantor for an additional comment. I also find that being referred by somebody who is familiar with the recruiters help to skip steps in the selection processes.

At the end of this chapter, I discuss referrer and the referral process. I find that in UK publishing, a staff member being referred by somebody he or she cannot identify is quite common, so long as both of them belong to the publishing community. Some of my interviewees mentioned this experience. My findings differ from the conventional belief of reciprocity in referral – reciprocity, obligation and favours are expected in the referral processes (Putnam 1995; Coleman 1998).

My interview results elaborate Kanter's homophily argument (1977). I find that, even where my interviewees mention "similarity", they talk about it in terms of character, workstyle and organisational outlook rather than social and ascriptive background. In publishing, staff members work in a team which comprises colleagues from different ranks and departments. For example, on a daily basis, a copy editor needs to work with art editors/ designers and production editors; a commissioning editor needs to work with marketing executives, publicity executives, copy editors and designers. This suggests that the ability to interact and coordinate with team members is more crucial in the selection decision rather than attributes such as ascriptive background (e.g. gender and ethnicity as Kanter suggested). Based on my findings, homophily is defined in terms of whether staff members share similar character, workstyle and organizational outlook in the context of teamwork. Kanter argues that the greater the uncertainty in work, the greater the pressures for those who have to rely on each other to form a homogenous group. According to my findings, the entry ticket for this homogenous group is similarity in non-ascriptive attributes. To put the argument the other way, if staff members in a team share diverse characters, workstyles and organizational outlooks, they might possibly be unable to coordinate and rely on each other; and of course, this is undesirable from a recruiter's point of view as this might end up with conflict or inefficiency.

Nevertheless, I would like to make a remark with reference to my response to Kanter's argument. Even if the ability to work in a team (i.e. non-ascriptive background) is crucial, I am yet to say homogeneity in an ascriptive background cannot be endogenous in the selection process, *though* none of my interviewees highlight this issue. The following diagram illustrates my arguments:

Figure 5.1: My response to Kanter's homophily argument


Kanter: Homophily in social and ascriptive backgrounds
Selection results
Endogenous?
My interviewees (recruiters): Teamwork skills

In Figure 5.1, we see two separate selection criteria: homophily in ascriptive and social backgrounds and homophily in teamwork skills (which include homophily in workstyle, characters and organisational outlook as discussed in previous paragraphs). I am not trying to reject Kanter's argument, rather, I suspect that Kanter's argument is endogenous in mine. Based on my interview information, I cannot see much heterogeneity in the ascriptive background in my interviewees and their teams. For example, in editorial, staff members are predominately white British. Even if they are not white (such as Sonia), they are locally born, locally brought up and speak English (or the Queen's English). Furthermore, even if they are not born British (such as Sue), they work on a more knowledge-based side of editorial (in Sue's case, she works in legal publishing). Among all interviewees, only Cherry (who originated from Spain) claimed the relatively heterogeneous nature of her team – one team member is from Italy and another one is from Spain. She heads a production team in which language and the knowledge of local culture is less important. Another interviewee, Anna, is a British born Indian who works in publicity. According to her, she is the only non-ethnic British in her team. All in all, when I refer to the actual ascriptive components (particularly ethnicity) of the team members, I find homogeneity.

There could be various reasons for my interviewees to skip mentioning ascriptive backgrounds. Perhaps they want to be politically correct; or simply perhaps they take ascriptive homogeneity for granted.

My interview results also elaborate Jackson's argument (2001) in which personal characteristics (e.g. presentable, moral or physical attributes) and social skills (e.g. communication skills and leadership abilities) are valued in the empirical labour market in addition to cognitive abilities (e.g. highly organised and analytical skills); and effort (e.g. job commitment, motivated and reliable). Managerial and professional jobs particularly prefer both cognitive abilities and personal characteristics (and social skills). In her later article (2007), she further emphasises the view that different personality traits are important in different jobs (this is to understand the processes underlying stratification and mobility patterns *via* occupational attainment). She breaks each class down into its occupational components (class sub-groups) and finds that the importance of social skills and personal characteristics for each class sub-group vary at the entry level. For example, whereas social skills and personal characteristics are most frequently required for occupations falling in to Class 1, higher managers are more required to demonstrate social skills and personal characteristics than higher professionals (Jackson 2007: 379). In another article (2006), Jackson again attempts to explain the relationship between non-cognitive characteristics, particularly personality traits and occupational and class attainment. She dichotomises personality traits into two categories, i.e. aggression component and withdrawal component. For example, she finds that withdrawal has a significant negative effect on being in the managerial group relative to the working class (Jackson 2006: 195).

This chapter elaborated Jackson’s work in the following ways: first, my interview results are generally compatible with hers in that both cognitive traits and personality characteristics (in Jackson’s words) are desirable in the recruitment processes. The findings were summarised in previous paragraphs.

Second, although Jackson makes a continuous attempt to investigate the relationship between non-cognitive personality traits, occupational attainment and social stratification, her work needs to be contextualised. I locate her work in a specific context by describing vividly what kind of industry and organisational structure will lead to certain preferences on a job applicant. Whereas she used quantitative dataset, e.g. National Child Development Study (NCDS); and job advertisements for content analysis in order to make inference as to what qualities employers desire regardless of the nature and structure of the company, I collected first hand information from recruiters in the publishing sector. When my interviewees told me what they look for in a job candidate, they told me their company structure, especially the personnel at the same time. For example, Cherry told me she looked for moral and cognitive attributes in a job applicant. Just before she told me her preferences, she said she was heading more than twelve production staff within her team and the daily routine of her subordinates – who need to coordinate with the editorial department. This helps me to contextualise, for further analysis, why moral and cognitive attributes are crucial.

Third, my findings suggest that job advertisement is only one of the common ways in the recruitment processes (for details, refer to Chapter4). Undoubtedly, I agree with Jackson: "job advertisements are the first step in a screening process which communicates an employer's view of an ideal candidate to a pool of potential employees" (Jackson 2007: 371). But I also have to clarify, based on my interviewees' description, word of mouth is commonly used particularly if the work is not basic. As Jackson wrote, it is the employer who has the final say on who is going to employ – the employer lists out ideal traits and s/he makes the final judgment. In relation to the homophily argument as discussed in this Chapter, the employer might tend to recruit a job candidate who is similar to him/ her. There are two separate issues here: first, the employer lists out ideal attributes in a job candidate; second, the employer eventually selects somebody (formally or informally) who is similar to him/ her in certain ways. My findings suggest that Jackson's findings might not be able to capture the entire recruitment and selection processes in the empirical world.

Last but not least, built upon Jackson's categorisation of personal characteristics and social skills, my results further provide a more concrete illustration in an empirical context. As for social skills, my findings include “fit into the team”, “based on chemistry”, “instantly got on with you”, “presentable”, “trustworthy”, “honest”, “paying attention”, “sensible”, “pleasant” and “calm”. These definitions of social skills partially relate to teamwork, which is what modern organisation encourages. As for personal characteristics, it ranges from “trustworthy”, “honest”, “paying attention”, “sensible”, “pleasant” to “calm”. Some of the above attributes were mentioned by Jackson, e.g. presentable, while some of them were not. But more importantly, in relation to Kanter’s homophily’s discussion, being similar to the recruiter in terms of workstyle, character and organisational outlook is one of the most crucial attributes. My findings add value to the illustration of desirable traits in this regard.

My results are compatible with Goldthorpe’s discourse which argues that, where there is difficulty in monitoring work, it becomes especially important for a recruiter to gain the commitment of employees. Most of the recruiters mentioned job-related abilities (cognitive skills) and non-cognitive personality attributes rather than “commitment to work”. Only Peter mentioned *“enthusiasm”* when he named the desirable traits he looks for. Goldthorpe focuses on the uncertainty in monitoring the job – that explains why work commitment is important. In parallel, my interviewees mentioned moral attributes, such as trustworthiness and honesty. These moral attributes are possibly basic and essential qualities if an employer is about to leave an employee to monitor the job: if an employee is not trustworthy and honest, how can an employer trust him/ her and let him/ her monitor the job on his/ her own? This is what reputation in the workplace is all about – being trustworthy and honest. This applies across different roles and positions in publishing.

Both this chapter and the previous one examine the UK publishing labour market from the recruiter’s point of view. These two chapters focus on the recruitment and selection processes in this market. In Chapter 4, I argue that formal and informal recruitment methods (extensive search) *co-exist* in the UK publishing labour market. It is a market in which performance and non-cognitive personality attributes are important and become the basis of a reputation. The ability of a person to build up his/ her own social network is also crucial because this helps to spread his/ her own reputation. This chapter discusses the selection processes in recruitment. My findings further assure the importance of the interconnecting factors of performance and informal networking. However good the job applicant, at the final stage of selection, recruiters are likely to double check his/ her ability informally. This is where networking plays a crucial role. I find that this “final double check” applies to all roles in publishing.

Having explored the recruitment processes from a recruiter’s point of view, I will examine them from the point of view of the job applicant in the next chapter. The focus of attention lies in the way job applicants search for jobs and to what extent they rely on reputation and networking in making a job application. I will also examine whether the job hunting methods vary with different positions in publishing.

Chapter 6

Getting a job

6.1 Introduction

In the previous two chapters, I discussed the UK labour market for the publishing sector from an employer’s point of view. Chapter 4 discussed recruitment methods while chapter 5 discussed the selection processes. I believe that in order to understand the labour market, we need to listen to both the employer and the employee because recruitment and job application strategies are interdependent.

In this chapter, I will discuss employees’ job-hunting strategies. As Chapter 4 has already indicated, there are basically two job-hunting methods: formal and informal. I will discuss how my interviewees applied these methods to search for their current job. It is a common practice for economists to assume that individuals are price takers in job-searching behaviour. According to Devine and Kiefer (1993), only the unemployed will search for a job and the way they search for a job is through an observation of the job market on their own. They usually have a minimal acceptable wage rate, i.e. reservation wage, in mind and this reservation wage is determined by how much individuals know about the job market. To a very large extent, no second party is involved in an individual’s job searching behaviour.

The economists’ account can be subjected to a number of challenges and it is the insufficiencies of economists’ explanation that highlight the importance of informal methods in this context. One major challenge is that economists assume everybody attains information on an equal footing and no other party is involved in the job-searching process. Besides, the basic assumption in which only unemployed people will look for a job is criticised as well (Granovetter 1986, 1995; Lin 2001).

This chapter discusses the job-hunting methods of people in publishing from a sociological point of view. I start with Granovetter's idea on the strength of weak ties, which illustrates how weak ties play a role in the labour market. Lin's theory of instrumental action (1982) echoes Granovetter's strength of weak ties argument. The structure of this chapter is as follows: I first discuss the job-hunting strategies of those who are new to publishing. Most of the interviewees used a variety of techniques to equip themselves to get into the industry. Most of the interviewees said they used formal methods to get into publishing. Then I will discuss how employees at the managerial level in publishing change jobs within the industry. I will illustrate that all the managerial level interviewees got their current job either through informal methods or a mixture of formal and informal methods. I will discuss internal promotion in the next chapter. In the last part of this chapter, I will discuss how freelancers find work. The freelancer predominately obtains work through informal channels, though some of them use formal methods.

6.2 The strength of ties and getting a job

To explain job-searching behaviour, Granovetter (1973) lists three major methods of job searching: they are 1) *via* sending a CV, 2) *via* job centre or advertisement and 3) *via* personal referral and contact. Granovetter found that interviewees who obtain their current jobs through personal referral tend to receive higher salaries. His sample of male professional, technical and managerial workers was selected by comparing two city directories of Newton. He randomly chose from among those who had either changed employers within a five-year period or had newly entered the labour force. 100 men were interviewed and 182 were surveyed by mail. He suggests that networks are vital to provide information about relevant job opportunities as he finds that over half the respondents in his sample used personal contacts to find their current job. Moreover, he argues that not every job seeker is unemployed. Instead, quite a considerable proportion of people change job simply because of other’s referral. Some people do not intend to seek for a job but because of receiving information about job openings from a referrer, they change jobs. The new jobs are usually better than the previous ones because they collect enough information about the new job before accepting the offer.

Granovetter initiates the idea of weak ties to explain job-searching behaviour. Ties are defined in terms of recent contact time and the type of relationship named by respondents. By definition, weak ties “characterise the infrequent interactions and peripheral relationships among dissimilar individuals”. Weak ties link individuals to wider social networks and therefore have important implications for individual opportunity (Mortimer 1975). According to Granovetter, weak ties are important in job searching because individuals are able to extend the scope of information beyond their close circle. Hence, individuals can access non-redundant information from acquaintances. Weak ties are of highest value when they are connected to a social circle whose social status or class position is higher than one’s own since more useful information can be attained. This may increase an individual’s upward mobility chances. The intrinsic value of weak ties encourages people to keep more acquaintances who are expected to provide benefits in the future. The “receivers” are obliged to provide benefits to the “providers” in the future as well. Granovetter reaffirms that weak ties are actually “vital for an individual’s integration into modern society" because they are more prone to move in circles different from one's own than strong ties[72]. Based on this, weak ties serve to provide information to an individual and to extend the scope of news on top of one's own close circle. In regard to job searching, the use of weak ties will put one in a better and more advantageous position in job searching.

However, different classes will have different accesses to weak ties and strong ties. Langlois (1977) found that among those who use personal contact to find a new job, administrative or managerial employees frequently used weak ties, when compared to semiprofessionals and blue collars workers who are more dependent on strong ties[73]. Moreover, less well educated respondents tend to use strong ties to search for jobs while more educated ones tend to use weak ties as well as bureaucratic procedures[74]. Yet, weak ties would have the highest value when they are connected to a social circle that is different from and of higher socio-economic position than one's own. They bridge the social distance to higher groups so that people can search for opportunity in other social circles.

Strong ties, on the other hand, also play a unique role in one's well being. As for Granovetter, "weak ties provide people with access to information and resources beyond those available in their own social circles; but strong ties have greater motivation to be of assistance and are typically more easily available" (Granovetter

---

[72] "Those to whom one is closest are likely to have the greatest overlap in contact with those one already knows, so that the information to which they are privy is likely to be much the same as that which one already has" (Granovetter, 1982:109).

[73] According to the Quebec provincial government, 42.7% of the 2553 individuals found their job through personal contact (Langlois 1977). 35.5% and 15.8% of administrative or managerial employees use weak ties and strong ties in finding their jobs, 30.8% and 25.8% of professionals and office workers use weak ties respectively but 51% and 44.4% respectively use strong ties. Only 13.1% and 19.1% of semi-professionals and blue-collar workers use weak ties and 44.9% and 19.1% use strong ties.

[74] Similarly, Lin, Ensel and Vaughn (1981) also assert that weak ties have direct correlation with and are more efficient at reaching high-status individuals.

1982:113). In times of prolonged unemployment, an individual tends to use strong ties for job hunting. This is a response to economic pressure as they believe that they are deprived of alternatives.

Similarly, Lin (1982) initiates a theory of instrumental action, which spells out the relationships between the strength of ties and the success of goal oriented or instrumental actions. Three propositions are made and confirmed by his research. The social-resources-proposition is asserted, in which, "the success of instrumental action is associated positively with the social resources provided by the contact". Following this proposition, the strength-of-positions proposition, in which "the level of the initial position is positively related to social resources reached through a contact" is confirmed as well. That means, the structural opportunity for reaching better social resources is much better for those whose initial class positions are relatively high, and *vice versa*.

The strength-of-ties proposition suggests that the capability of attaining social resources is not absolutely determined by class position. Here, Lin retrieves the concepts, strong ties and weak ties[75]. From the strength-of-ties proposition, it is suggested that weak ties, rather than strong ties are supposed to bring about better social resources[76]. This proposition, on one hand, stresses the expected advantage of being at a higher initial social position as they have more diverse social ties and on the other hand, it specifies the strategy for instrumental action despite the fact that one's initial social position is relatively low. Indeed, weak ties are more useful to find jobs if they are nearby but strong ties remain useful even if they are far away. In this sense, it shows how the interaction between social and physical distance affect the success of instrumental action. Lin *et al.* (2001) recall similar arguments.

---

[75] By definition, the former "characterize the intimate social circle of individuals with similar characteristics" and the latter "characterize the infrequent interactions and peripheral relationships among dissimilar individuals".

[76] From the Small World Study (Lin, 1982:135-138), the Albany Study (Lin, 1982:139-141) and the New York Study (Lin, 1982:141-144), the strength-of-positions and the strength-of-ties propositions are confirmed. The results show that respondents at higher initial positions have greater access and social ties to various occupational groups and at the same time, it is friends and acquaintances (weak ties) rather than relatives (strong ties) who account for this.

Further discussion on network and labour market competition

Burt (1992) identifies two major mechanisms whereby social capital leads to competition success. They are information access and control. For information access, information benefits occur in three forms: *access*, *timing* and *referrals*. Access refers to receiving valuable pieces of information and knowing who can use them. Since there is a limit to the volume of information one can process, social networks can act as screening devices. They help to keep an individual up to date on developing opportunities and warn him/her of impending disasters. Timing refers to who obtains a piece of information early. Personal contacts help one to acquire significant information before the average person. As a result, one can act early. Finally, information does not only flow from contacts; contacts can also direct information about one to others in their networks. This is referral. Such referral may get one's name mentioned at the right time in the right place so that opportunities are presented to the ally in the future.

Burt emphasises the idea that competition is a matter of relations and not an attribute of players. Through securing productive relationships with people in one's network, one would be able to succeed. In this chapter, I regard job application as a competition to receive a job offer. Being able to receive a job offer represents success in a competition. In times of frequent information flow and imperfect competition, a sense of trust is crucial. This is to guarantee a reliable flow of information. In this sense, people tend to develop relationships with those who will share the inter-personal debt (in the hope of benefiting and being benefited in the future).

6.3 Implications for publishing

Based on Lin’s argument, I expect that people at the managerial level are more likely to get their job through informal methods based on weak ties. Meanwhile, I expect people in junior positions to be more likely to get their job through formal channels (non-referral). I also expect that those who have a wider network (e.g. had worked in different publishing houses and had moved jobs a couple of times) in publishing will be better able to receive job-related information than others and will receive this information earlier than others. They are more likely to be referred as well.

6.4 Aims of the chapter

This chapter aims to study how people get a job in publishing. Current sociological studies on job applications and social networking focus on the strength of ties or the intensity of relationship between the referrer and job applicant (e.g. Granovetter 1973, 1982, 1985; Lin 1982; Flap 2004). I aim to study how people of different ranks in publishing, i.e. newcomers, junior level and senior level get their current jobs. I will also study how my interviewees got their job all the way through their publishing careers.

6.5 Getting into publishing

As mentioned in Chapter 3, across all publishing roles, editorial is the most competitive area to break into. Jobs in editorial are often viewed as the most glamorous in publishing. Given the fact that it is so difficult to get into publishing, especially editorial, how do people break in? My interviewees told me their personal experiences of getting into publishing. They found their job through both formal and informal channels. I shall discuss their job-hunting experiences in the following sections.

6.5.1 Finding a job through direct application

As mentioned in Chapter 4, there are various formal recruitment methods in publishing. These methods include advertisements and recruitment agencies. Advertising is a common method of recruitment in publishing, especially for the large publishing houses. Some of my interviewees entered publishing *via* press advertisements. They were entirely new to the industry and knew nobody at any of the publishing houses. But as we can see in the following, I argue that relevant publishing experience, however minimal, is helpful to getting a job in editorial.

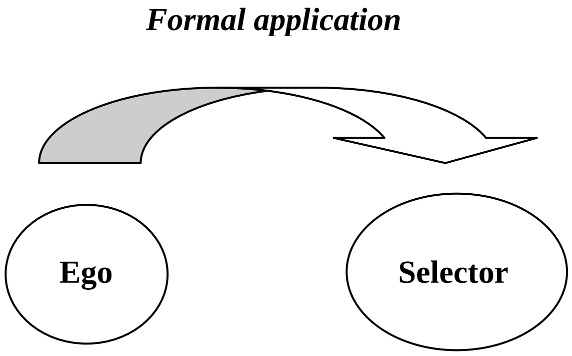
Sonia is an editor in the primary literacy department of an educational publishing house. She is responsible for *"proofreading the manuscripts, illustrations and administration working alongside other editors and designers"*. She found the job through an advertisement on her university website and started working in the company as an editorial trainee, which is a stepping stone to being an editor:

> *"It was my final year at university when I saw the advertisement on our career services website. I just applied and sent my CV and covering letter." (Sonia, interviewed on 1st September 2005)*

Sonia did not know anybody in the company though she did get some publishing experience at university and during a summer internship. When she was at university, she edited a university society newsletter for about a year during her first year. After graduation, she worked as a summer intern at an educational publisher. The job was simple: *“Doing really basic proofreading, just checking text”*. The way Sonia received her first job in publishing can be illustrated in the following typology:

Figure 6.1: Typology of job hunting – first entrant

(Type 1)



Whereas Sonia is ego, her boss is selector. The application process is entirely direct and formal. The case of Louisa, Anna, Catherine, Kathy and Nancy (in the second stage of getting a job), which will be discussed shortly, belong to this type as well. They received their job through cold call, career exhibition or recruitment agencies.

The way Sonia obtained the summer internship was by making a direct approach to the people who came to her university on the careers open day:

> *“That publisher sent a few representatives to our university for a careers open day. I spoke to the HR manager who passed my details onto somebody else in the company.” (Sonia, ibid)*

Sonia admits that she was quite lucky to get the job in publishing given that *“publishing has been perceived as quite a competitive industry”*. She argues that it is the subject she studied at university – history and education – that influenced her decision to get into publishing:

> *"Given the subject I read at university, it seemed to make sense to go into publishing. (How did it make sense?) As with many other arts studies, media and publishing seem to be where most people go. I felt that is where there would be more opportunities for me. I'd say it's reasonably competitive because I have had a lot of people apply for this job." (Sonia, ibid)*

When reviewing her still limited career trajectory, we will see that Sonia had a fair amount of editorial experience, i.e. editing the university newsletter and the summer publishing internship. In a way, she was not a total outsider to the sector who possessed no experience at all. This echoes the selection methods and criteria of recruiters as discussed in Chapter 4 and 5: recruiters tend to minimise the cost of recruiting a wrong person who might possibly make mistakes in the job. In these two chapters, I argue that recruiters use the word of mouth to minimise the uncertainty of making mistakes. Here, Sonia's experience shows that having limited publishing experience might possibly help recruiters to minimise such uncertainty as well. However, she did not at that stage draw upon any informal ties, either weak or strong.

Another interviewee, Louisa, who is now a publisher in the same company, also believes that the summer internship helped her to get her first publishing job. She had done temporary work for the company in the summer before she went to university but *"I didn't keep in touch with anyone" (Louisa, interviewed on 1st August 2005).* The way she got the job was through a recruitment agency. She went into the recruitment agency, did an interview and got the job. She said she was lucky in the sense that she got into publishing relatively smoothly when compared with others.

Many new graduates try very hard to get into publishing. I will discuss how they succeed later in this section. Louisa started on her company's graduate training scheme after she graduated from Oxford in 2001. Similar to Sonia, she did *"a lot of student journals, the editorial side"*. She said these experiences were quite similar to her future job in publishing. The university she attended also helped:

> *"Oxford helps a lot because... every year at least half of the new trainees were at Oxford. I think they definitely look out for us." (Louisa, ibid)*

An Oxford degree is an asset for getting into publishing – being able to receive an undergraduate degree in Oxford implies a high standard of English and intellectual ability, which is highly regarded in publishing. According to Louisa, Oxford graduates are more likely to get into this *"Oxford-headquartered company"*.

Both Sonia and Louisa entered publishing through formal channels – the former applied for the job *via* the university website while the latter entered *via* a recruitment agency. Neither had known anyone at the company before and both had taken on board publishing experience at university. Sonia felt that her degree from the university and her experience in publishing, though limited, helped her to get the job. Louisa said her identity as an Oxford graduate and her publishing experience at university, though limited, accounted for why she got her job. Here, I argue that formal channels are a possible way to get into publishing, even into editorial, despite the fact that it is extremely competitive. The key to getting into editorial is to equip oneself with relevant experience early during one's time at university. Experience with a school publication and a summer internship may have been helpful in these two cases.

6.5.2 Making cold calls

Anna is a press officer with a large publishing house in London. She began to work in the company in 2003 as a publicity assistant, one year after graduation (she had gone to France to teach English immediately after university). Similar to Sonia and Louisa, she had known no-one at the company previously. She got her interview by making a cold call:

> *"I scrolled their website and saw that they offered work experience. I phoned them up and asked them about work experience in editorial. They said they didn't have any in editorial but asked whether I wanted to be in publicity. I said I'd try. I had six weeks publicity work experience, then I left." (Anna, interviewed on 26th July 2005)*

Initially, Anna wanted to get into editorial but, because there were no vacancies, the company offered her publicity. She was completely lacking in experience of publicity (or, indeed, of publishing). She started out on the publisher's six-week programme but somebody from human resources then telephoned to offer her a formal job interview for the post of publicity assistant. She worked as a publicity assistant for one year before being promoted to her present position. This is Anna's account of how she moved into her full-time position in publicity (as a publicity assistant):

> *"I did an English literature degree at university. That might have helped. But really, was the fact I had work experience and that I got on well with the person who employed me and the team, and they had seen how I worked. After the programme had finished and I'd left, someone left the department and they called me. They asked me to come for an interview and see if I wanted the job – because they already knew me." (Anna, interviewed on 26th July 2005)*

According to Anna, it was her English literature degree plus the six-week work experience with the team and good job performance that helped open up the opportunity for her to get an interview. Her initial approach had been a cold call; later, it was both her work experience and familiarity with the people in the team that helped. Presumably, she did a good job as well. She agrees that the informal channel is important to getting into publishing but it is not entirely a must:

> *"I'm quite a forward person. I didn't know anybody – I just called them up. If you do know someone it probably helps if there's a job going and they'll tell you about it. It's not just true of publishing but across the world of work. It helps if you know somebody in the business. But from my point of view, it wasn't a disadvantage that I didn't know anybody." (Anna, ibid)*

To her, being forward helps to get interviews. Nevertheless, I would say if she did not work in the company before and "got on well with the person who employed me and the team", her current boss might not be confident enough to recruit her again.

Catherine is a publications officer at a governmental department in London. Her role is a mixture of production, publicity and editorial.

> *"It's an interesting role: in that department, as with other charities and non-profitable organisations, our publication departments get a lot more of everything whereas in a publishing house it's more specific – editor or production editor split away – but we are more alround." (Catherine, interviewed on 12th September 2005)*

Catherine was born in New York. After marrying an Englishman, she migrated to London where she has lived since 2001. She had worked in publishing when she was in New York and, after moving to London, she automatically searched for a publishing-related job. She did not know anybody in UK publishing and all she could do was try the formal channel:

> *"I sent out my CV and kept looking in* The Guardian *on-line, checking publishing news, and similar places. I am computer-oriented. I would rather go on-line and I like to research. I was constantly looking for places to send my CV. Eventually I got some callbacks from the agencies. I don't know if there were more jobs at that time but it was the agencies that finally broke the ice." (Catherine, interviewed on 12th September 2005)*

Catherine sent out her CV, referred to newspapers, browsed the web and contacted agencies. She also joined a publishing association, the Junior Publishing League, where I met her, where she attended all the activities. She had exhaustively explored all the formal ways of getting into publishing. She was only able to get her first publishing job in the UK four to five months after moving to London and it came through a recruitment agency:

> *"It was ABC Publishing Personnel or something like that. They called me. I think I spoke to an agency and I spoke to ABC. But those two called me for interview first. They gave me a lot of information about different jobs, 'Would I be interested in this?' 'Would I be interested in that?' That's how I found out about this job. One of the advantages was I could start immediately because I was not working. I came in for interview on a Tuesday. By Friday, I was working here!" (Catherine, ibid)*

Catherine talked about her experience with agencies in detail. From her experience, it appears that, where someone completely lacks any connection with the publishing sector, the only thing he or she can do is to search through the formal channels. Recruitment agencies, advertisements and joining a publishing association are common ways of getting into publishing for junior posts, according to my interviewees' experiences[77].

6.5.3 Getting prepared to go into publishing – doing courses

All the above shows that experience of UK publishing is crucial for anyone who wants to get into this field. I talked to a couple of interviewees (in addition to Sonia and Louisa) who set out to equip themselves with relevant skills in order to break in to publishing. This is particularly necessary for editorial and production. Anyone determined to get into editorial or production, must be equipped with relevant skills. One of the most common ways is to study for a diploma or an MA in publishing.

Kathy, who is now a publishing manager, started with the one-year diploma at a university. She went on the course straight after she had completed her degree in English in London. According to Kathy, *"I learned a lot about all the functions within publishing. Not only editing but also marketing and electronic things." (Kathy, interviewed on 17th November 2005).* To her, this diploma was very useful in building her career:

> *"It was a very good start for any career in publishing. Wherever you end up in publishing, you'll always have an idea of what's going on in the other departments. (It's a good start in publishing?) Definitely! I had applied for jobs in publishing without success. So I tried to think what I could do to make myself more attractive. That's why I did it. Partly it was for my CV but it was actually very useful." (Kathy, ibid)*

---

[77] Here is a comment from a retired publisher on Catherine's case: I think Catherine's second problem might have been that she was not a new entrant but already had experience that this insular country does not recognise; had she had only a smattering of experience, like your previous interviewees, she might not have found it so hard. She should have asked her US connections for introductions. *Caveat*: I have no current experience of the scene: this is just an opinion.

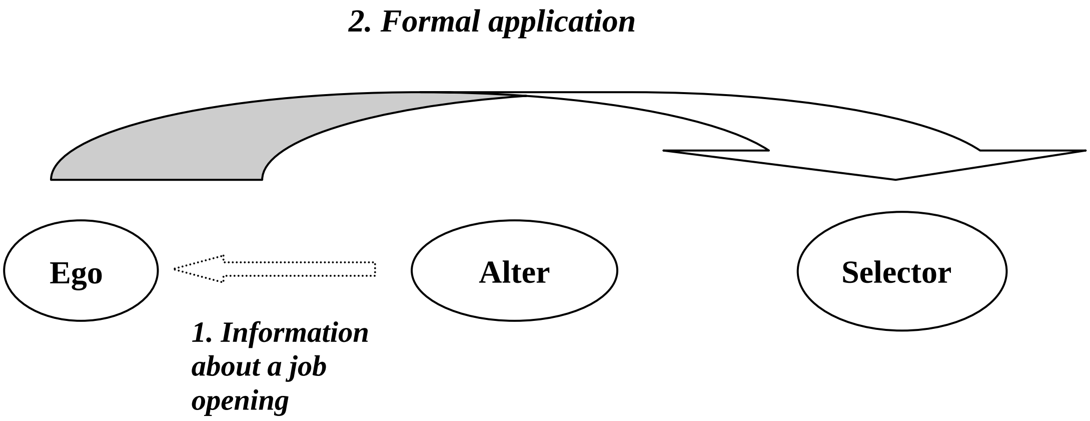
Kathy applied for publishing jobs before she did the publishing diploma but without success. She was able to get into publishing only after completing the course. The value of the course, for her, lay in getting more knowledge about publishing and building up her CV. Kathy's first publishing job was an editor in an electronic publishing company that covers many aspects within the humanities. She applied for the job after seeing an advertisement in a newspaper and did not know anybody in the company.

A couple of my interviewees received information about job openings informally when they were completing the course. Azura, for example, an assistant production editor with Company A, did a diploma at a polytechnic and eventually got into publishing. Azura, who is Spanish, studied English at university in Spain. She moved to London in 2000. She first worked as a waitress in a restaurant but, realising this was not a "career", decided to do something more professional. Moving to Oxford, she took a one year MA in publishing at a polytechnic. According to Azura, the course provides a substantial and broad training in all areas of publishing, ranging from editorial, to production, to marketing and sales. The way she got her first publishing job was "accidental". When she did her MA dissertation, Azura needed to interview somebody working at Company A. During the interview, she was told there was a vacancy at Company A in the editorial team. This turned out to be a production position. She said she just applied for the job and got it. She denied that her interview had helped. Azura's experience demonstrates an example of classic weak ties. Although she denied her interview helped her to get a job, the interviewee indeed gave her information about job opening (though not actual influence). In this sense, even if she got the job through a formal channel, i.e. directly applied the job, she was provided with information about a job opening through weak ties. She might not apply for the position if she did not receive this particular piece of information from a person working in publishing.

The experience of Azura illustrates the function of classic weak ties, i.e. information (about job vacancy) flows through informal ties[78]. After receiving a piece of information about a job opening, she applies for the job formally. Let ego refers to a job applicant (Azura) and alter refers to a referrer (her interviewee). I classify Azura's experience in type 2 of typology of job hunting for full time staff members. Simon, the interviewee I discuss later also falls in this type when he was a first entrant in publishing. The following figure illustrates the type:

Figure 6.2: Typology of job hunting – first entrant

(Type 2)



Where ego is the information recipient, alter is the person who provided information. Azura did not know alter prior to the time she received the information. Alter did nothing to help ego other than providing information about the job opening. Ego applied the job formally afterwards. This illustrates Granovetter’s weak ties argument, that is, information flow. No embeddedness is involved.

---

[78] I have illustrated Figure 6.2 in Chapter 4 already. This figure is equivalent to Figure 4.8.

Another point I want to make is that reciprocity works in the way that the agent connects to others, who are then obligated to support each other and are expected to exchange favours (Putnam 1995; Coleman 1998; Burt 2005). Azura explained to me how mutual support and reciprocity worked among classmates on the course. According to Azura, information about employment opportunities was passed around between friends at her university. In other words, they provided one another with mutual help (in terms of studying and exchanging job information). But there was a dilemma – if Azura was going to apply for a particular position, she would inform her close classmates only at the last moment. She would not keep silent about the vacancy because the selfishness of such behaviour could violate the bonds of friendship. But because her classmates were also her potential competitors, she told them only at the last moment in order to minimise the risk of being out-competed. She said everybody did the same. Where there is mutual help and reciprocity, there are usually conditions.

From the experience of Kathy and Azura, we learn that (and they agree that) the publishing course: 1) allowed them to acquire relevant skills that were beneficial to their CV; and 2) put them in touch with more publishers and made their skills recognisable to publishers. To Azura in particular, the course helped to put her in touch with useful and relevant information about job openings, which is a key factor for new entrants to the business.

6.5.4 Preparations to enter publishing – voluntary internship

Completing a publishing course is one of the ways to equip oneself with relevant publishing experience and get into publishing. Another way is an unpaid internship in a publishing house. Nancy is an editor in an education publishing house. She studied English at university but failed to find anything in publishing after graduation. In order to equip herself with publishing know-how (or having a more "publishing outlook" that would be beneficial to her CV), she contacted a close friend who was an editor in Company A and asked for a referral. Very soon, she was part of a two-week "informal" and unpaid internship there with, of course, the consent of the department manager. There was no interview for this voluntary position and it was entirely *ad hoc*. According to Nancy,

> *"They emptied out a booth for me and I just worked there very temporarily." (Nancy, interviewed on 12th August 2005)*

The experience at Company A added value to her CV. Eventually she got an editorial trainee position in another publishing house *via* direct application for an advertised job.

I argue that Nancy's case comprises both formal and informal elements as well. Without the help of her friend in Company A, she would not have been able to get the voluntary job (yes, even a voluntary job). This demonstrates how internship comes through contacts. Thanks to this voluntary job experience, her CV now carried a useful item that helped her get a job elsewhere, according to Nancy. She found her current job through a newspaper advertisement. If Nancy had got a job in Company A after completing her voluntary placement there, I would have argued that she had entered publishing entirely by informal channels. But now in her case, it was half-and-half.

6.5.5 Starting out from administrative positions

People in publishing do not necessarily start with a proper publishing job. For example, they may begin at the administrative level, e.g. as a receptionist or secretary, before going into editorial. For instance, this is what Janice said:

> *"I think a lot of people who come in at the administrative level really want a particular type of job in publishing. Because publishing looks glamorous." (Janice, interviewed on 15th December 2005)*

This shows one of the tricks for getting into a career which carries glamour[79]. Economic theories emphasise wage level and ability. Sociological theories focus the debate on social origin and mobility. There is yet to be a study on the "glamour", i.e. non-monetary benefits of a job or, to put it this way, how the glamour of a job influences the job market. Michelle, a commissioning editor in a publishing house specialising in novels, mentioned the experience of an editor in another team. In order to get into publishing, that editor started as a receptionist for the company for a couple of months. He had applied for an editorial position and failed to get it, so he had asked whether he could work for the company in some other capacity and eventually he was given the receptionist job. During his period as a receptionist, he watched for the internal advertisements and told people around him that he wanted to go into editorial. According to Michelle, the future editor was given a freelance editorial job to cut his teeth on, and from there he was eventually able to climb up to editorial[80].

---

[79] The funny thing is, such 'glamour' disappears once people get into publishing. In other words, it is more an 'image' than a 'reality'. Janice said publishing is definitely not glamorous. So did Angelina, who said publishing is all about photocopying and administration. For Janice, "I won't say *I'm* glamorous. *It's* more glamorous for some things. I think there are areas where people have aspirations."

6.5.6 Receiving information through various occasions

Simon is a communication consultant in a medical publishing company that provides publishing services to the pharmaceutical industry. Of all my interviewees, Simon's educational credentials were the highest – he studied at Oxford from undergraduate up to D.Phil in chemistry. He got his first job after the D.Phil, which was in 1998. The way he got the job was largely *via* a chance meeting. When he had completed his D.Phil and while waiting for the *viva*, he went traveling in South Africa for two months with an overland truck expedition. Traveling with him was a management consultant for a medical publishing company. According to Simon, the conversation between them went like this:

> *" 'What are you thinking of doing now?' 'I'm not sure.' 'You should think about being a management consultant.' That's how it began. I contacted the company, attended interviews and I was up for the job. (Did you mention to him you wanted to get in to publishing?) I was interested. But I don't think I said shall I apply to your company. I just asked him questions about it and I did seem interested in his work. He could tell I was interested." (Simon, interviewed on 7th October 2005)*

From what he said, the management consultant asked him to think of working in management consultancy (then he worked as a communication consultant afterwards) and he expressed interest in the *work* itself. He stayed with the company for three years. The management consultant, who is actually somebody he met on a trip, gave him information about publishing. As mentioned previously, Simon falls into type 2. He (ego) did not know the management consultant (alter) prior to the time when he received information about job opening (or perhaps he met the management consultant a few times during the trip and before he received the information). Alter did nothing to help ego other than providing information; and ego and alter are not familiar with each other. Ego then applied the job through formal processes.

---

[80] I requested for an interview with this man but he was away at the time. Thus, I can give only second-hand information via Michelle.

Referral – word of mouth – is used in publishing and for those wanting to get in to publishing. Angela got her job in publishing through referral[81]. She had been working as a secretary in another industry for five or six years until, recognising that being a secretary was not a "career", she decided to do a publishing course at a polytechnic. She said *"I think I got the first publishing job on the strength of having done that course."*. This was a *sub-entry editor* (as described by Angela) at an academic publishing house at Oxford. The way she got this first publishing job was through referral from a tutor:

> *"The company got in touch with the tutor at my university and said, 'We have this vacancy. Do you have any people about to finish the course who could do this?'" (Angela, interviewed on 8th September 2005)*

But, according to Angela, the tutor did not tell every student doing the course. The tutor told her only. The reason was that:

> *"He said I was the only one who was suitable. (Were you the top student so that your tutor recommended you?) Not really, but I was a mature student. I guess he trusted me more". (Angela, ibid)*

---

[81] Angela's situation was briefly discussed in chapter 4.

She said the tutor did not put a good word for her. The tutor *"just put forward my name."* She stayed for two years before moving to another publishing house. On the way of acquiring qualifications, she was led to social contact which gave her information about a job opening.

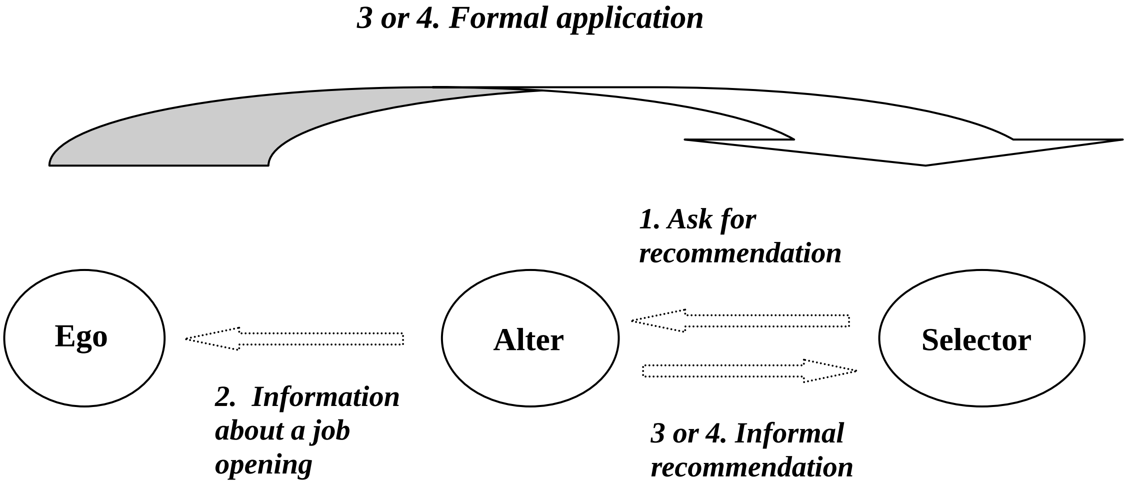
The experiences of Angela can be categorised into type 3a. What distinguishes type 2 from type 3a is that in the process of formal job application, alter offers an informal recommendation to selector. Here I divided type 3 into type a and type b. Similar to type 2, in type 3a (in which Angela belongs to), alter takes the initiative to provide ego information about a job opening. Information flows through informal ties, from alter to ego. After receiving information about job openings, ego applies for the job formally. The following figure illustrates the situation[82]:

---

[82] Figure 6.3 has already been illustrated in Chapter 4, Figure 4.9.

Figure 6.3: Typology of job hunting – first entrant

(Type 3a)


3 or 4. Formal application
1. Ask for recommendation
Ego
Alter
Selector
2. Information about a job opening
3 or 4. Informal recommendation

Type 3a illustrates an element of embedding in a formal job application process. Whereas there is no tie between alter and selector in type 1, alter offers informal recommendation to selector. Informal recommendation can be very helpful to both ego and selector: whereas alter helps to bring selector's attention to ego (and possibly put a good word for him/ her), selector is able to collect extra information about ego so as to minimise the uncertainty involved when recruiting potential staff (refer to chapter 4 and 5). Alter helps to pass ego's reputation to selector. The formal job application process is indeed embedded with alter's informal recommendation of ego.

This raises an issue of trust between alter and ego; and alter and selector. Repeated cooperation between ego and alter helps to strengthen alter's confidence in ego. In my examples, Angela (ego) was perceived to be mature by her tutor (alter) who then placed higher level of trust to her than to other students. She got a comparative advantage when compared to her classmates. I can also assume that selector trusts alter (assume, not assert because it is not easy to prove) or otherwise alter's recommendation would be insignificant and selector would not ask alter for recommendation.

Another interviewee told me how she had referred somebody who wanted a publishing internship. Angelina received a phone call from a friend’s daughter, who was a new graduate and without publishing experience. Angelina did not offer the young woman a job but she did refer her to a friend’s company:

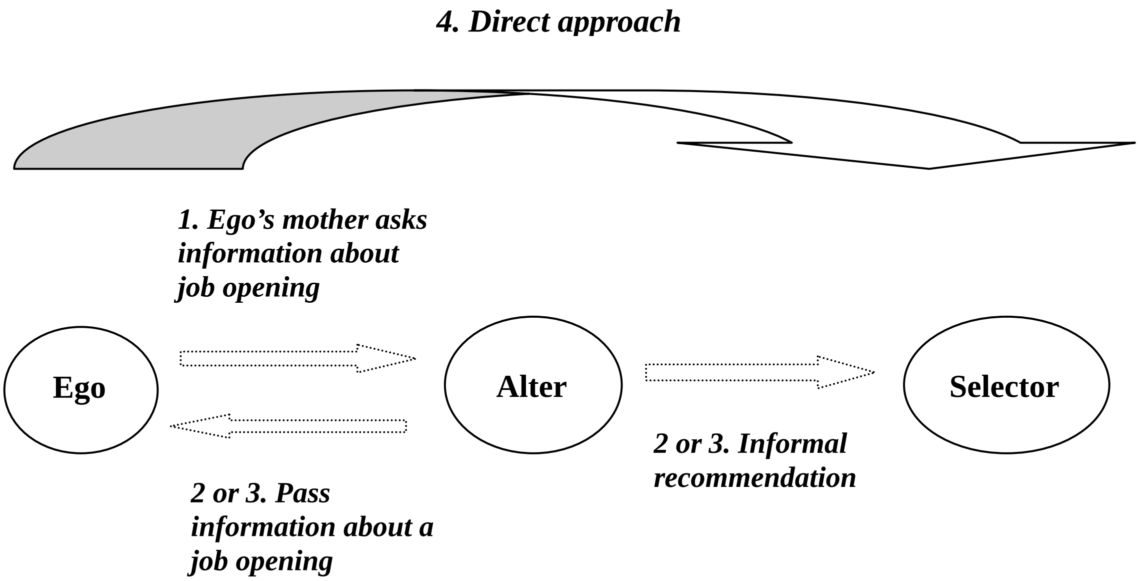
> *“I didn't think we had anything suitable for her at my company but why didn’t she get in touch with Mike (i.e. Angelina’s ex-partner)? She contacted Mike and he gave her a month’s internship in his company.” (Angelina, interviewed on 9th December 2005)*

That young woman is still working with that company. Her mother was a freelance designer who used to work with Angelina. To Angelina, personal contact can help a newcomer at least to get an interview. Otherwise, she said it can be really difficult to get into editorial.

Angelina’s experience fits into type 3b in which ego approaches alter for information about a job opening and alter responds to ego correspondingly. Alter provides an informal recommendation to selector and ego then applies the internship directly. Figure 6.4 illustrates the situation:

Figure 6.4: Typology of job hunting – first entrant

(Type 3b)


4. Direct approach
1. Ego’s mother asks information about job opening
Ego
Alter
Selector
2 or 3. Informal recommendation
2 or 3. Pass information about a job opening

Whereas Mike is selector, Angelina is alter and her friend’s daughter is ego. On the surface, ego applies for the job formally but indeed embedding is found in ego’s formal application process. According to Angelina, she maintains a very good relationship with Mike even after they separated (they had a daughter). They know each other well both in the private and public sphere (they were colleagues before). It is hard to believe if Mike hesitates to trust Angelina, especially in this job referral case.

From sections 6.5.1 to 6.5.6, I found that, for those without publishing experience or knowledge, it is nearly impossible to get into publishing, especially on the editorial side. I focused on editorial because this is the most competitive area in the industry. My interviewees demonstrated the various ways they had equipped themselves with relevant skills and experiences. These methods included doing a summer internship during their time at university; taking on a publishing role of some kind with a student publication; having a humanities or, specifically, an English degree; and doing a publishing course, either diploma or MA. They are all “formal methods”. Such methods help to strengthen a CV and get a reference letter from a publishing-related employer. However, it is also clear that some but not all social ties are drawn on for information on job search. For example, the acquisition of qualifications leads to social contact, which gave interviewees such as Angela and Azura information about a job opening. Social ties help them to receive information about a job opening and knowledge about publishing as an industry in general. It is common to enter publishing through formal methods, on the condition that one’s CV contains publishing experiences.

In the above sections, I also develop three types of typology of job hunting, which illustrate how information flow helps to get a job. In type 1, ego directly applies the job *via* formal channel. In type 2, ego informally receives information about job opening from a third party prior to formally applying the job. In type 3a, ego is informally recommended by alter. Embedding exists in the formal job application process in that informal recommendation of the job applicant by the referrer is witness in type 3a. The situation in type 3b is slightly different because ego approaches alter for a job and alter gives information to ego alongside with making informal recommendation to selector.

In the next section, I will discuss how people being higher up on the ladder found their current position. In contrast to the newcomers, they all got their jobs partly through informal methods.

6.6 Getting a job – managerial level

According to my interviewees, the higher the job, the more likely it is to come through informal channels. All of my interviewees at managerial level got into their current position either through informal channels or through internal promotion (which I will discuss in the next chapter). In this section, I am going to discuss how informal channels worked for my managerial interviewees.

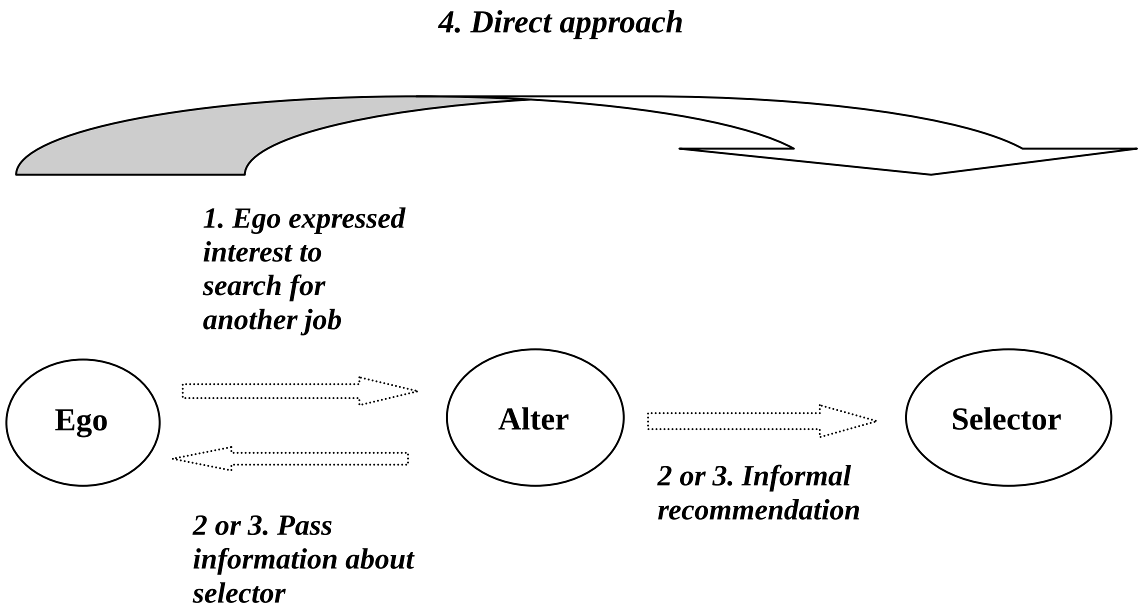
A managerial grade person must be an expert in a particular area before being "invited" to talk about a new job. Eva, a commercial director of a print-on-demand company said her strong network had appealed to the head of the company when they were hunting for a marketing expert. She got her current job through an ex-colleague she had met at a conference when she mentioned she was looking for another job. The colleague knew that the head of Eva's current company was looking for a marketing person because that colleague knew the head of the company personally. The ex-colleague introduced Eva to the company head – and after formal interview, she got the job. Eva's situation actually falls into type 3b where Angelina (alter) belongs to. Eva is ego, her ex-colleague is alter and her current boss is selector. Informal recommendation is embedded in the application process. Figure 6.5 illustrates the situation[83]:

---

[83] This figure duplicates Figure 4.7 in Chapter 4; and Figure 6.4 in Chapter 6.

Figure 6.5 Typology of job hunting – senior manager

(Type 1)


4. Direct approach
1. Ego expressed interest to search for another job
Ego
Alter
Selector
2 or 3. Informal recommendation
2 or 3. Pass information about selector

Whereas Eva is ego, her ex-colleague is alter and the head of the company is selector. Selector and ego do not know each other at all. It is alter who takes the initiative to recommend ego to selector. Parties involved in this process are all within professional ties.

Simon has been a communications consultant with a medical publisher since 2004. Although he did not know anyone in the company before he joined them, he got the job through *“a personal link”*. To him, the process was *“complicated”*.

> *“How did I come to apply for this job? Actually I didn't apply for it. The person who approached me was a colleague whom I sat next to at an industry dinner. We swapped cards and three months later he rang me at work and said, ‘Do you remember? We met at the dinner. We're looking for a medical writer. Would you be interested in joining us?’ Then I had an interview with him and his colleague.” (Simon, ibid)*

It was a social function, an industrial dinner, that opened the door. Simon was not intending to get a job out of this occasion but, because he “swapped cards” with the person sitting next to him and this person was looking for a new staff, he got an interview. To Simon, the most convoluted aspect lay in the referral. The person whose intervention had led to the interview was someone that both Simon and the dinner person used to work with. Her name is Amy and she is a freelancer who works for different companies. The one who swapped cards with Simon had rung Amy and asked her what she thought of Simon. In Simon’s words: *“He rang Amy and Amy said, ‘He’s all right.’ Therefore Amy now knew I was looking for a job.”* Simon thought he was “set up” because everything was arranged and exposed without his permission:

> *“In a way it's unethical because what if I didn't want Amy to know that I'm looking for a job! I was looking for a job: I had been fed up with my previous job for about a year. I didn't tell anyone – yet my managing director knew I was looking. How can that be? It's a small industry and people probably talk to each other. You don't know who you're sending a CV to and it's probably someone who works with someone who works with someone you know.” (Simon, ibid)*

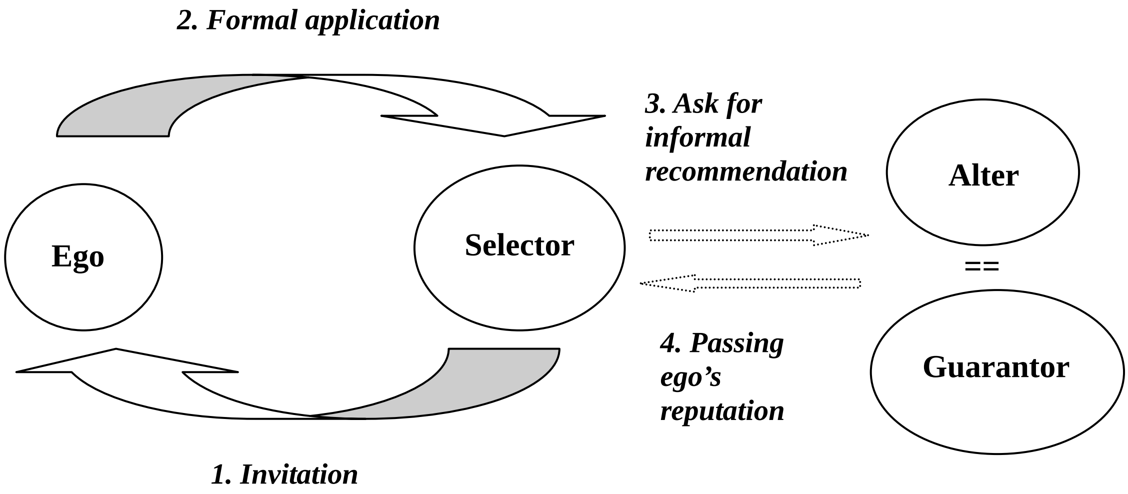
Simon complained that initially he did not expect anybody to know he was searching for a job but because the company that interviewed him had asked Amy for an informal recommendation, and Amy had talked to his managing director, Simon’s company knew he wanted to change job. In this circumstance, he thought he had to move. Running alongside the informal procedures, Simon went through formal procedures as well. He emailed his CV and interviewed twice, once in the evening and once at lunch time. This led to the job where he is working now. This kind of job hunting processes, objectively speaking, involves both informal and formal elements – Simon did not receive the job offer solely by means of word of mouth.

Following the above discussion, I would argue if Simon did not possess reputation (in Amy's word, *"he is alright"*)[84], word of mouth would be possibly ineffective. Alongside Chapter 4 and 5, reputation is crucial in informal method on the side of a recruiter and a job hunter.

A new type can be derived from Simon's case. Where Simon is ego, the guy who swapped card with him is selector (the guy was involved in the job interview). An interesting point here is that Amy, the working partner of both ego and selector, performs as guarantor. At various points over this thesis, I discuss referrer. But Amy in this case is obviously not a referrer (if so, who did she refer?). She is a guarantor. Figure 6.6 illustrates the situation:

Figure 6.6: Typology of job hunting – senior manager

(Type 2)


2. Formal application
3. Ask for informal recommendation
Alter
Ego
Selector
==
4. Passing ego's reputation
Guarantor
1. Invitation

---

[84] Of course, Amy was assumed to be reasonably honest.

In this type, Simon applied for the job formally. Rather than being an intermediary for which most alters in my types did, Amy was external to the recruitment. She is guarantor (alter) who only needs to pass on the reputation of Simon to selector. The level of trust between ego and selector here is obviously not enough and a guarantor is needed, though selector intends to employ ego. Embedding is found in Simon's formal job application process *via* informal recommendation by guarantor.

The guarantor gives informal recommendation of a job applicant to selector is indeed a request for trust (Burt 2005). Burt defines trust: "You trust someone when you commit to a relationship before you know how the other person will behave." (2005: 93). From a selector's point of view, he anticipates cooperation from the other person (ego) but he commits to the relationship before he knows how the other person will behave. In this circumstance, guarantor is valuable in that he or she can provide extra information to minimise uncertainty of the qualities of ego. Of course, selector has to place trust on guarantor or otherwise it is meaningless to seek his/ her recommendation. From a guarantor's point of view, the job applicant's reputation can lower his/ her uncertainty about putting a good word to selector (the guarantor needs to think through the consequence of making recommendations).

Angelina is an editorial director of an international publisher. She first worked for her current company from 1981-85. In 1994, she was invited to take up a senior editor position in the same company and has been with them until now (for Angelina's career, see Chapter 3). Her re-entry into the company in 1994 was entirely affected through informal channels: she was invited by her previous boss to join them again:

> *"After a seven year gap (1987-94), the head of the department – who had been my head of department – said they were looking for somebody long-term to replace him as editor-in-chief of C.B." (Angelina, interviewed on 9th December 2005)*

During the intervening seven years, Angelina said she had kept in touch with her ex-colleagues: *"They are all people I knew well and we were friends"*:

> *"I would still go to their parties, where I saw my previous colleagues. There was also the Frankfurt Book Fair every year and so you would be seeing people there as well." (Angelina, ibid)*

Angelina was active among people in publishing and she kept in touch with ex-colleagues. This probably explains why her ex-boss called her about his job: she knew the relevant people.

Helen, a brand development director, shared a similar experience. She had been working in publishing on the editorial side since 1976. As she wanted "to do something different", she took a year off and embarked on a two-year course at business school in London. It was business school that led to her current position:

> *"When I was in business school, we had to do a thesis. Together with one of my classmates I was doing a thesis on a hand-held tourist guide, connected by satellite. It would help you to get to, say, Buckingham Palace and then tell you something about the place. One of our advisers, who was a publisher, asked me about myself. I said I was at business school and hoping to establish a branding consultancy later. He said, 'That's very interesting, when will you be looking for a job?' I said in two or three months, and he said, 'Come and see me'. They were looking for someone but they were not advertising." (Helen, interviewed*

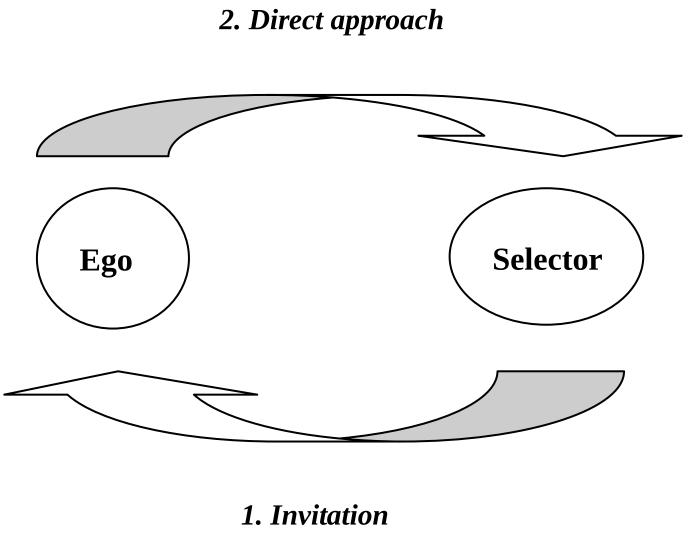
on 15th November 2005)

The way Helen heard of her job was accidental and entirely informal. The job was not advertised but it came *via* an interview with someone she had met through her business school thesis, and she was offered a job.

Helen’s experience falls into another type. Where Helen is ego, her thesis adviser is selector. Figure 6.7 illustrates her case:

Figure 6.7: Typology of job hunting – senior manager

(Type 3)



(With interview)

In this type, ego goes through formal interview and there is no intermediary person in the job hunting processes.

Ella, being a freelance manager at an educational publishing house at Oxford for two years, received her current job by sending her CV around. She has been into publishing for twenty three years. She has worked freelance since the beginning because she claimed herself more devoted to theatre – she spent most of her career in acting. She worked in publishing predominately for the sake of a livelihood. She described in detail how she got the current job:

> *"Well, as it happens, I've probably been known by people working in all the publishers in Oxford because Oxford as you said is like. When you go out (people said) 'oh you're working here now'. But no, other than that, I didn't know anybody. I didn't talk to anybody." (Ella, interviewed on 2nd September 2005)*

She *"didn't talk to anybody"* when she hunted for a job and she only sent her CV around. But her reputation helped her to receive the current offer as *"I've probably been known by people working in all the publishers in Oxford."*. She went further to explain how reputation helped her to receive a job:

> *"I've got work not through going for interviews or audition but because people knew me. Obviously, that wasn't just because they were like 'Oh you're a friend I'll give you some work'. It was because they thought I would do it well." (Ella, ibid)*

> *"I think it's easier (when compared with acting) to phone up a publisher and say 'I do this, do you want it' and then they'll say 'well, show me what you can do'. You could even say 'well I do two days work without pay to show you what I can do'. You could say that if you really want to do something." (Ella, ibid)*

She highlighted the key element to receive a job when the recruitment process does not go through formal procedures – "do it well". How do recruiters know the job hunter "does it well"? This is through the reputation of the job hunter. As mentioned in the previous two chapters, reputation is carried through social ties. Ella has worked in publishing for twenty three years and served in different companies in Oxford as a freelancer. People in publishing know her well already. Even if she did not go through formal procedures during the job application, her recruiter trusted her ability because of her reputation. I would argue that people are connected to each other in some ways, partially because they attend social or industrial functions and partially because they move around. Social ties do not only help them to receive industry-related information, ties also help them to spread reputation.

In this section, I discuss how people at managerial level got their current job. I found that they came to their current position partially through informal channels. Referral is the chief job-hunting method for people at the managerial level. Based on the interviewees' experiences, I develop more types of typology of job hunting of managers in this section. Whereas Eva's experience belongs to type 1, Simon's experience belongs to type 2. In type 2, a guarantor is involved. This guarantor does not offer information about a job opening, rather s/he is external in the entire process. Helen's situation falls in type 3.

In the next section, I will discuss how freelancers find freelance projects. I find that this, too, follows a similar pattern: most freelance work in my sample comes through informal channels.

6.7 Getting freelance jobs

In this section, I will discuss how freelancers find freelance work. We will see that this happens mostly *via* informal channels, i.e. by word of mouth. Stephen is a full-time freelancer. He had worked for Company A for a couple of years when he decided to go freelance. Drawing on his experience, he told me the different ways of getting a freelance job. Earlier, he had put together a video for Company A. When Company A needed somebody to make a video later, somebody remembered him and Stephen's name came up. This is how he got his first freelance job. Here I summarise what happened: Stephen had done something earlier that people knew about. When the same skills were needed again, people remembered him and he got the job. In other words, he had a reputation (refer to Chapter 5 for reference). Therefore, having a portfolio and keeping people informed is crucial. This involves accumulating experience and spreading the word. This is how Stephen describes the whole incident:

> *"I had worked in Company A earlier and I carried on doing some work for them: I knew people in Company A through that. The first thing I had done for Company A was to make a video, when I interviewed people. Somebody remembered that and when they need somebody to make a video this time round they remembered that I'd made one and they got in touch. Through this, I got more work from them. It's word of mouth." (Stephen, interviewed on 2nd August 2005)*

Stephen further elaborates the details. In early social network analysis, such as Bott's (1957), the focus is on identifying the structure or degree of "connectedness" among members of a network as an important variable in determining the behaviour of individual members. Portes (1998) suggested that informal connections could be more useful in gaining employment and advancing one's career than a tight-knit family circle of the sort Bott described. Burt (1992, 2005) argued that individuals could gain a competitive advantage by brokering information that flows across structural holes, within or between large open networks. Yet, from Stephen's experience, we can see that the use of a network might not be a matter of the strength of ties. It could be entirely coincidental. But, of course, the prior condition is to let people know what you have done, otherwise there is no entry point through which other people can refer you.

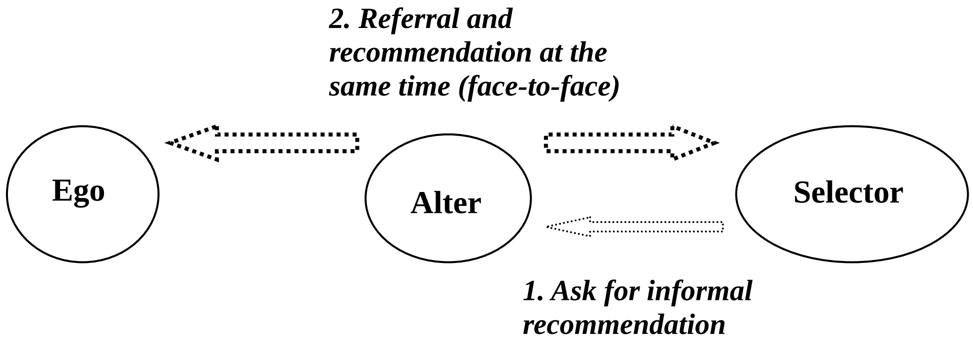
> *"(Do you know the person who contacted you again? He or she saw your video?) No. It's hard to explain. The vital moment was two years ago I went to a business conference in Holland and I bumped into somebody who had been my boss in Paris 15 years ago. (You met your boss again?) My old boss. And then we went talking. He had started working in Company A and it was this time that they were looking for somebody for a video. (Did he see you in the video?) No, it was another person who saw me in the video but at the same moment, my ex-boss was there and they both knew me. So I was kind of the obvious choice. It's through personal contact and word of mouth. (Did you keep in touch with your boss in between?) No. I didn't know him very well. I just recognised him. (Was he your supervisor before?) No, he was the director of the school. He employed me but I didn't have day-to-day contact with him. I recognised him but he didn't recognise me." (Stephen, ibid)*

This is the story of how Stephen got his first freelance job. He had the relevant experience and reputation and people in the field knew him. So he got the freelance job. The use of networking in the job-hunting field usually ignores the networking mechanisms through which people actually find their jobs. The focus tends to switch to "Who gives you the introduction?" or "What kind of relationship helps you to find a job more efficiently?" The mechanism is yet to be stated. Stephen's story provides an account of how referral actually works. It does not necessarily imply strong ties, and it does not necessarily involve constantly keeping in touch with people. Based on Stephen's account, one of the possibilities is that, so long as one has done something well, i.e. having a good reputation; and has let people know about it, one will eventually be given work. At least, this is how freelancing works. Stephen concludes with: *"Yes, lots of coincidence!"*

Stephen gave an example of receiving his first freelance job: his old boss recommended him to a colleague for a freelance job in front of him.

Figure 6.8: Typology of job hunting – freelancer

(Type 1)


2. Referral and recommendation at the same time (face-to-face)
Ego
Alter
Selector
1. Ask for informal recommendation

In type 1, no job application is involved. Indeed, this is very common for freelance job. Where Stephen is ego, his old boss is alter and his old boss’s colleague is selector. This is an example of an entirely informal way of getting a job.

Stephen told me another way a freelancer gets a commission. From the following example, we can see that the relationship between freelancers is co-operative (to a certain extent), rather than antagonistic:

> *“Another job I’ve done recently is to work on a dictionary of slang. Somebody emailed me, whom I knew a bit. He used to work freelance at Company A. He was offered this job but he couldn’t do it – he didn’t have enough time. He knew I was freelance and so he asked if I could…We used to meet around the coffee machine. It’s word of mouth: chance hearing about things, chance meetings.” (Stephen, ibid)*

It is common for the freelancer to pass jobs from one to another if he or she is fully occupied. Establishing a network with other freelancers is really important under these circumstances. Freelancers also have to grasp opportunities to meet other people and to make themselves known. This is the underlying condition for getting freelance work. The first is to work in publishing before so that people know who you are; then they have to widen the network and let more people hear about them and know how good they are. This is how Stephen describes the importance of a network:

> *"You do have to get out. You can't stay in the house. You have to show your face to people and at the vital moment, when they have work, they might think of you." (Stephen, ibid)*

Stephen gives examples of the routes that tend to give freelance jobs. Accumulating relevant experience and spreading one's reputation are very important.

Robert worked as an in-house designer for about thirteen years. Since the year 2000, he has gone freelance in Oxford because he wanted more "freedom". He found no difficulty going freelance because:

> *"I probably got more connections than any other designers I know because I traveled a lot and I kept the contacts with the people I worked with. People never stay still. They moved companies. By the time I go freelance, all the people I've met in the previous thirteen years all moved from their companies." (Robert, interviewed on 24th November 2005)*

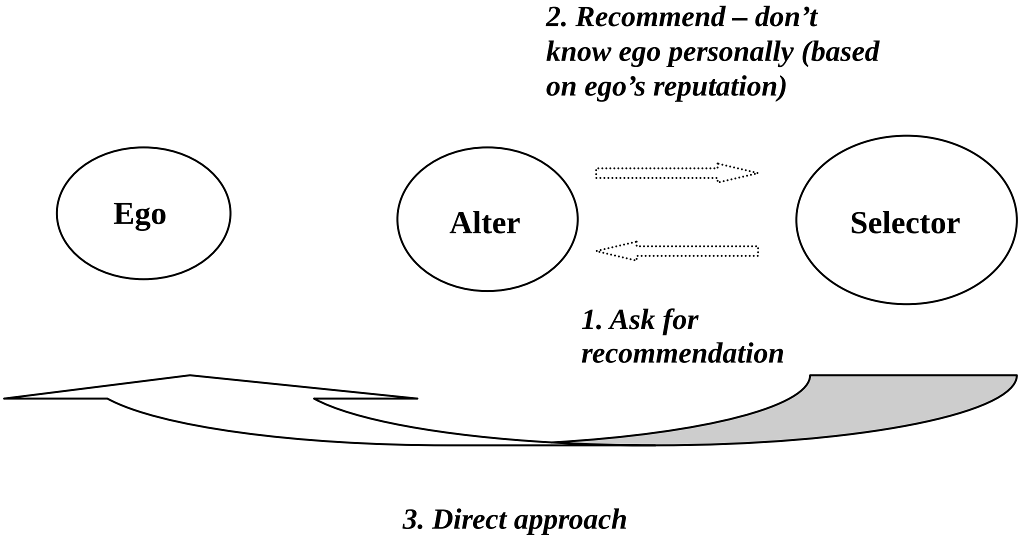
His connections help him to receive a lot of freelance jobs. Along the way, he emphasised how important trust is between freelancers and employer:

> *"Trust! Being able to get a job done on time. What people are looking for me first is deadline and done everything on time and be able to be honest to people. Honesty is quite important. You work with a lot of booksellers and you shouldn't tell the work of the others." (Robert, ibid)*

So far as I know, Robert has a reputation of being able to deliver a high quality of work on time. One of the interviewees, Janice, confirmed this with me: people in several academic publishing houses in Oxford knew his name well and were happy to offer him freelance work. Robert has worked for various publishing houses. The ability to conceal the plan of each employer is of course crucial (and indeed, constitutes part of his reputation). Janice's description was illustrated in Chapter 4, type 3 of typology of freelancer recruitment. I here re-illustrated once again.

Figure 6.9: Typology of job hunting – freelancer

(Type 2)


2. Recommend – don't know ego personally (based on ego's reputation)
Ego
Alter
Selector
1. Ask for recommendation
3. Direct approach

Whereas Robert is ego, Janice is alter, her colleague is selector. Janice does not know

Peter personally, rather, she knows of him through his reputation. He has worked with different staff members of the company (which is a direct work relationship) and they appreciate his high quality of performance.

Angela's experience shows another way of getting a freelance assignment. She was phoned up to do an in-house freelance job but she did not know who referred her:

> *"They phoned me up. They heard about me from somewhere else – I don't remember where. (At that time, did you know who recommended you?) No, I didn't know at all." (Angela, ibid)*

Usually, we assume people who are familiar with each other will make referrals. There is an implicit element of reciprocity when discussing referrals – the referrer expects the referee will do the same for him/her in the future. Yet, as Angela shows, this is not necessarily the case. It could be a stranger who refers. Similar to the above example (Janice recommended Robert), Janice's description was illustrated in the above (or perhaps, it belongs to type 1b where selector approaches ego directly).

Conventional job search and social capital studies (flexible employment studies too) put the emphasis on the connectedness and strength of ties between the referrer and the job seeker (as discussed earlier). Angela's experience is a counter example.

This section shows that freelancers predominately receive jobs *via* social ties which are used to spread reputation and information. Reputation is the pre-requisite to receive a job. The quality of social ties varies – whereas some interviewees (such as Stephen and Robert) receive jobs *via* ex-colleagues, Angela received a job *via* somebody she *"didn't know at all"*.

6.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, I discuss the way job applicants receive their current (and previous) job offers – whether they got their job entirely through formal channel or through referral or a mixture. I start with Granovetter's (1973) strength of weak ties argument. I discuss whether people in different ranks in publishing receive their job offer through ties; and if so, what kind of ties they got their job offer through. Current sociological literature examines quantitatively how people get their job offer. This chapter adds value to current writing in that it examines qualitatively the mechanisms in which people in publishing get their job. My findings in this chapter are not confined to how people get their current job, just as the existing sociological literatures do. I also review how people got their previous jobs. For instance, I discussed in details how Simon got into publishing and how he got his current managerial job in publishing.

I begin this chapter by examining various ways of getting into publishing. I discover that most newcomers in my sample use formal methods to get into publishing, on the condition that their CV contains relevant experience for publishing. I find that one will be much likely to get into publishing only if he or she has publishing experience and knowledge. But the ways my interviewees equip themselves with publishing experiences contain both formal and informal strategies. As for formal strategies, they include attending a publishing course (which helps them to refine their CV and get a reference letter from a relevant lecturer – though most recruiters said reference letters mean nothing, as mentioned in Chapter 5); getting an English language degree; taking up some publishing responsibilities in the university, such as student magazines; and doing a summer internship in a publishing house. All these strategies help the newcomers to strengthen their CV and get a reference letter from a publishing-related person.

Although new entrants need to acquire publishing experiences before actually getting a job in publishing, it is also clear that social ties are drawn on for information on job search. For example, the acquisition of qualifications leads to social contacts, which gave interviewees such as Angela and Azura information about job openings. Social ties help them to receive information about job openings.

As for informal strategies, they include contacting a friend who has been working in publishing for a voluntary internship (so as to refine the CV) and joining a publishing association (which helps them to get to know recruiters in publishing more effectively). Only very few interviewees were able to use informal methods to get into publishing.

In sharp contrast, I find that people at managerial level got their job partially through informal channels. They got the job through social gatherings, previous members of the working environment or other events. The reputation of the interviewees helped them to receive a job offer (e.g. Ella and Simon). From the recruiter's point of view, reputation carried through social ties serves to be a shortcut to information not always seen in CVs and a way of avoiding the risk of recruiting the wrong person. This is to ensure the abilities of the potential person filling the position. This echoes the arguments in Chapters 4 and 5. But here, I have to acknowledge that this was the case for the people interviewed for this study. Rather than making a generalisation, I simply report what I have found from the interviews.

In addition to formal methods, the freelance labour market also relies heavily on informal methods. Reputation is the key for referral (e.g. the case of Simon and Robert). I find that sometimes it is strangers referring somebody having a good reputation, though the referee does not know that person personally.

Based on the mechanisms involved when hunting a job, I developed three typologies of job hunting, i.e. typology of job hunting for first entrants, senior managers and freelancers. Regarding the typology of job hunting for first entrants, I developed three types. Type 1 refers to formal application through job advertisements, agencies and cold call. This type is the most common one among first entrants. In type 2, alter (i.e. the third party) is involved: ego informally receives information about a job opening from alter prior to formally applying for the job. No embedding is involved in the job application process. Type 3 is divided into two sub-types. In type 3a, selector takes the initiative to ask alter for informal recommendation whereas in type 3b, ego takes the initiative to ask alter for job opportunities. Embedding exists in the formal job application process in that informal recommendation of ego is passed to selector *via* alter. In terms of the nature of relationship, the three parties in type 3a belong to professional and weak ties (i.e. alter is ego’s tutor and selector and alter establish a professional relationship) while the relationship among people in type 3b is much closer: the alter is the working partner of ego’s mother; and alter is actually selector’s ex-partner.

Regarding the typology of job hunting for senior managers, I developed three types as well. In type 1, although ego applies for the job formally, embedding exist as alter makes informal recommendation to selector prior to formal application. In type 2, a guarantor is involved. This guarantor in this type is alter. Alter does not offer information about a job opening, rather, offers an informal recommendation about ego based on direct work experiences with ego. Alter is obviously external – rather than searching for job candidates for selector or collecting information (about selector) for ego, alter passes on the reputation of ego. In type 3, selector invites ego directly and ego corresponds to his invitation. The relationship among people in the first two types is entirely work-based. As for the third type, the recruiter is the job hunter's thesis adviser.

This chapter developed the typology of job hunting for freelancers as well. The typology is divided into two types. In type 1, ego is offered a freelance job *via* a recommendation by his previous boss and previous colleagues. In type 2, ego was recommended by somebody she did not know for a freelance job. The processes of receiving a freelance job in the typology of job hunting for freelancers are entirely informal.

My findings respond to some issues that were suggested by Granovetter, Lin and Burt. As suggested by Lin, weak ties predominately help those at a senior level, rather than those at a junior level. My findings show that junior level job applicants also use weak ties for receiving information. The way Azura and Angela received information on job openings during their thesis interview are examples. Although ties are used to collect information about job opening, embedding is not frequently found in junior level when compared to senior level. Embedding is usually found in senior level where job applicants have better established networks.

Granovetter's and Lin's studies on ties focus on the inter-connection between job applicant and referrer and how the flow of information is affected by the strength of weak ties. My findings further illustrate that job-related information might flow to a stranger. Moreover, I found that weak ties help people in junior and senior position in a different way: junior applicants do use weak ties to obtain information while senior staff use weak ties to spread reputation. I noticed that job-related information is exchanged between strangers who can be job hunters as well.

On the way to exploring how people get into publishing, I find that job hunters exchange information with each other. Azura told me vividly that she exchanged job opportunity information but only on the condition that they told each other just before the deadline – so as to retain the existing friendship. This recalls Burt’s “timing” argument in which competitors need to attain information earlier than others.

This chapter illustrates different ways of getting a job in publishing. This helps to understand what (other than social networking) really helps a person to get a job in publishing. It also helps to understand how the external labour market in publishing operates. In the next chapter, I will explore the ways of getting promoted (or demoted) in publishing. This is to explore how the internal labour market operates in the publishing sector.

Chapter 7

Internal promotion

7.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses internal promotion in the UK publishing sector. In Chapter 4, 5 and 6, I discussed recruitment from external sources. In this chapter, I explore how a vacancy is filled internally. Internal promotion is upward mobility within the company. When a worker leaves their position, they create a vacancy. Jobs filled from below create further opportunities for promotion (Sorensen 1977), to be filled either by others within the company or by new recruits. Researchers usually identify internal labour markets as jobs or sets of jobs within a company, especially in large companies, although the pattern can operate within occupations across companies (Althauser 1989a; Rosenfeld 1992).

7.2 Perspectives of internal promotion

In this section, I discuss the salient aspects of internal promotion. The first model explains internal promotion in terms of the employee's productivity (Becker 1975; Sorensen 1977; Rosen 1986; Lazear and Rosen 1981). For example, Becker (1975) argues that human capital consists of productivity from a worker and investment by the employer. Employees who have invested in company-specific training and added to their human capital are more likely to advance than those who do not possess such skills. Human capital refers to an individual's experience, skills and education. Employees who invest in company-specific training and possess more human capital are more likely to advance than those who do not. The human capital theory suggests that promotion takes place for people whose human capital investment is high. Since training leads to promotion and promotion leads to further training, companies use training as a mechanism for retaining promoted workers who might otherwise leave the company (Saporta and Farjoun 2003). The effect of company-specific human capital helps to retain an employee and job-specific human capital helps win promotion. Within the internal labour market, the longer an employee is in a particular job, the more likely advancement becomes (Rosenfeld 1992; White and Althauser 1984). Employees with a record of past promotion are less likely to leave their company (Saporta and Farjoun 2003). This argument emphasises the importance of rewards, particularly of promotion, in creating an employment environment that persuades workers to remain employed within the organisation. On-the-job training is what drives mobility within internal labour markets (Althauser 1989; Althauser and Kalleberg 1990; White and Althauser 1984; Sorensen and Kalleberg 1980).

Lazear and Rosen (1981) and Rosen (1986) modeled promotion as a “tournament”. In this model, the company offers the promotion tournament as a way of creating incentives for workers to work harder. The authors posit a setting characterised by two identical and risk-neutral workers, where promotion is the prize and the probability of winning is a function of productivity. The winner of the prize receives the salary, benefits and prestige associated with the higher position. In this interpretation, promotion and the associated higher compensation serve as prizes and workers further down the chain work harder because this increases the probability of their receiving prizes too (Waldman 2007). The authors also discuss the circumstances in which labour-market tournaments are preferable to alternative ways of motivating workers, when effort is not directly observable.

There is a large body of literature extending Lazear and Rosen’s analysis (Waldman

2007). A number of papers such as Green and Stokey (1983) and Nalebuff and Stiglitz (1983) focus on a comparison between the efficiency or profitability of employment tournaments *versus* contracting directly on output (Waldman 2007:14). Tournament theory has been extended to cover several rounds or contests. Rosen (1986) models a tournament along these lines. In Rosen's model, pairs of workers compete against each other in a first round; the winners proceed to the next round where there is again competition amongst pairs of workers. The tournament ends when only a single winner remains. Under the assumption that worker effort is constant across rounds, Rosen shows that the wage increase associated with winning the final round of the tournament is greater than the increases associated with winning earlier rounds.

There is also a substantial body of literature that tests the implications of the tournament model. One set of papers focuses on the prediction that worker's effort *should be* positively related to the probability to promotion. Various papers, including Ehrenberg and Bognanno (1990) who study professional golf tournaments, Becker and Huselid (1992) who study motor rally racing, and Audas, Barmby and Treble (2004) who study promotion within a large British financial sector employer, find evidence consistent with the tournament model.

Asymmetric learning and promotion as signals

The basic argument comes from Waldman (1984). He considers a model characterised by asymmetric as opposed to symmetric learning. When workers enter the labour market, their ability levels are initially unknown and there is learning – as in the symmetric learning case. The difference is that only a worker's current employer is able to observe their ability directly: other companies become aware of it by observing the actions of the current employer. In Waldman’s analysis, the key is the promotion decision. The logic is that promotion signals that the worker’s ability is high: at that point, other companies are willing to bid more for the worker’s services. This means that the current employer must pay a promoted worker more to pre-empt higher bids from outside. This, in turn, causes companies to promote workers only when they are likely to be significantly more productive in the higher-level position (but of course, they have to promote them first before they can see how productive they are in the new position).

Some scholars argue that the employee’s productivity might not be the only or the main reason for promotion. Reasons for promotion unrelated to productivity include age and ethnicity (Granovetter 1986; Gilbert and Lownes-Jackson 2005). This is similar to Kanter’s homophily argument as discussed in Chapter 5. In terms of age, Granovetter (1986) argues that an age cut-off would depress the motivation of older employees and thus reduce their propensity for promotion. Gilbert and Lownes-Jackson (2005) argue that ‘aversive racism’ results in worsening terms of employment and training opportunities for the black women in the workplace.

Job satisfaction might be another factor which affects both organisational performance and staff’s well-being; and in turn, influence staff’s commitment to work and staff turnover (Siefert *et al.* 1991; Lambert *et al.* 2001; Yoon and Thye 2002; Freund 2005; Haley-Lock 2007). For instance, among staff in diverse jobs and settings, job satisfaction is linked to reduced turnover and to enhanced organisational commitment and effectiveness. Liao *et al.* (2004) suggested that demographic- and personality-based employee dissimilarities relate to organisational and interpersonal deviant behaviours. For instance, dissimilarities in ethnicity, agreeableness and openness to experience were significantly related to organisational deviance. Dissimilarities in gender, conscientiousness and extraversion were significantly related to interpersonal deviance (2004: 899-992). When an employee holds a deviant attitude towards the organization and towards interpersonal interaction, he might not be as committed to work as he could and eventually, his opportunity for promotion will be lower.

The role of social ties

Social ties are regarded as an influence on promotion. Researches document the processes by which personal relationships serve as critical conduits of social and emotional support (e.g. Granovetter 1973, 1995; House *et al*. 1988; Wellman 1992; Burt 1992). Some studies suggest that bonding (or close and local) ties are valuable for generating general satisfaction and promotion opportunities (Haley-Lock 2007). Having close network ties is related to satisfaction with compensation and promotion opportunities.

Being loyal to the supervisor’s personal aims also contributes to an opportunity for promotion (Dalton 1959; Granovetter 1986; Hewlin 2003; Stromer and Devine 2008). Facades of conformity (FOC), a theoretical concept coined to describe employees who act as if they embrace the organisational values in order to succeed within that organization, explains why a staff member gets promoted (Hewlin 2003; Stromer and Devine 2008). According to Hewlin (2003), the organisational reward systems and the propensity for self-monitoring are examples of variables likely to serve as antecedents to creating facades of conformity. In line with the Facades of conformity, Granovetter adopts Dalton’s (1959) view that supervisors who promote are not merely winnowing talent but also acting politically to place those loyal to their personal aims and procedures. The loyalty-to-superior argument was especially emphasised in the literature on bureaucracies (Williams *et al*. 1980). Izraeli (1975) quotes the example of a new manager engaged in a competitive struggle with his immediate superior for control over the television department, who sought alliances with those whose support would enhance his own influence. He attempted to remove his opponent’s loyal supporters from key positions or to undermine their influence within the domain over which he sought control.

In addition to the perspective of human capital and loyalty to the superior’s policies, empirical studies show that the social network plays a role in determining the rate of promotion. Katz and Tushman (1983) investigate whether there are benefits working for a supervisor with wide social networks. They find that project members who report to different supervisors have significantly different rates of promotion. They argue that working for a supervisor with an effective social network enables the employee to develop an effective network as well. In this way, these employees receive promotion faster. Manager’s boundary spanning role is critical to the effectiveness of groups, teams and organizations (Wiesenfeld and Hewlin 2003).

In this chapter, I regard the job promotion as a competition to receive a job offer. A job offer represents winning the competition.

7.3 Implications for publishing

My understanding of the internal promotion literature led me to form various expectations as to how employers make promotion decisions and the strategies employees adopt in order to get promoted. On the side of the employers, I expect employers to promote an employee on the basis of his/her productivity. In other words, human capital guides employers to decide whom to promote. I also expect that employers with a well-established network will tend to have earlier information about the company; and thus, to transfer relevant information to their subordinates. Finally, I expect employers to prefer to promote those who demonstrate higher job satisfaction and are loyal to their political aims within the company.

On the side of the employees, I make the assumption that they will regard promotion as a “tournament”. They enhance their productivity in order to get promoted (if they want to stay in that particular company). Possessing job-specific human capital is seen as the key to promotion. I also assume that employees prefer to work with a well-connected supervisor and know that building a well-established network within the company helps internal promotion, because the network facilitates the flow of earlier information about the company. The network also helps to ensure direct personal experiences among colleagues, which will provide the basis of assessing a person’s work ability. Finally, I expect to find that the employee believes that loyalty to the company and the supervisor and having a higher level of job satisfaction are determinants for promotion.

7.4 Aims of the chapter

I aim to explore three basic issues in this chapter: the processes through which employees get promoted. I particularly explore and compare the mechanisms through which employees are internally and externally promoted. Based on the above literature, I ask the following questions: how do employers make a promotion decision? To what extent do employers promote an employee because of his/ her human capital, embedded relation within or outside the company? Moreover, will employees determined to achieve promotion take steps to enhance their human capital, nurture their company loyalty and establish a good network within the company? These are the areas covered in this chapter.

7.5 The employer’s perspective

Filling vacancies internally is less expensive: the employer only needs to prepare a detailed job description for circulation. From an employer’s point of view, internal promotion is an efficient way of filling vacancies. According to Annie, a senior art editor and Ben, a senior manager, the benefit of internal promotion lies in:

> *“If you have to explain the whole thing it takes an hour. It's much easier to work with someone who knows how you work.” (Annie, interviewed on 6th September 2005)*

> *“I don’t have to spend time training somebody who knows nothing about the company.” (Ben, interviewed on 16th August 2005)*

On top of minimising the cost of guarding against uncertainties and the cost of training, perhaps the following indicates the rationale for employing a person:

> *“If you’re an employer and you’re offered a whole range of people with equal skills, and you know somebody, and you know you can get on with that person, you know they are reliable and dependable etc, and share your values of what the company stands for, you are going to pick them. If you don’t have that person then, fine, you should chose equally. However open-minded one tries to be, you’re always going to go for the person who you’ve already known. It’s occasionally better the devil you know: somebody who isn’t perfect, who are there.” (Peter, interviewed on 19th October 2006)*

From an employer’s point of view, being familiar with a potential recruit is another consideration when filling a vacancy. Under what circumstances will an employer be familiar with a potential recruit? Based on common sense, we assume that direct personal experience with the potential recruit is one way; or perhaps the reputation of a potential recruit (which is an indirect experience) is another. For the rest of this chapter, I am going to discuss the mechanisms through which promotion operates in order to understand the rationale behind promotion.

It can be difficult to promote when the position in the publishing company is relatively senior. As mentioned in Chapter 3, some interviewees were unwilling to move into a managerial role because they disliked the administration involved. This is especially the case in design. The implications of this are that recruiters tend to refer to the external (or intra-company) labour market to fill some senior positions. According to Peter, this is why recruiters prefer using headhunters or recruiting experienced managerial staff:

> *"It's interesting to talk about internal promotion in publishing. (Why?) Many jobs at higher levels are difficult to fill – people at the middle level prefer getting on with their jobs. They have no incentive to move up. Employers refer to the external labour market to fill the senior posts. They tend to refer to the headhunters. The new recruits are usually experienced managers from outside." (Field notes, Peter, 30th November 2006)*

Peter, in Chapter 4, told me that the headhunter is *'part of the network'*. Here, we found the symbiotic nature of internal labour market and informal recruitment methods: if employers fail to promote somebody within the company, they will recruit somebody from outside *via* headhunters, which is *'part of the network'*. In line with Chapter 4 and 5, so long as the recruits have a good reputation, they will recruit somebody from outside. I will further discuss this issue in section 7.7.

Based on the above, employers take the minimisation of cost, i.e. cost of filling the vacant position with inappropriate staff and cost of time, into prior consideration when they make promotion decisions.

7.6 Mechanisms of internal promotion

Internal promotion is common in publishing. Most of my interviewees had experienced it. Below, I discuss various patterns of internal promotion so as to come to an understanding of the mechanisms through which promotion operates.

7.6.1 Being offered a promotion without formal procedures

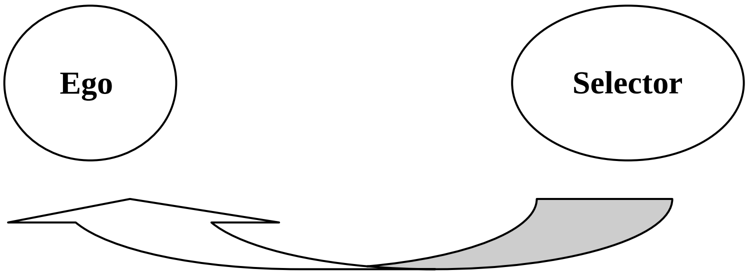
Angelina is an editorial director of an international publisher. She originally worked with the company from 1981-85 and then left. She was invited to take up a senior editorial position in the same company in 1994 and has been working with them until now (for her career path, see Chapter 3). She described how she got promoted:

> *"It's the people I know: I've been in this organisation for many years. I knew that when I got to editor-in-chief, I would have two bosses. I had the boss who had been managing director and a second boss who was the global editor. When he was looking for somebody to replace the editorial director, he gave me the job." (Angelina, interviewed on 9th December 2005)*

The position was not advertised. According to Angelina, her company did advertise but not this type of position: *"If it's a senior position, the big job, you see very few of them advertised."* It was because her two bosses were on the lookout and decided that she was the right person to be promoted. Obviously, this implies that her boss knew she would not do anything wrong and/ or was capable in handling the responsibilities of the new position. Figure 7.1 illustrates her situation:

Figure 7.1: Typology of promotion

(Type 1a)



Direct approach

I classify Angelina's promotion experience as type 1a, which also applies to the case of Anna, Jane, Elsa and Susan. Let ego be Angelina and selector be her boss. As described, her supervisors approached her directly. To Angelina, the key to internal promotion is:

> *"Once you are in the company, networking works differently. You have networks with people with whom you are in contact." (Angelina, ibid)*

From what Angelina says, her promotion related to the link with her boss. But how exactly did this happen? Angelina explains that she had been working with her boss for a couple of years and it was her boss who looked for staff. Her boss knew her well and spontaneously offered her the opportunity of promotion:

> *"We know each other well, and he knows I'm familiar with the company. That's why, when he looked for somebody to replace the position, he came to me" (Angelina, ibid)*

Angelina was promoted because her boss has direct work experience with her. If her boss is not in a position (or to be more specific, has the power) to decide who should be promoted, she might not be able to be promoted so smoothly. Angelina's explanation adds value to conventional studies on ties and labour market outcomes. For example, Katz and Tushman (1983) argue that employees working with different supervisors have different promotion rates; they failed to identify, however, the mechanisms through which a network relates to promotion.

Anna is a publicity officer with a London publishing house where she has been working for three years. She started as a publicity assistant and after one year she was promoted to publicity officer. In her department, the promotion decision is based on a yearly appraisal written by her manager:

> *"We have a yearly appraisal. In that appraisal, they evaluate your performance and what you are doing. From my last appraisal, I was promoted to a press officer." (Anna, interviewed on 26th July 2005)*

Based on a yearly appraisal, Anna was promoted. She said her promotion was actually *"by chance"* because *"someone left"*. She did not expect she would be able to be promoted within a year:

> *"You don't know who's going to leave. But most people will stay for a year and will move to the next job or move to a different house. Unless you are lucky enough that someone leaves then you can be promoted. But you can never tell who is going to leave. In my case I'm lucky that someone left and I was promoted." (Anna, ibid)*

She did not formally apply (there is no such system in her company) for internal promotion. She simply went through yearly assessment procedures, which is part of the bureaucracy. Once somebody vacated the position, she filled it in, on the basis of her yearly appraisal.

She claims that she is not the sociable type and she rarely socialises with other publicists within or outside the company. She believes that ability is more important than anything else to survive in the profession if she wants promotion.

> *"I'm getting lots of experience that would help me to establish my CV and help me climb." (Anna, 26th July 2005)*

According to Anna, human capital determines her success to get promoted. She does not believe in networking – though she is on good terms with her boss:

> *"I mean I'm just there (on training courses) to get the skills. Then I can write on my CV 'I can do this. I have learned that'. If it's not beneficial to know the tutor then maybe I wouldn't stay in touch with them. I just go and do the course." (Anna, ibid)*
>
> *"My boss and I get on well. I'm very open with her and I hope that she's glad that I can be open and discuss my feelings. I think it's partly because I've worked really hard and get results for her. That keeps her proud of her team. She says, 'You work hard and I respect you for it'. Also, I respect her. I have seen the way she works with other people and I respect her opinion because I respect her as a person. It motivates me more to work harder for her. If I didn't have respect for my boss and I would probably not work very hard." (Anna, ibid)*

According to Anna, being on good terms with her supervisor and possessing relevant skills are keys to promotion. This corresponds to recruiters' explanation in Chapter 5: they look for staff members with relevant skills and are able to work within a team. Being on good terms with her supervisor is crucial in the sense that her boss recognises her performance and will judge her in a relatively positive way based on the direct work experience with her. Anna's situation also implies loyalty to her boss.

The promotion experience of Jane, a senior medical writer, was based on internal appraisal as well. She experienced rapid promotion within six years (from medical writer to editor-in-chief). She said that her company's hierarchy resulted in plenty of opportunities for promotion:

> *"You don't feel like fighting other people for promotion. Anyway, everybody could get promoted. It's not that one person gets the promotion instead of another. It doesn't work like that. There are too many layers of management which ultimately means the company is less efficient. But people certainly have a career ladder to climb." (Jane, interviewed on 16th August 2005)*

In general, someone working in a middle-ranking role in a large company could achieve a more senior position in a small one. As discussed in Chapter 3, clear career structures exist in large publishing houses[85]. In small publishers, the dividing lines are blurred and even cross over. A small employer may offer a more varied job. On the other hand, junior staff in large companies may gain the in-depth expertise afforded by the greater resources of the publisher (for details, see Chapter 3).

The large company establishes a career ladder for its staff (in a way, it bureaucratises the personnel). By promoting staff internally, the recruitment procedure is satisfied. From a resources point of view, it saves monetary and time costs: the employers do not have to pay for advertisements or for agencies to assemble information from referrers. From the point of view of minimising uncertainty, the employers do not have to worry about recruiting an inappropriate staff member and, thus, experiencing their mistakes.

---

[85] For example, a person can move from junior editorial level to senior commissioning editor, production assistant to production controller, marketing assistant to marketing manager.

Nevertheless, there can be negative consequences. Rapid promotion can be achieved at the expense of quality:

> *"I think sometimes people are promoted before they really deserve it. For example, you don't have to be very experienced nowadays to achieve the title of senior medical writer compared with five or six years ago." (Jane, ibid)*

According to Jane, people get promoted simply because of the company structure rather than ability. When the employer promotes in order to fill in a gap, promotion can seem to be "automatic": so long as the employee performs well enough, i.e. acquires a reasonable amount of human capital, he or she is automatically promoted.

Elsa is a reporter in an educational publishing house in London. Her regular duty is to collect the updated information about the higher education sector and to write news articles. She was an assistant reporter for two years and has been a reporter since 2002. Similar to Anna and Jane, she was promoted through internal appraisal. When we talked about promotion experience, she looked hesitant:

> *"It's not easy to get promoted… a lot of competition. (How is it the case?) Well, sometimes I need to see if I live up to the standard. It is quite subjective. I have to see what my supervisor really likes and it's not easy. (But what's the competition?) Compete among colleagues, everybody wants to get promoted." (Elsa, interviewed on 15th August 2005)*

According to Elsa, she tried hard to get promoted because everybody on the same rank is fighting for the same position. In this circumstance, she needs to detect what her supervisor likes in order to develop a better impression in front of her supervisor. Finally, she got promoted. Her situation suggests that being able to reach the supervisor’s standard is crucial.

Susan is now an art editor with Company A. Before that, she was an art director for a small publishing house in London with about 10 people. When she looked back to the promotion experience in her previous company, Susan said the pace of promotion proceeded *“far too quickly”*:

> *“Basically within just about three years, I had gone from being a designer to an art director. So I had been a designer, a senior designer and an art director, all within three years” (Susan, interviewed on13th September 2005)*

It was only when she was to replace a colleague who left the company, she got promoted. There was neither formal application nor formal interview. Her promotion was based on an internal appraisal. When compared with the eight years it normally takes to climb from junior to senior level[86], Susan did it in only three. Why was it the case? She explains:

> *“I suspect it was the commitment to work, a real commitment. I think I worked extremely hard and I don’t think in any circumstance I might not forget to end up professionally. I worked furiously and intensively within one magazine.” (Susan, ibid)*

Work attitude (i.e. commitment to work) helped her proceed. Such rapid promotion created drawbacks that drove Susan to go freelance for half a year before moving to Company A:

> *“One of the major reasons I came to Company A is because I went too quickly to being an art director and I didn’t settle in to my core skills. The*

---

[86] Here, I am referring to well-established publishing house such as Company A.

> *work was very simple. I worked well with photographers; I worked well with editors in a magazine environment; but I want to be a good designer as well. I enjoy doing design. They wanted me to direct very quickly. It was great but it's extremely stressful. Very, very small team work, and very intensive." (Susan, ibid)*

Susan's experience illustrates that promotion can come very fast within a small team. She was committed to work, being professional and worked well with her colleagues – all these helped her to get promoted. The work was "very simple": this implies she possessed more human capital than was expected. In addition to the factor of the company structure and her human capital, she got promoted fast as a result of being able to work well with colleagues.

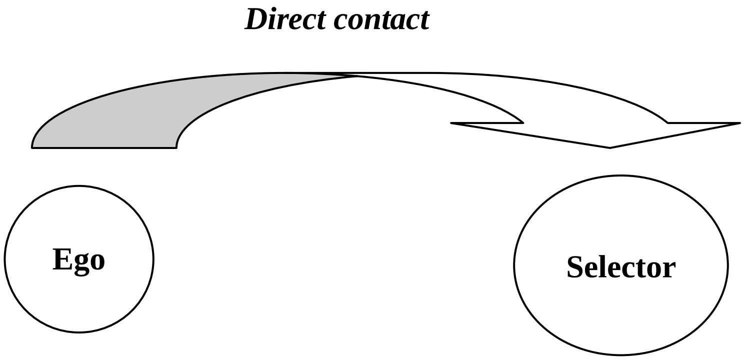
Janice had been working on a dictionary for Company A as a freelancer. Because she was already familiar with Company A, she was later able to join them on a permanent basis without any formal procedure.

> *"One day there's an advert in* The Guardian *for someone to work full-time in-house on dictionaries. So I rang up. I knew the people. I've never had an interview with Company A... (Did you ring them?) I knew them. They said, 'Would you like to come and work with us? Come and work for a year.' After that I was offered a permanent job." (Janice, interviewed on 14th December 2005)*

This is how the job market may operate when someone transfers from freelance to permanent. Janice did not go through any formal procedure despite the job being advertised in the press. Once the job was advertised in the press, I assume there were other competitors for the job. However, Janice did not go through any single formal procedure once she *"rang up"* the selector. Figure 7.2 illustrates the promotion pattern of Janice:

Figure 7.2: Typology of promotion

(Type 1b)



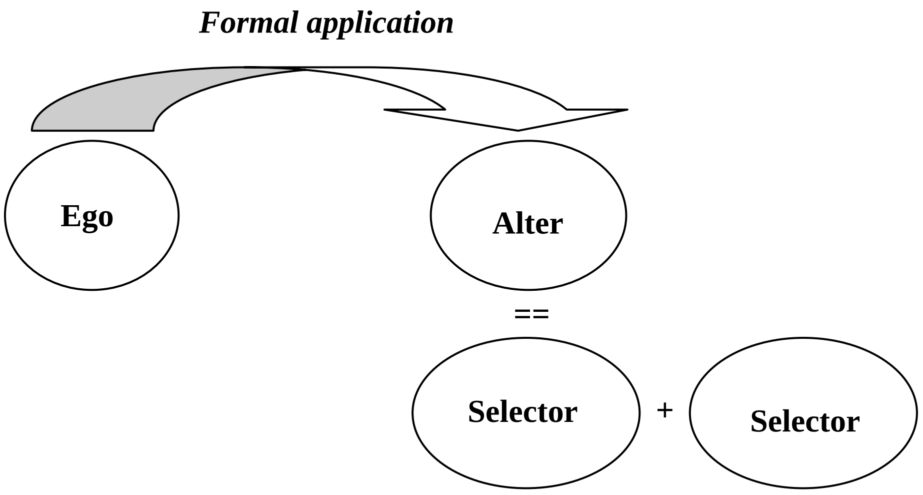
Janice's experience is classified as type 1b (Elisabeth's experience is the same). Let ego refers to Janice and selector refers to the selection team. The above diagram shows that she took an initiative to approach the selector, whom she had been establishing a working relationship with. Then the selector offered her the job, without arranging any formal procedure. Although she did not start as part of the in-house permanent staff, she proceeded in gradual steps from freelancer to a one-year contract staff to permanent staff. The essential reason for being able to change status is that she knows the people already, and they are familiar with her work. The longer she stayed in the company, the more she became familiar with its ways and, at the same time, the more familiar the employer became familiar with what she could do. In this case, there will be a reduction and elimination of the asymmetry (with respect to information about the potential employee's ability) that comes about the longer she stays in the company.

7.6.2 Promotion via formal procedure followed by competition

In this section, I am going to discuss the situation where promotion is achieved through formal application with reference to internal advertisement. In the following two cases, competition for promotion is involved. Sonia is an editor in the primary literacy department of an educational publishing house. She started her publishing career as an editorial trainee. This is a two-year programme for recruits interested in publishing. Trainees were free to apply for internal promotion within these two years. With Sonia, it was after seven months that she saw an internal advertisement for an editorship and applied for it. According to her, she needed to go through all the formal procedures – submitting a CV and cover letter and attending interview; but, since she had been working in the company for seven months, she knew the people interviewing her[87]. One of them was her manager, the other was a publisher within the company. Figure 7.3 illustrates her situation:

Figure 7.3: Typology of promotion

(Type 2)



---

[87] She needed to go through the formal procedures partly because the company needed a record of every job applicant; and partly because these procedures required that the company made a formal assessment.

I classify Sonia’s case as type 2 (later when I discuss external promotion, I will show that Sue’s experience is similar to this type as well). Let ego refers to Sonia; and alter and selectors refer to her manager. According to Sonia, there were other colleagues in the publishing house applying for the job but she failed to identify who they were. Although she followed all formal procedures when she applied for the job, there is apparently an informal relationship embedded in the selection process – one of the selectors was her manager whom had direct work experience with her. There were two selectors in the selection committee and she knew both. Even if another selector did not have direct work experience with Sonia, her manager was able to provide first hand information (even if her manager did not put a good word for her – in her case, we are yet to know) about her work performance.

Further to the distinction between internal promotion and external recruitment, in Sonia’s case, it is clear that being an editorial trainee was better placed to being offered a stepping stone to becoming an editor:

> *“You are more familiar with the background of the company and you know how the department functions. That’s the advantage.” (Sonia, interviewed on 1st September 2007)*

The reason Sonia offered is very similar to what employers mentioned about recruiting previous staff (see chapter 5). *“Familiar with the background of the company”* and *“know how the department functions”* are important factors in internal promotion. From an employer’s point of view, it helps to reduce the cost of training and the potential cost of any staff member. From an employee’s point of view, she is able to identify a career path that he or she can follow. Again, this shows the symbiotic nature of informal recruitment and internal promotion – the employer’s personal knowledge of the job candidate is important in both recruitment methods, though in the case of informal recruitment, it is not always direct personal knowledge but sometimes through a referrer and a guarantor.

As mentioned in Chapter 6, Louisa worked in the same company as Sonia. She, too, had entered the company *via* the editorial training scheme but had found the training *"unchallenging"*. So, after four months, she moved into a permanent job as an editor in a department dealing with non-fiction for children – a very rapid promotion. The following autumn (autumn 2002), Louisa was promoted to managing editor. According to her, this is *"where you have complete responsibility for a project"*. After a year, Louisa left and went travelling for six months. On returning to England, she worked freelance for the same company and wrote children's books. A few months later (mid 2004), she applied for a commissioning editor position and got it[88]. The way she got the commissioning editor position was a mixture of formal and informal: a commissioning editor who was her working partner, planned to quit the job and he introduced Louisa to the publishing director:

> *"He passed my details on to the publishing director about the commissioning job. I was given freelance by him at that time. We're very good friends really." (Louisa, interviewed on 1st August 2005)*

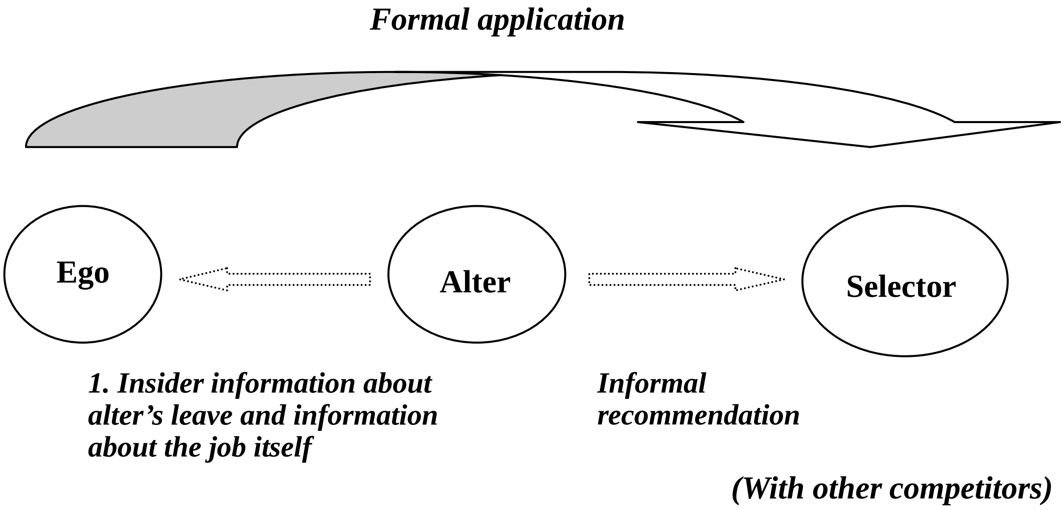
According to Louisa, the job was internally advertised. She followed all formal procedures: from submitting her CV to attending a formal interview. The interview was *"about half an hour. It was more based on what you've been told"*. Figure 7.4 illustrates her situation:

---

[88] As far as I know, three months after our interview she was promoted to the position of publisher. It is a position that shares similar responsibilities with that of commissioning editor but the position and pay are better.

Figure 7.4: Typology of promotion

(Type 3a)


Formal application
Ego
Alter
Selector
1. Insider information about alter's leave and information about the job itself
Informal recommendation
(With other competitors)

Type 3a suggests an element of embedding in a formal job application process. Whereas there is no tie between ego and selector, alter offers informal recommendation to selector. Informal recommendation can be very helpful to both ego and selector: whereas alter introduces ego to selector (and possibly put a good word for him/ her), selector is able to collect extra information about ego so as to minimise the uncertainty involved when promoting a potential staff member (refer to chapter 4 and 5). Alter helps to pass ego's reputation to selector, who does not share direct personal experience with ego. The formal job application process is indeed embedded with alter's informal recommendation of ego. In Louisa's case, alter gives information about the job to ego. This helps ego to perform better in the formal interview.

In Louisa's company, promotion could be quick. She started her publishing career as a trainee and she took less than four years to reach the position of a publisher. This is her experience:

> *"You get the impression they were trying to push you up the career ladder. In publishing there are lots of people who say, 'You have to be pushy.'" (Louisa, ibid)*

Her comment that people had to be "pushy" recalls the tournament model, i.e. that the firm imposes a promotion tournament in order to create incentives for employees to work hard, and the employees compete for the prize.

In section 7.6, I discuss the mechanisms of internal promotion. I found that my interviewees were promoted under two circumstances: first, they were offered a promotion based on their yearly appraisal, which is the most common type among the interviewees (e.g. Angelina, Anna, Ella); and second, interviewees got promoted through formal procedures and competitors were involved (e.g. Sonia and Louisa). Based on these two circumstances, I develop the typology of promotion which comprises four types. Firstly, type 1a refers to a direct approach from employer to ego, which is the most common type (through a yearly appraisal). Secondly, type 1b is the other way round, i.e. ego approaches employer (informally). Thirdly, type 2 illustrates that ego applies for internal promotion formally but informal relation is embedded in the application because one of the selector is actually a direct manager of ego (Sonia's case); and this direct manager performs as alter in the promotion process (puts a good word for ego). Fourthly, in type 3a ego applies for promotion formally, but alter gives informal recommendation to selector and gives information about job opening and the job to ego. Embedding is witnessed.

7.7 Mechanisms of external promotion

In this section, I am going to discuss various patterns of external promotion. Whereas internal promotion depends on direct work experience between an employee and selector or an embedded relation between an employee and alter within the publishing house, external promotion relies more on the reputation of the job candidate himself/ herself.

7.7.1 Being offered a job without formal procedure

Elisabeth is a commissioning editor of Company A[89]. She started her career in publishing in Company A where she was an assistant commissioning editor in 2001. After being an assistant commissioning editor for one and a half years, she moved to London for a publishing editorial position largely because her supervisor at Company A moved to London. In other words, her supervisor brought her to a new company in London. However, because she wanted to *'live in Oxford'* where her boyfriend had been staying, she got a job in Company A again in 2005. This time, she was promoted to product development editor (and later on, she was promoted to commissioning editor). According to Elisabeth, she *"didn't apply for this job (product development editor) but I got this job in March 2005" (Elisabeth, interviewed on 19th August 2008).* She contacted one of the managers in editorial and eventually she was given the job. Elisabeth's experience belongs to typology 1b.

She approached the manager directly and got the job despite the fact that she had never worked with the manager. She got the job because:

> *"I'm willing to do more than I should be doing (Doing more in terms of what?) In terms of the volume. I could make more money as well." (Elisabeth, ibid)*

---

[89] Elisabeth's case was briefly discussed in Figure 4.4, Chapter 4.

As she has worked in the company before, the manager accepted her eventually without any formal procedures (indeed, when she talked about this experience, she looked quite proud of it).

7.7.2 Being invited to apply and going through formal procedures

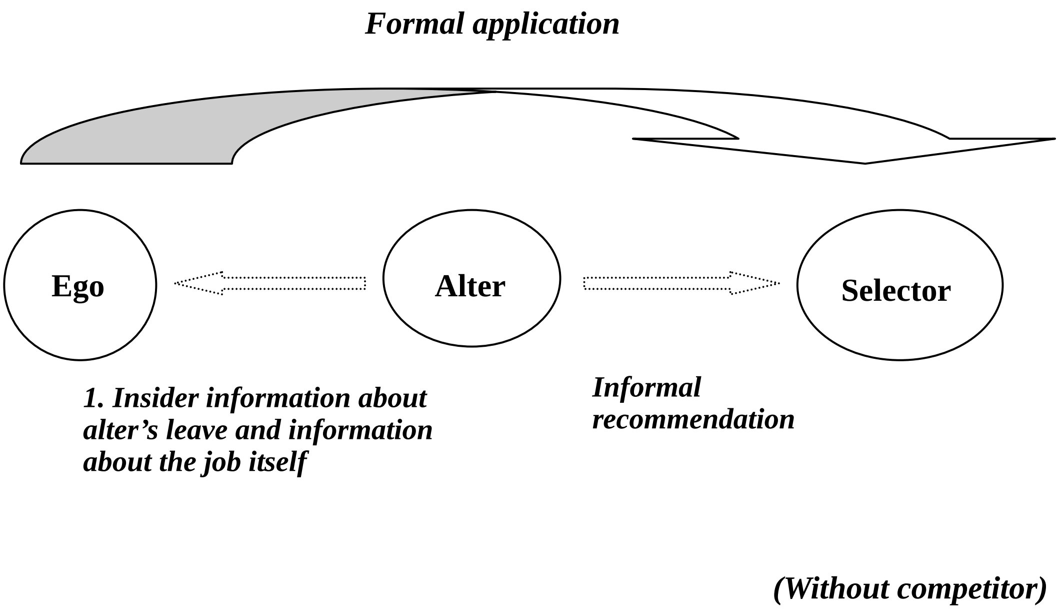
Helen was a brand development director of a publishing house in London. She started her career as an editor, senior editor; and then moved to a large publishing house and became a publishing manager. Eventually she was invited to become a brand development director in 1994 in another publishing house (this part was discussed in Chapter 6). Here I would like to discuss one of her earlier experiences when she moved company for a senior editorial position. According to Helen, when she left her first company in publishing, she was *"actually made redundant"*:

> *"It was in early 80s when I was still an editor. I was actually made redundant. My boss's husband gave me a start. (A start?) Started with a new project in his company. He said, 'talk to me about doing books'. (Did you tell your boss you'd like to do something new?) She knew I needed a job." (Helen, interviewed on 16th November 2005)*

Similar to other interviewees, she told me there was a lot of restructuring in the publishing sector in 1980s. Fortunately, she managed to get a new job (with an even better title) *via* the referral by her boss. Indeed, she was invited to apply and went through all the formal procedures (though there was no other candidate). Her boss might also perform as a guarantor in the job application or otherwise the husband would not be able to capture accurately the quality of her work or even her personality (which can be crucial in employment, refer to Chapter 5 for details). Figure 7.5 illustrates Helen's situation:

Figure 7.5: Typology of promotion

(Type 3b)


Formal application
Ego
Alter
Selector
1. Insider information about alter's leave and information about the job itself
Informal recommendation
(Without competitor)

I classify Helen's experience as type 3b. Helen is ego, her boss is alter and her boss's husband is selector. Notice that in Helen's case, I would say her boss did not only perform the role of a referrer. Rather, she was very likely to be a guarantor who put in a good word for Helen because Helen did not go through any formal interviews or assessments after her application. She went straight to her boss's husband and discussed the job with him. Unlike type 3a, there is no competitor in this case.

7.7.3 Going through formal procedures involving competition

Sue has been a publisher in a legal publishing house since 2002. Before externally promoted to the current position, she had worked as a legal editor for 4 years. The process through which she received her current job illustrate how reputation and informal contact can help a person to outcompete other competitors in a formal competition.

Although the job was advertised in the press and was open to formal competition, she received the job largely through informal means:

> *"Legal publishing is a very small industry. Once you've started working in it, you get to know people very quickly. So you could say that I got this particular job through an advert. While I was working for my previous company, my previous company had professional relationship with a number of legal publishers including C.C. (fictitious name, her current company). I knew people from AB when I was in my previous company. When the position of C.C. was vacated, I got in touch with Iris actually. I applied the job. She was the publisher at that time and I got the position." (Sue, interviewed on 9th December 2005)*

In Sue's case, Iris was guarantor and selector. Iris was only one of the interviewers. After the interview, Sue told me she was indeed having a working partnership with Iris when she applied for the job. However, Iris was not the person who told her about the job opening. She already knew about the job opening before she saw the job advert. This is how she got to know about it:

> *"No, she didn't tell me that there was a vacancy. But somebody who was working here sent a note to my previous company saying 'I'm leaving the company'. (Sent a note to all of you saying that he was leaving?) Yes, he sent the message. Everybody did that – I'm leaving the company, goodbye. That's what you do when you are leaving the company. This person emailed me and some other colleagues of my previous company. So I realised that there was a vacancy." (Sue, ibid)*

This is how an informal mechanism is embedded in Sue's external promotion. Although Sue said twice that the job was formally advertised and she followed all formal application procedures, informal relation was undoubtedly embedded in her application.

An individual’s career path in the publishing sector varies depending on the size and structure of the company. According to Clark (2001), it may be easier to move around the company and learn different jobs in small companies with a small number of staff and fewer departments[90]. People with this career path are also likely to benefit from faster promotion. For example, Kathy was an assistant editor with an academic publishing company in Oxford. She subsequently moved to a charity and was promoted to editorial manager within less than two years. She said:

> *“I think it's a big jump because it's a charity and they don't necessarily know a lot about publishing.” (Kathy, interviewed on 17th November 2005)*

What exactly was the mechanism that led to Kathy’s rapid promotion within the charity? Her explanation suggests that her human capital was sufficient for the job. Kathy’s CV indicated that she had worked as editorial assistant in three well-known and well-established publishing houses in Oxford. Her solid experience within large publishing houses had equipped her with the human capital to take up the higher position in other companies. In a way, I would say working in a well-known and well-established publishing house helps a person to build up his/ her own reputation. Kathy’s experience of external promotion can be an illustration.

In section 7.7, I discussed external promotion. I found that there are three circumstances under which employees are promoted externally. Firstly, employees are offered a job without going through formal procedures. Secondly, employees are invited to apply for promotion and go through formal procedures. No competitor is involved. Thirdly, employees go through formal procedures which involve competition. The first mechanism was discussed in Chapter 4, figure 4.4 and the last mechanism was discussed in Chapter 6, figure 6.1. In this section, I focus on type 3b of typology of promotion. That is, the second mechanism. In type 3b, selector does not have direct experience with ego but alter is ego's boss (Helen's case). Embedding exists.

---

[90] What I mean here by publishing includes those organisations that have a publications department. These organisations can range from commercial companies that produce an in-house newsletter to small charities that need to communicate with their employees or donors. Working as an editorial assistant in one of these organisations can often give people an insight into the whole process of publishing.

7.8 Giving up promotion – the employee's experience

In some circumstances, employees pass up the opportunity for promotion. The wish to care for children influences a person's promotion decision[91]. A reasonable proportion of my interviewees mentioned how maternity leave affects women's careers:

Jane, a senior medical writer was once an editorial team leader. She started her career as a medical trainee in 1997. Within six years, she had moved up from medical writer to editorial team leader in-charge of her own team of writers. She admitted that she had "moved quite quickly up the company", but she changed to part-time (three days a week) and moved back to being a senior writer after her second baby:

> *"Actually, after the second baby, I wanted to go part-time and they told me, 'Could you actually manage the team of writers?'. ('Because I couldn't) I had to take a demotion…I was reporting to different editorial team leaders. I was actually moved to a different division. It wasn't somebody from my team who then swapped place with me. I moved to a different team." (Jane, ibid)*

---

[91] In section 3.4.1, I provided similar reasons for women going freelance after maternity.

Because of the need to care for her children, Jane voluntarily become downwardly mobile, from team leader to senior writer[92]. In her case, she needed to bear childcare responsibilities (even when her husband was around). The traditional female role as a caretaker is assumed here. Women with childcare responsibilities make decisions relating to care and employment "with reference to moral and socially negotiated (not individual) views about what behaviour is right and proper" (Duncan *et al*. 2003). I would argue her decision to downgrade the position is made within the confine of a moral framework (Crompton 2006).

Sometimes, my interviewees seem to rank abstract values higher than job promotion. For instance, Kathy is an editorial manager with a charity organisation. Before that, she had been with Company A for nearly two years. She had had the chance to be promoted to commissioning editor after one and a half years but decided to leave instead. This is why:

> *"I found that I didn't like an environment that is so driven by making money, that sets targets all the time. Company A publishes research but it's not driven by that: the goal is all about money, all about making profits. Even if you have a good piece of work, if it's not profitable, they won't publish. I felt frustrated. Working for a charity is more fulfilling." (Kathy, ibid)*

Kathy illustrates that job mobility can be driven by non-materialistic preference. Instead of staying in Company A and getting promoted, she moved to a smaller company in which there was not even a publishing department. She started as information officer in the research department for two years.

---

[92] Angelina recalled similarly, *"…In the end, a female will have a baby and go freelance so they can look after their children. I do what I do because I didn't get (maternity leave) when I had a child. I had six weeks off and I went straight back to work. So I didn't do a full maternity leave and there was no disruption in my career despite having children. A lot of very good editors, they're going to have children. So they're going to do freelance editorial. You can be a fantastic freelance editor but you don't become head of the company." (Angelina, ibid)*

Another example is Kitty. She is currently a managing editor with an educational publishing house in Oxford. Before her new job, she had taken a year off travelling, and before that she worked for four years as commissioning editor with a small publishing house. She left that job for personal reasons, as she explains:

> *"I'd found that I didn't like it. I didn't like all the travelling, conferences worldwide, those weekends. (Even weekends?) Conferences start on Sundays and or on a Saturday evening, so you arrive on a Saturday. I didn't want to give up my life for my career. Also, I just didn't like selling yourself to the author." (Kitty, interviewed on 13th December 2005)*

Because Kitty did not want to "give up my life to my career" and disliked "selling yourself to the author", she quitted the job. She said that, because she hoped the atmosphere at her new company was probably less stressed, she would be more likely to take up an opportunity for editorial promotion.

7.9 Conclusion

This chapter examines internal promotion within the UK publishing sector. In this chapter, I discuss the mechanisms associated with the probability of promotion. This makes a distinctive difference to the previous three chapters in which the focus is external recruitment.

I begin this chapter by examining how an employer makes promotion decisions. Based on the interviews, I find that employers regard minimising the training time as crucial in the internal labour market. Cutting training time to the minimum implies that the employers are already familiar with the ability of the employee and know their performance is reliable. One distinctive finding in regard to UK publishing is that sometimes employers find it difficult to fill a senior position because employees prefer staying in their original position – some employees were unwilling to move up to managerial level as they dislike administrative tasks. Employers still rely on external recruitment (usually through head hunters who are *“part of the network”*, according to Peter in Chapter 4) in this regard. They prefer recruiting external staff who are rich in administrative experience even when relatively less qualified in publishing. The importance of skills (i.e. human capital) is implied. It also implies that internal promotion and informal recruitment is symbiotic: the ultimate concern of an employer is to ensure he or she finds somebody who is suitable for the position and whom the employer has knowledge about. The processes of these two methods are similar: personal knowledge of the job candidate and his/her work capabilities are important (though in the case of informal recruitment it is not always direct personal knowledge but sometimes through a referrer).

In this chapter, I discuss the mechanisms through which employees experience promotion. Both internal and external promotion is examined. In terms of internal promotion, I find that there are three patterns of promotion. Firstly, employees become promoted through a yearly appraisal (e.g. Anna, Jane, Elsa and Susan). This is part of the bureaucratic procedures and it helps to decide who should be promoted on the basis of an employee's general performance. According to interviewees who experienced promotion through a yearly appraisal, they are basically hard working and committed to work (Anna and Susan), being able to understand the standard required by her supervisor (Elsa) and are basically familiar with the work and the company (Angelina and Janice). The case of Angelina and Janice illustrate that an employee's work ability and personal network is important – both of them are able to work with superiors who have the power to decide who is to be promoted. Secondly, employees were promoted *via* direct application to an internal advertisement. Sonia and Louisa's promotion experience belong to this type. In Sonia's case, her manager, who was one of the selectors, had direct work experience with her. In this circumstance, her manager would be able to put in a good word for Sonia (to another selector) when deciding who to be promoted. In Louisa's case, her working partner gave her knowledge about the job and informally recommended her to the publishing director. In this case, although Louisa did not share direct experience with the selector, her working partner helped to put in a good word for her.

Based on the mechanism involved in the promotion processes, I develop the typology of promotion. There are three types. Type 1 is a direct approach – whereas in type 1a, selector approaches ego directly based on a yearly appraisal; in type 1b, ego contacts selector informally and directly. Type 1b is external promotion and the assessment of ego is based on the previous work record within the company. Type 2 refers to a direct application for internal promotion. In this type, one of the selectors in the promotion processes is ego’s (or the promotion applicant’s) direct manager. Although type 2 refers to a formal competition, embedding can be involved as the direct manager (alter and selector) can put in a good word for ego in the selection committee (alter is one of the members). Type 3 involves three parties, i.e. ego, alter and selector. Alter provides information to both sides: to ego, alter provides him or her information about the job opportunity; and to selector, alter provides informal recommendation about ego. There are two sub-types (type 3a and 3b) for type 3. The only difference between type 3a and type 3b is that while ego is subjected to an open competition in the former, ego is not subjected to competition in the latter.

Alongside the discussion of internal and external promotion, I find that having a good relationship with a supervisor is of great help in achieving promotion, in particular, a supervisor will help to spread a good word for the employee if it is necessary. For example, if Helen did not have a good relationship with her supervisor (though she was structurally made redundant), I doubt if her supervisor would have recommended her to her husband, and got promoted. If Louisa did not have good relationship with her working partner (who was indeed going to quit the job and Louisa was to replace him), she might not have been able to outcompete other competitors. Her working partner indeed introduced her informally to selector. From an employer’s point of view, perhaps being able to get on with the team would be a criterion of promotion.

Finally, in this chapter, I illustrate the cases in which employees say no to a promotion opportunity. Child caring (e.g. Jane) and dedication to a current job (e.g. Kathy) explains why some employees refuse to accept promotion.

Previous studies often use human capital to explain promotion (Becker 1975, Sorensen 1977, Lazear and Rosen 1981 and Rosen 1986). Becker (1975), for example, argues that human capital is a source of productivity from a worker and an investment by the employer. Human capital determines whether an employee can advance between jobs. Lazear and Rosen (1981) modeled promotion as a “tournament”, in which employers create incentives for workers to provide effort. Promotion is associated with the level of effort each employee puts into the job. In addition to human capital, I discuss literature on how loyalty demonstrated to the employer (or the company) helps promotion (Dalton 1959, Izraeli 1975, Williams *et al*. 1980). I also discuss literature on how a social network and the degree of similarity within the company help promotion. For example, Katz and Tushman’s (1983) argue that employees working for a supervisor with an effective social network enable themselves to develop an effective network and, eventually alter their promotion opportunities.

This chapter adds value to current writing in that it illustrates the mechanisms through which internal and external promotion is achieved; and based on these mechanisms, I found that direct work experience with the employee is a must. Based on the interviewees’ accounts, however, they need to demonstrate outstanding performance in the workplace (e.g. Jane and Susan) and have good personal relationships with the supervisor and possibly demonstrate a sense of loyalty (e.g. Anna), and/ or have good relationships with working partners (e.g. Louisa), to be likely to be promoted or recommended. The examination of internal promotion contributes to an understanding of the mechanisms of social ties in the internal labour market, which has not been systematically studied (Flap 2004). There is not much evidence showing that reputation, which was discussed in the previous chapters, plays a role in promotion. Perhaps in future research on promotion, I need to put the focus on how headhunters play a role in promotion as headhunters are likely to collect information about the reputation of a person within a professional community and share it when they are approached by employers.

Overall, I argue that promotion is accounted for by: human capital (advocated by Becker 1975), the tournament model (Lazear and Rosen 1981; Rosen 1986) and social ties. When making a promotion decision, employers look for staff members who possess relevant skills, who are familiar with the company, and who incur minimal costs (in terms of training and potential mistakes). This explains why employees are put on a fixed-term contract before becoming permanent. The purpose of the tournament model is to encourage employees to move up (Louisa’s case).

Chapter 8

Conclusion

8.1 Overall findings

This thesis is an in-depth study of the labour market in the UK publishing sector. The aim is to study the role of social ties in publishing in external recruitment and promotion. Using qualitative research methods, I studied the perspective of the recruiter, the job-hunter and the referrer in the labour market. This thesis aims to explore the mechanisms involved when recruiters recruit new staff members, job hunters hunt for a new job and employees seek for promotion. In particular, I studied the circumstances in which recruiters and job hunters use social ties in the recruitment and promotion processes. Chapter 3 reviewed the current labour market in the UK publishing sector; and the career paths of selected roles in publishing. These roles included editorial, design, marketing and publicity and production. This helps to make sense of the context which was discussed in the next few chapters.

Chapters 4 to 7 discussed in detail the roles played by social ties in different aspects of the labour market. Chapter 4 explored whether the method of recruitment varied with the nature of job: under what circumstances recruiters use both formal methods for external recruitment, such as advertisements and agencies, and informal methods such as word of mouth; and the mechanisms through which these methods are used. The findings in Chapter 4 suggested that the prior concern of recruiters in my sample is to minimize uncertainties of recruiting an inappropriate employee who might be likely to make mistakes in the job in the future. Whether recruiters use formal or informal recruitment methods depend on the level of uncertainty around recruiting a wrong person and the cost of such mistakes. The greater the uncertainty and the cost, the more likely recruiters are to use social ties. Social ties serve to provide information about the availability of suitable employees; and possibly the reputation of a potential employee (this is especially the cases for freelancers). Based on some recruiters' discussions, I found that reputation of a potential recruit is particularly important in times of uncertainty during recruitment because it might be a predictor of work ability.

This chapter also illustrates that freelancers are recruited *via* free websites, agencies and referral. In other words, both formal and informal channels are used. If the recruiters are confident of the potential candidates, they will use formal methods. Otherwise, they will ask for recommendations from somebody who had direct work experience with a potential recruit before. This further establishes that informal channels are used when there is uncertainty.

In Chapter 4, I develop a typology of recruitment for full time staff member based on the mechanisms involved when recruiters recruit new staff member. There are five types of typology. Type 1 refers to a formal application with alter (i.e. the third party) who serves to be a bridge between selector (i.e. the recruiter) and ego (i.e. the job applicant). Type 2 is a direct approach either from ego or from selector. Type 3 is featured by an informal recommendation embedded in the recruitment processes (provided by alter) despite ego applying for the job formally. Alter also provides job-related information to ego. In type 4, alter passes information about selector to ego who then takes an initiative to approach selector. After a time-lag, when selector really needs to fill a vacancy, selector approaches ego directly. In type 5, alter simply passes information about a job opening to ego – there is no link (e.g. informal recommendation) between alter and selector at all.

Chapter 4 also develops the typology of recruitment for freelancers. Three types are developed. Type 1 refers to either formal application from ego to selector or direct approach from selector to ego. This type is the same as type 2 of recruitment for full time staff. In type 2, alter serves to be an intermediary between ego and selector: in spite of formal application or direct approach from ego and selector respectively, alter provides information about a job opening to ego; and informal recommendation of ego to selector. In type 3, based on the reputation of ego, alter, who does not know ego personally, recommends him or her to selector. Reputation plays a crucial role in type 3.

Chapter 5 examined the selection process (intensive search). I explored the traits that are considered desirable in an employee in the different publishing roles and the way recruiters ensure a job candidate possesses these traits. For example, I found that professional skills are essential but not enough in themselves. In a position that is relatively technical, such as production editor, recruiters emphasise moral attributes such as honesty and trustworthiness. Recruiters also look for similarity in characters, organisational outlook and work style. In editors, recruiters look for a candidate that is able to “fit into the team”, a criterion which is more than cognitive ability. In the junior positions, such as trainees, recruiters look for general traits such as being an “all rounder” and having “common sense”. These different attributes bring out the importance of teamwork in the selection processes: whether a person fits in the team is based on “chemistry”, rather than other attributes. With designers, whose work requires more discretion, recruiters look for both cognitive abilities and communication skills. In summary, I argue that recruiters look for different cognitive traits that are tailor-made for each role. At the same time, non-cognitive traits such as being able to work in a team and communication skills are desirable for all positions. In general, recruiters recognise different cognitive traits in each role.

I find that at each stage of selection, recruiters look for specific traits. For example, at the stage of screening the CV and covering letter, recruiters check for cognitive skills. During interviews, recruiters look for non-cognitive and moral attributes. The formal reference letter is seen as ineffective in the selection process. Rather, the informal reference is crucial at the final stage of recruitment even when the formal selection method (screening) is used. In regard to the latter half of this chapter, the main aim was to explore how social ties are used in recruitment.

Chapter 6 moves the perspective from the recruiter to the job applicant. The main issue of concern is whether methods of job-hunting vary according to positions in publishing. I found a difference between the job-hunting strategies of newcomers and senior level staff. Most interviewees claimed they used formal methods to get into publishing, despite the fact that their CV had to contain some element of experience of publishing, without which it would be impossible for them to get a foothold in the profession. The experience would include involvement with publishing at school, studying a relevant subject or having a degree in English. Informally, the newcomer would contact a friend in a publishing house with a view to being offered a voluntary internship.

Although new entrants need to acquire publishing experiences before actually getting a job in publishing, it is also clear that social ties are drawn on for information on job search. For example, the acquisition of qualifications leads to social contacts, which gave interviewees such as Angela and Azura information about job openings. Social ties help them to receive information about job openings.

In contrast, I found that people at managerial level got their job through informal channels or a combination of formal and informal methods. Referral is essential in job hunting processes. They got in touch with contacts through social gatherings and previous members of the working environment; and eventually received a job offer. The reputation of the interviewees often helped them to receive a job offer. From the recruiter’s point of view, reputation carried through social ties provides information not always seen in CVs. Reputation also helps to avoid the risk of recruiting the wrong person. This is to make sure of the abilities of the potential person filling the position.

With regard to freelancers, they rely heavily on referrals though formal methods are also common in hunting for a freelance job. Reputation is the key for referral (e.g. the case of Robert). I find that sometimes it is strangers referring somebody having a good reputation, though the referee does not know that person personally.

Based on the mechanisms involved when hunting for a job, I developed three typologies, i.e. typology of job hunting for first entrants, senior managers and freelancers. As for the typology of job hunting for first entrants, I developed three types. Type 1 refers to formal and direct application. Type 2 involves alter: ego informally receives information about a job opening from alter prior to formally applying for the job. Type 3 is more complicated in that in addition to type 2, alter makes informal recommendation to selector. Embedding exists in type 3.

As for the typology of job hunting for senior managers, I developed three types as well. Type 1 is the same as type 3 of typology of hunting for full time staff (as described in the above paragraph). In type 2, a guarantor is involved. This guarantor serves to be alter who passes on reputation about ego. The guarantor is obviously external – rather than seeking job candidates or collecting information about the recruiter, the guarantor passes reputation of the job applicant. In type 3, selector invites ego directly and ego corresponds to the invitation. No third party is involved. The relationship among people in the first two types is entirely work-based. As for the third type, selector is the job hunter’s thesis adviser.

Chapter 7 explores the rationale for promotion and the processes through which employees are promoted. Employers in my sample promoted staff from within the company who already possesses essential abilities, so as to minimise training costs and get around the uncertainties in settling in new staff. Getting to know the employee by direct experience becomes the prior concern for employers in promotion decisions.

One distinctive finding in regard to UK publishing is that sometimes employers find it difficult to fill a senior position because sometimes employees prefer staying in their original position – a few employees were unwilling to move up to managerial level as they dislike administrative tasks. Employers still rely on external recruitment in this circumstance. They prefer recruiting external staff members who are rich in administrative experience even if they are relatively lacking a background in the publishing sector.

Based on the mechanism involved in the promotion processes, I developed the typology of promotion. There are three types. Type 1 is a direct approach by selector based on a yearly appraisal (though in its sub-type, type 1b, ego who was previously a staff member of the company, approaches selector personally for job opportunities). Type 2 refers to a direct application for internal promotion. Although type 2 refers to a formal competition, embedding can be involved as the direct manager (alter and selector) can pass on informal recommendation to another selector of the selection committee. In type 3, alter provides information to both sides: to ego, alter provides him or her with information about the job opportunity; and to selector, alter provides informal recommendation about ego.

Employees in my sample believed that being familiar with the company, being on good terms with the boss and the team members and possessing relevant skills would help to get them promoted. In addition, interviewees in my sample (e.g. Angelina) pointed out that networking within the company helped towards promotion.

8.2 Key similarities and differences for different types of posts

Based on the mechanisms of recruitment, job hunting and promotion as discussed above, this thesis demonstrates that there are some similarities and differences for different types of posts in the labour market. In the following, I am going to discuss the ways under which first entrants, senior managers, freelancers and internal promotes receive their jobs in the labour market. The major issues of concern include: 1) what is the essential information which flows through social ties; and 2) is there a third party who provides information? What is the relationship between the third party and the employer, and the third party and the job hunter?

First entrant

In the UK publishing sector, first entrants predominately receive their job through formal methods. First entrants take an initiative to approach the recruiters through formal application for the job. As discussed in Chapter 6, since the labour market of the publishing sector is very competitive (especially in editorial), first entrants need to equip themselves with knowledge and experiences of publishing or otherwise it would be very difficult to get into the sector. According to the experiences of first entrants, they usually take courses before applying for jobs. These courses range from a diploma to a Master of Arts (MA) in publishing. Another measure of equipping oneself with the knowledge of publishing is through joining publishing associations. Some of my interviewees were members of these associations and they found the membership helpful to learn more about publishing.

If there is a third party involved in the job application, there could be two circumstances. First, the third party helps to provide information about a job opening to the first entrants. On the way to acquiring educational qualifications in publishing, some first entrants were able to receive information about a job opening from their tutor. Student-tutor in this context establishes a weak tie; and *information about a job opening* is carried through this tie. Second, in addition to providing information about a job opening, the tutor in some cases informally recommends a student to the recruiter. In spite of formal application for the job, informality is embedded in the application process as the third party put in a good word to the recruiter. Tutor-recruiter in this context again, is a weak professional tie; and *comments about the general performance and personality of the job applicant* is passed from the third party to the recruiter. Rather than assuming the tutor passes on the reputation of the job applicant, it would be more appropriate to assume the tutor passes on his or her assessment of the job applicant. Occasionally, family ties play a role in the job application process. In one case, the mother of the first entrant asks her working partner about a job vacancy for her daughter. The working partner (the third party) then passed the request to the boss of another company (the boss was her ex-partner). Information carried through these ties (first entrant-third party; and third party-recruiter) could simply be the availability of a job vacancy – after all, all parties involved want to find a vacancy to cater for this particular first entrant.

Senior manager

Senior managers predominately attain their current position *via* informal methods or a combination of formal and informal methods. As for informal methods, recruiter quite often takes the initiative to spot out and approach a potential recruit informally. In other words, recruiter invites a potential recruit for a position. Recruiter tends to refer to the previous work record (if the recruit worked in the company before) and the reputation of the potential recruit before he or she invites him or her for a job. The recruit usually responds correspondingly.

Even if there is no invitation from the recruiter, that is, job applicant applies for the job formally, there is a third party (i.e. a referrer) involved in the application process. The third party provides *informal recommendations* to the recruiter – another situation of embedding. The referrer establishes a working relationship with the recruiter; and at the same time, he or she gets to know the job applicant well based on direct working experiences. However, in the cases of senior managers, the third party does not necessarily serve to be an intermediary between recruiter and job applicant. Rather, the third party can be external to these two parties. Unlike other posts in which the third party is to provide information about a job opening to the job applicant and to provide informal recommendation to the recruiter, the third party here is to pass *reputation* about a potential recruit to the recruiter when he or she is asked. Reputation is important for senior managers and it is spread through work ties within the professional community. Reputation is like a package – being good at work, being trustworthy and honest; and it is recognised through direct experiences with other colleagues. All these qualities are to ensure that the person has the ability to make discretion in the work in case of uncertainty. The relationship between the senior manager, referrer and recruiter is work-based in nature; and each party establishes a professional and weak tie with each other.

Freelancer

Freelancers attain a freelance job through both formal and informal methods. As for formal methods, as discussed in Chapter 4, if the job is 'basic', recruiter will simply put an advert on the web or in an agency. The use of formal methods is rarely discussed in current sociological literature (Dex *et al.* 2000, Rubery *et al.* 2002, Antcliff *et al.* 2007) and the findings in this research surely add value to the current literature.

In the labour market of freelancers, it is quite common for a recruiter to approach a potential freelance recruit informally. A recruiter either approaches the potential recruit on his/ her own or asks a third party (usually the recruiter's colleagues) for suggestions. Reputation is particularly important for freelancers as it is the essential reference for referral. So long as a freelancer has a good reputation and makes him/ herself known, even if the third party (referrer) does not know the freelancer personally, he or she will recommend the freelancer. To the third party, passing on the reputation of a potential freelance recruit is not more than passing on a piece of information. In terms of the content of the link, the third party passes the name and the reputation of the freelance recruit to the recruiter. As for freelancer, he or she needs to let him/ her be exposed to the professional community; and to let other publishing staff members recognise his or her availability and reputation. But in terms of the content of the link, freelancer passes his or her time availability to the third party.

Promote

Finally, it comes to internal promotes. In Chapter 7, I illustrated that either employer or employee can take an initiative to bring out the issue of promotion. If an employer initiates the promotion of an employee, the decision is largely based on a yearly appraisal, i.e. direct work experiences and evaluation records. Alternatively, an employee applies for promotion *via* an internal advert within the company. Occasionally, embedding exists – either a third party within the company (usually the higher level) informally recommends the applicant or a third party (who has direct work experience with the applicant) is one of the selectors of internal promotes. In terms of the content of the link, the third party passes on recommendation to the recruiter; or sometimes passes on information about the job (e.g. its nature) to the potential promotes.

Overall, the thesis identifies the following major results. First, the so-called formal and informal methods in recruitment and job hunting co-exist alongside each other. Sometimes, even if a formal method is used, embedding exists in the recruitment, job hunting and promotion processes. Second, from the recruiter's point of view, social ties are drawn on for information and advice which is not always seen in CVs and as a way of avoiding the risk of recruiting the wrong person.

Third, people in publishing are connected in some ways and this is how information about a person’s quality is passed around (this is especially the situations for freelancers and senior managers). The information and advice is very often built upon the referrer/ guarantor’s direct work experience with the candidates. Based on the findings, I find that information carried through social ties is important in recruitment and promotion. Information is usually derived from direct work experience of the job applicant or employee. Even if a potential recruit has a good reputation, the reputation of a person comes from direct work experience of somebody who has worked with the recruit. This is basically how referral and reputation work: within the labour market of the publishing sector, people give comments about their working partner (who is a job applicant) if they are asked. The previous performance of the job applicant serves to be the basis of their reputation.

The above discussions might possibly imply that there could be a limitation of the scope of potential candidates if social ties are used because recruiters can only reach candidates who are relevant to their ties.

8.3 Contributions to sociological literatures

In the labour market, information flown between employer and employees (job applicants) is asymmetrical: whereas recruiters have imperfect information about job applicants, job applicants may be aware of whether they are capable of doing the job. A recruiter needs to take time to learn about the new recruit’s work after they have been taken on. He or she needs information to ensure he or she recruits someone unlikely to make mistakes. A job applicant, however, also needs to take time to collect information about the labour market. This justifies the use of social ties in the labour market – to collect extra information about the opposite side *via* social ties.

This is where the thesis began. As mentioned in Chapter 1, there are numerous sociological studies on social ties and labour market outcomes (to name some, Granovetter 1973, 1995; Lin 1982, 2001; De Graaf and Flap 1988; Burt 1992, 2005; Moerbeek *et al.* 1995; Flap and Boxman 2000; Flap 2004). But these studies fail to explore the mechanisms through which social ties bring about positive (or negative) labour market outcomes, to explore the content of what flows through the ties and to examine the side of the employer/recruiter who, naturally, also uses social ties to collect information. These studies also focus solely on one particular rank. For example, Burt (2005) focuses on managers in the business sector.

This thesis fills these gaps. The case study of the UK publishing sector provides an in-depth examination of how people in different positions (e.g. senior *vs* junior) and with different roles (e.g. editorial, design, production, and publicity) use social ties to affect the labour market outcome. It offers a detailed picture, taken from different perspectives, of how social ties operate in the labour market. It also examines whether there is any variation in the use of social ties among people, depending on their position and role, something I illustrated in section 8.1. I have also demonstrated how the different nature of their job affects how people make use of social ties.

This thesis makes the following contributions. First, it identifies the differing nature of the information that flows through social ties, an area which was neglected in social network analysis (Flap 2004). In Chapter 1, I explained why I abandoned the term “social capital”: rather than using Coleman’s or Putnam’s model of social capital in the inclusive sense of expectations and obligations, norms and reciprocity, and social networks, I disaggregate the concept into its component parts and make it a matter of empirical investigation. I used the term “social ties” as the basic building block to investigate empirically in which ways social ties provide channels for information flow; and which aspects of “social capital” are important, and why.

In this thesis, I found that for employers/recruiters, social ties provide information about the availability of potentially good recruits and the reputation of potential job candidates. My research provides a stronger discussion of reputation (especially relevant for freelancers and senior managers). In some cases, the reputation of the interviewees helped them to receive a job offer and to find an appropriate staff member. From the recruiter’s point of view, reputation carried through social ties (often based on work relationships) provides information not always seen in CVs and a way of avoiding the risk of recruiting the wrong person. To job hunters and promotes, social ties provide information about a job opening and the nature of the job which he or she is interested in. Instead of assuming social capital brings about positive labour market outcome, this thesis provides results of an empirical investigation.

Second, the spread of information and reputation relies on a referrer, who might not know the person he or she refers to personally. The conventional arguments about obligations and reciprocity do not emerge from this research (Putnam 1995; Coleman 1998; Portes 1998). From a referrer’s point of view, referral means offering a piece of information – no obligation and reciprocity is expected. For job hunters, social ties provide information about job opportunities for job hunters and employees.

I discussed referral (from a referrer’s perspective) in Chapter 5. When referral is based on the performance of the job applicant in the previous company, the reputation of the job applicant is crucial. Nevertheless, I also find that in UK publishing, stranger referring stranger is quite common. My findings differ from the conventional belief of reciprocity in referral (Putnam 1995; Coleman 1998): referral is just a behaviour which does not necessarily involve reciprocity from the referrer's perspective. Conventional arguments on obligations and favour (for example, Portes 1998; Coleman 1998) did not emerge from my findings.

Third, the recruitment experiences of the interviewees echo Stinchcombe's idea of uncertainty in an organization (1990). Whether recruiters use formal or informal recruitment methods depends on the level of uncertainty around recruiting a wrong person and the cost of making such mistakes. For instance, Calvin and Angelina recruited previous staff members because they do not have to train them all over again and they should know their work performance quite well. The nature of the service relationship as discussed by Goldthorpe (2000), to a certain extent, sheds light on the extensive search. This particularly refers to the second dimension of "contractual hazard": the high degree of specificity of human assets which means that it is necessary to understand the job before employment. For instance, when recruiting freelancers whose jobs might be relatively *"basic"*, recruiters used both formal and informal methods rather than informal methods alone. If recruiters are confident of the quality of potential candidates, they will use formal methods. The specificity of human asset influences the methods for extensive search. The nature of the job, i.e. the level of control over the job and over access to the job as discussed by Sorensen and Kalleberg (1980), however, is not particularly mentioned by the interviewees. Based on my findings, the level of control over the job and the employment relationship are not influential in the extensive search processes.

Fourth, my interview results elaborate Kanter’s homophily argument (1977). As mentioned before, I find that, even where my interviewees mention “similarity”, they talk about it in terms of character, workstyle and organisational outlook rather than social and ascriptive background. In publishing, staff members work in a team which comprises colleagues from different ranks and departments. For example, on a daily basis, a copy editor needs to work with art editors/ designers and production editors; a commissioning editor needs to work with marketing executives, publicity executives, copy editors and designers. This suggests that the ability to interact and coordinate with team members is more crucial in the selection decision rather than attributes such as ascriptive background (e.g. gender and ethnicity as Kanter suggested).

Nevertheless, I would like to make a remark with reference to my response to Kanter’s argument. Even if the ability to work in a team (i.e. non-ascriptive background) is crucial, I am yet to say homogeneity in ascriptive background cannot be endogenous in the selection process, *though* none of my interviewees highlighted this issue. I am not trying to reject Kanter’s argument, rather, I suspect that teamwork might depend on some prior characteristics, such as social and ascriptive background. Based on my interview information, I cannot see much heterogeneity in the ascriptive background in my interviewees and their teams. For example, in editorial, staff members are predominately white British. Even if they are non-white, they are locally born, locally brought up and speak with an English accent.

Fifth, my interview results also elaborate Jackson’s argument (2001) in which personal characteristics (e.g. presentable, moral or physical attributes) and social skills (e.g. communication skills and leadership abilities) are valued in the empirical labour market on top of cognitive abilities (e.g. highly organised and analytical skills); and effort (e.g. job commitment, motivation and reliability). Jackson (2006) dichotomises personality traits into two categories, i.e. aggression component and withdrawal component.

This thesis (Chapter 5) elaborated Jackson's work in the following ways: a) my interview results are generally compatible with hers in that both cognitive traits and personality characteristics (in Jackson's words) are desirable in the recruitment processes; b) although Jackson makes a continuous attempt to investigate the relationship between non-cognitive personality traits, occupational attainment and social stratification, her work needs to be contextualised. I locate her work in a specific context by describing what kind of industry and organisational structure will lead to certain preferences on a job applicant; c) my findings suggest that a job advertisement is only one of the common ways in the recruitment processes (for details, refer to Chapter 4). I also have to clarify, based on my interviewees' descriptions, word of mouth is also commonly used if the work is not basic. There are two separate issues here: first, the employer lists out ideal attributes in a job candidate; second, the employer eventually selects somebody (formally or informally) who is similar to him/ her in certain ways. My findings suggest that Jackson's findings might not be able to capture the entire recruitment and selection processes in the empirical world; d) built upon Jackson's categorisation of personal characteristics and social skills, my results further provide a more concrete illustration in an empirical context. As for social skills, my findings include "fit into the team", "based on chemistry", "instantly got on with you", "presentable", "trustworthy", "honest", "paying attention", "sensible", "pleasant" and "calm". These definitions of social skills partially relate to teamwork, which is what modern organisation encourages.

As for personal characteristics, it ranges from “trustworthy”, “honest”, “paying attention”, “sensible”, “pleasant” to “calm”. Some of the above attributes were mentioned by Jackson, e.g. presentable, while some of them were not. More importantly, in relation to Kanter’s homophily discussion, being similar to the recruiter in terms of workstyle, character and organisational outlook is one of the most crucial attributes. My findings add value to the illustration of desirable traits in this regard.

Sixth, my results are compatible with Goldthorpe’s discourse which argues that, where there is difficulty in monitoring work, it becomes especially important for a recruiter to gain the commitment of employees. Most of the recruiters mentioned job-related abilities (cognitive skills) and non-cognitive personality attributes rather than “commitment to work”. Only Peter mentioned *“enthusiasm”* when he named the desirable traits he looks for. Goldthorpe focuses on the uncertainty in monitoring the job – that explains why work commitment is important. In parallel, my interviewees mentioned moral attributes, such as trustworthiness and honesty. These moral attributes are possibly basic and essential qualities if an employer is about to leave an employee to monitor the job: if an employee is not trustworthy and honest, how can an employer trust him/ her and let him/ her monitor the job on his/ her own? This is what reputation in the workplace is all about – being trustworthy, honest and good at the job. This applies across different roles and positions in publishing.

Seventh, Granovetter’s and Lin’s studies on ties focus on the inter-connection between job applicant and referrer and how the flow of information is affected by the strength of weak ties. My findings further illustrate that job-related information can flow to a stranger outside the initial loop. I also find that job hunters exchange information with one another: their relationship is not as antagonistic as the tournament theory suggested. My study shows that where job hunters know one another, they exchanged information about job opportunities, but only just before the deadline for the application to go in. My findings add extra value to those of Granovetter (1973, 1982), Lin (1982) and Burt (2005), in which weak ties help those who are in a senior position, rather than those in junior ones. I found that weak ties help people in junior and senior position in a different way: junior applicants do use weak ties to obtain information while senior staff use weak ties to spread reputation. Over and above these channels, I noticed that job-related information is exchanged between strangers who can be job hunters as well.

Last, in terms of methodology, the use of qualitative methods helps to identify the mechanisms that enable recruiters and job-hunters to use social ties in the labour market. As mentioned in Chapter 2, conventional research on social ties adopts the quantitative method. One of the most common methods is to use the name generator to identify the intensity of ties. Although the process through which social ties bring about positive labour market outcome is yet to be studied, this thesis has made an attempt to identify them.

8.4 Room for further research

I need to clarify despite the fact that social ties were particularly important in the recruitment of senior people, I am not trying to claim that this finding applies across the board. After all, I only interviewed forty staff members in publishing. But I have to assert that it is not my intention to generalise a pattern in the labour market; rather, I aim to find out the mechanisms through which different parties of staff members behave in the labour market. It could simply be a function of the small sample of people.

This research is a case study of the labour market of the UK publishing sector. The interviewees are concentrated on those currently working in educational and academic books. Because publishing divides into numerous specialities, such as novels, audio books, journals, directories, databases, magazines, newspapers, online books and digital publishing, there may be variations in the operation of the labour market within each publishing sector. For example, I learned that there used to be a literary agent who coordinates between author and publishing house in fiction publishing, in which case the role played by social ties in fiction publishing might be different to those I have investigated in this thesis.

This thesis explores both external recruitment and internal promotion. The findings imply that internal promotion and informal recruitment is symbiotic: the ultimate concern of an employer is to ensure he or she finds somebody who is suitable for the position. The processes of these two methods are similar: personal knowledge of the job candidate and his/her work capabilities are important (though in the case of informal recruitment it is not always direct personal knowledge but sometimes through a referrer). The next question of research would be: when do employers use external recruitment and when would they use internal promotion? This thesis provides one answer in Chapter 7: when there is no appropriate candidate filling the position within the company. Will there be any others where employers use one method rather than another?

On the methodological level, I used both semi-structured interviews and participant observation. Perhaps the best way of carrying out participant observation would have been to have worked full time in a publishing house, so as to observe how the labour market really works. As this route was closed to me, I carried out the element of participant observation in a voluntary trade association where I met associational members once to twice a week.

In this research, my interviewees were drawn from those who have survived in publishing. I might have been able to gather a more comprehensive picture of how social ties operate in the labour market if I had spoken to those who failed to get into publishing and those who quitted the sector.

In terms of the population breakdown, about 8% of those working in UK publishing come from an ethnic minority background. Among my interviewees, Sonia and Anna are, respectively, ethnically Chinese and Indian. Both strongly believe in meritocracy (stress on human capital). Nevertheless, there are numerous studies on the inequalities affecting ethnic minorities in the labour market in the UK. For example, in order to explore whether the second generation ethnic minority immigrants compete on equal terms in the labour market with equally-qualified members of the charter populations, Heath and Cheung (2006) suggest that human capital externalities work to influence access to information, contacts, aspirations and social identities. While I was associated with the Junior Publisher League, their newsletter published a couple of articles discussing the hurdles that someone from an ethnic minority needs to jump in order to survive in publishing. The publishing association Diversity in Publishing has sprung up specifically to cater for ethnic minorities. All in all, the behavioural pattern of these groups of people, especially the way they use social ties, may differ from those of people of European origin in UK publishing. Both Sonia and Anna are newcomers to publishing. Perhaps if we study people with an ethnic minority background who have worked in publishing for longer, how they use social ties may add to our understanding of the subject.

The extent to which gender influences the use of ties deserves further attention. This thesis focuses on how the use of social ties differs in roles and positions in the labour market. The gender aspect is yet to be explored. In Chapter 3, I described the situation in which gender affects personal decision in a career and the situation in which vertical segregation and horizontal segregation are inversely related: the more horizontal segregation, the less vertical segregation (Blackburn and Jarman 2006)[93]. The more a sector is confined to women, the greater the women's chance of reaching higher positions. This is especially the situation in editorial. This is one distinctive aspect of gender and the labour market. Following the arguments developed in this thesis, the next aspect that deserves exploration would be: is there any gender difference in the use of ties in the labour market? For example, Leaperand and Holliday (1995) suggest that negative gossip was more likely to occur between female pairs than between male pairs or cross-gender pairs. Also, among female pairs only, negative gossip was more likely than positive gossip. Viewed in this way, does the nature of information flown through ties vary with gender? Or, does the way of spreading information vary with gender?

Last but not least, I have to emphasise that this is a case study of the UK publishing sector. This sector has some distinctive features such as the extensive use of freelancers. How about the labour market of other industrial sectors and other forms of organisation? The study of social ties in the labour market tend to focus on the private sector in which the recruitment and promotion process is more flexible, at least, there is no need to be accountable to the public[94]. How about the labour market in the public sector in which bureaucratisation is the golden rule? Bureaucracy adopts a spirit of formalistic impersonality and its legitimacy is built upon the belief in the correctness of the rules (Weber 1978; Ritzer 2008). In this circumstance, will there be a difference in the recruitment, selection and promotion processes when compared with private sectors such as publishing?

---

[93] I did not explicitly discuss these issues. In the course of description, these issues are implied.

The geographical context of this study is the UK, especially Oxford and London. I learned that only when a person is good at work, he or she might be benefit from social ties. I would like to compare, in the next research agenda, whether there might be differences (and in what ways the differences are) in the role of social ties in the labour market in other regions, such as in the Far East. For instance, in China, social ties are widely used in most of the daily life contexts, e.g. the labour market[95]. This can be weak ties and strong ties (in Chinese, *"guanxi"*). There are two distinctive types of economic systems within China nowadays: state-owned and private-owned enterprises (including joint ventures). Recent studies show that no matter which type the enterprise belongs to, *guanxi* is the key to success in job application and job mobility (to name some, Lin and Bian 1991; Bian 1994, 1997; Tsui and Farh 1997; Davern and Hachen 2006; Huang 2008; Han 2009). So far, the studies on social ties and relevant outcomes in China have been confined to the following dimensions: 1) the nature of social ties, labour market outcomes and status attainment (e.g. Lin and Bian 1991; Bian 1994; 1997; Tsui and Farth 1997; Zang 2003; Chow and Ng 2004; Davern and Hachen 2006); 2) processes through which guanxi leads to positive outcome (Bian 2001; 2002); and 3) ways of reciprocity (Han and Altman 2009). Whereas in other southeast Asian countries, such as Singapore and Thailand (Bian and Ang 1997; Lee and Phan 2006), the focus of concern lies in the way the strength of ties bring about different labour market outcomes.

---

[94] For example, Fernandez and Weinberg (1997) studied recruitment in retailed bank, Fernandez *et al.* (2000) studied employment in phone centres, Burt (2005) studied senior managers in banks and Antcliff *et al.* (2005, 2007) studied freelancers in creative industries in the UK.

[95] The labour market is only one of the institutions which widely adopt social ties. Other institutions, based on my personal observation, range from an enrollment in school to any legal decisions.

With reference to this thesis, I would like to investigate the extent to which these regions place a high regard on reputation when using social ties to achieve positive labour market outcome (or other goals). When a referrer refers somebody, what are the criteria for referral? The ultimate question is: to what extent the eastern developing (or developed) regions is a meritocracy?

While this thesis has contributed to a number of areas, particularly in the area defining the differing nature of information flow through ties, it can also be exposed to further explorations. The above are some of the ideas that come across my mind for future research in social ties, nature of information and labour market outcomes.

Bibliography

Anleu, S. (1992) "Recruitment Practice and Women Lawyers Employment – An Examination of In-house Legal Departments in the United-States", *Sociology* 26(4): 651-72.

Adkins, C., Russell, C., and Werbel, J. (1994) "Judgments of Fit in the Selection Process: the Role of Work Value Congruence", *Personnel Psychology* 47(3): 605-23.

Akerlof, G. (1970) "The Market for 'Lemons': Quality Uncertainty and the Market Mechanism", *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 84(3): 488-500.

Allard, A. (2005) "Capitalizing on Bourdieu: How useful are concepts of 'social capital' and 'social field' for researching 'marginalized' young women?", *Theory and Research in Education* 3(1): 63-79.

Althauser, R. (1989a) "Internal Labour Markets", *Annual Review of Sociology* 15: 143–61.

Althauser, R. and Kalleberg, A. (1981), "Firms, Occupations, and the Structure of Labor Markets: A Conceptual Analysis", pp.119-49, Berg, I. (ed.), *Sociological Perspectives on Labor Markets.* Academic Press, New York.

Antcliff, V., Saundry, R., and Stuart, M. (2005) *Freelance Worker Networks in Audio-Visual Industries*, University of Central Lancashire, Lancashire Business School Working Papers/ESRC No.4 ISSN No. 1742-0628

------------ (2007) "Networks and Social Capital in the UK Television Industry: The Weakness of Weak Ties", *Human Relations* 60(2): 371-93.

Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS) "Publishing sector", *Graduate Prospects, Sector Briefings 2005*.

Athey, S., Avery, C. and Zemsky, P. (2000) "Mentoring and Diversity", *American Economic Review* 90(4): 765-86.

Audas, R., Barmby, T. and Treble, J. (2004) "Luck, Effort and Reward in an Organizational Hierarchy", *Journal of Labour Economics* 22: 379-96.

Babbie, E. (2007) *The Practice of Social Research*. (11th ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson-Wadsworth.

Bacharach, M. and Gambetta, D. (2001) “Trust in Signs”, pp. 148-84, in Cook, K. (ed.) *Trust in Society*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Bacharach, S. and Bamberger, P. (2004) “Diversity and the Union – The Effect of demographic Dissimilarity on Members’ Union Attachment”, *Group and Organization Management* 29(3): 385-418.

Bacharach, S., Bamberger, P. and Vashdi, D. (2005) “Diversity and Homophily at Work: Supportive Relations among White and African-American Peers”, *Academy of Management Journal* 48(4): 619-44.

Banks, M., Lovatt, A. O'Connor, J. and Raffo, C. (2000) “Risk and Trust in the Cultural Industries”, *Geoforum* 31:453-64.

Barron, J. and Bishop, J. (1985) “Extensive Search, Intensive Search, and Hiring Costs: New Evidence on Recruiter Hiring Activity”, *Economic Inquiry* 23: 363-82.

Barron, J., Bishop, J. and Dunkelberg, W. (1985) “Employer Search: The Interviewing and Hiring of New Employees”, *The Review of Economics and Statistics* 67: 43-52.

Barron, J., Black, D. and Loewenstein, M. (1989) “Job Matching and On-the-Job Training”, *Journal of Labor Economics* 7: 1-19.

Baron, J., Davis-Blake, A. and Bielby, W. (1986) “The Structure of Opportunity: How Promotion Ladders Vary Within and Among Organizations”, *Administrative Science Quarterly* 31:248-73.

Bayo-Moriones, A. and Ortin-Angel, P. (2003) *Internal Promotion Versus External Recruitment: Evidence in Industrial Plants*, Working Papers 200303, Department of Business Economics, Universitat Autonoma de Barcelona.

Becker, G. (1962) “Investment in Human Capital: A Theoretical Analysis”, *Journal* *of Political Economy* 70, S5.

----------- (1975) *Human Capital: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis, with Special Reference to Education.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Becker, B. and Huselid, M. (1992) “The Incentive Effects of Tournament Compensation Systems”, *Administrative Science Quarterly* 37: 336-50.

Berg, B.L. (2001) *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences* (4th ed), Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Bernhardt, D. and Scoones, D. (1993) “Promotion, Turnover, and Preemptive Wage Offers”, *American Economic Review* 83: 771-91.

Bian, Y.J. (1994) “Guanxi and the Allocation of Urban Jobs in China”, *China Quarterly* 140: 971-99.

---------- (1997) “Bringing Strong Ties back in: Indirect Ties, Network Bridges, and Job Searches in China”, *American Sociological Review* 62(3): 366-85.

---------- (2002) “Institutional Holes and Job Mobility Processes: Guanxi Mechanisms in China's Emergent Labor Markets”, pp.117-36, in Gold, T., Guthrie, D. and Wank, D. (eds.) *Social Connections in China: institutions, culture, and the changing nature of Guanxi*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Bian, Y. J. and Ang, S. (1997) “Guanxi Networks and Job Mobility in China and Singapore”, *Social Forces* 75(3): 981-1005.

Bills, D. (1988) “Credentials and Capacities: Employers’ Perceptions of the Acquisition of Skills”, *The Sociological Quarterly* 29:439-49.

------------ (1999) “Labor Market Information and Selection in a Local Restaurant Industry: The Tenuous Balance between Rewards, Commitments, and Costs”, *Sociological Forum* 14(4): 583-607.

Blackburn, R. and Jarman, J. (2006) “Gendered occupations: exploring the relationship between gender segregation and inequality”, *International Sociology*

21(2): 289-315.

Blau, P. (1963) *The Dynamics of Bureaucracy: A Study of Interpersonal Relations in Two Government Agencies.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Bolton, G., Katok, E. and Ockenfels, A. (2004) “How Effective are Electronic Reputation Mechanisms? An Experimental Investigation”, *Management Science* 50(11): 1587-602.

Book Marketing Limited (2007) *Ethnic Diversity in Publishing: A Research Report*, commissioned by Diversity in Publishing Network.

Borgatti, S. and Molina, J. (2005) “Toward ethical guidelines for network research in organizations”, *Social Network* 27:107-17.

Bott, E. (1957) *Family and Social Network: Roles, Norms and External Relationships in Ordinary Urban Families.* London: Travistock.

Bourdieu, P. (1986) “The Forms of Capital”, pp.231-58, in Richardson, J. (ed.) *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. New York: Greenwood Press.

Bourdieu, P. and Wacquant, L. (1992) *An Invitation to Reflective Sociology*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Bowles, S. and Gintis, H. (1975) “The Problem with Human Capital Theory – A Marxian Critique”, *American Economic Review* 65(2): 74-82.

Braddock, J. and McPartland, M. (1987) “How Minorities Come to be Excluded from Equal Employment Opportunities”, *Journal of Social Issues* 43:5-39.

Browne, I. and Misra, J. (2003) “The Intersection of Gender and Race in the Labor Market”, *Annual Review of Sociology* 29: 487-513.

Burgess, R. (1984) *In the Field: An Introduction to Field Research*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd.

Burke, R. (1994) “Canadian Business Student’s Attitude towards Women as

Managers", *Psychological Reports* 75:1123-29.

Burt, R. (1992) *Structural Holes: The Social Structure of Competition.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

————(2005) *Brokerage and Closure: An Introduction to Social Capital.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Campbell, K. (1988) "Gender Differences in Job-Related Networks", *Work and Occupations* 15: 179-200.

Cannella, A., Park, J. and Lee, H. (2008) "Top Management Team Functional Background Diversity and Firm Performance: Examining the Roles of Team Member collocation and Environment Uncertainty", *Academy of Management Journal* 51(4): 768-84.

Chattopadhyay, P. (2003) "Can Dissimilarity Lead to Positive Outcomes? The Influence of Open Versus Closed Minds", *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 24(3): 295-312.

Chattopadhyay, P., George, E. and Lawrence, S. (2004) "Why does Dissimilarity Matter? Exploring Self-Cateorization, Self-Enhancement, and Uncertainty Reduction", *Journal of Applied Psychology* 89(5): 892-900.

---------------- (2008) "The Asymmetrical Influence of Sex Dissimilarity in Distributive Vs Colocated Work Groups", *Organization Science* 19(4): 581-93.

Chavez, C. and Weisinger, J. (2008) "Beyond Diversity Training: A Social Infusion for Cultural Inclusion", *Human Resource Management* 47(2): 331-50.

Chow, I.H.S. and Ng, I. (2004) "The Characteristics of Chinese Personal Ties (Guanxi): Evidence from Hong Kong", *Organization Studies* 25(7): 1075-93.

Clapperton, G. (2003) "I wouldn't Bank n it", *The Guardian,* July 31.

Clark, G. (2001) *Inside Book Publishing* (3rd ed.), London: Routledge.

Clark, G. and Phillips, A. (2008) "Getting into Publishing", pp. 254-69, in *Inside*

Book Publishing (4th ed.). London: Routledge.

Cohen, Y. and Pfeffer, J. (1986) “Organisational Hiring Standards”, *Administrative Science Quarterly* 31: 1-24.

Coleman, J. (1998) “Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital”, *American Journal of Sociology* 94: 95-120.

Collinson, J. and Hockey, J. (1998) “Capturing contracts: Informal activity among contract researchers”, *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 19: 497-515.

Corcoran, M., Datcher, L. and Duncan, G. (1980) “Information and Influence Networks in Labor Markets”, pp. 1-37, Duncan, G. and Morgan, J. (eds.) *Five Thousand American Families: Patterns of Economic Progress*, Vol.7, Ann Arbor, MI: Institute for Social Research.

Coverdill, J. (1998) “Personal contacts and post-hire job outcomes”, *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility* 16: 247-69.

Crompton, R. (2006) *Employment and the Family: the reconfiguration of Work and Family Life in Contemporary Societies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

---------- (1998) “Explaining Women’s Employment Patterns: ‘Orientations to Work’ Revisited”, *British Journal of Sociology* 49(1): 118-36.

Dalton, M. (1959) *Men Who Manage*. New York: Wiley.

Daniel-Echols, M. (2003) “How I Got them to Talk to Me: The Importance of Persistence, Personality, and Identity”, pp.106-9, in Feldman, M., Bell, J. and Berger, M. (eds.) *Gaining Access: A Practical and Theoretical Guide for Qualitative Researchers*. California: Alta Mira Press.

Davern, M. and Hachen, D. (2006) “The Role of Information and Influence in Social Networks – Examining the Association between Social Network Structure and Job Mobility”, *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 65(2): 269-93.

Davis, G. (2003) *Book Commissioning and Acquisition* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.

De Graaf, N. and Flap, H. (1988) “With a little help from my friends: Social resources as an explanation of occupational status and income in the Netherlands, the United States and West Germany”, *Social Forces* 67: 453-72.

Dellarocas, C. (2006) “Research Note – How often should Reputation Mechanisms Update a Trader”s Reputation Profile?”, *Information Systems Research* 17(3): 271-85.

Devine, T. and Kiefer, N. (1993) “The Empirical Status of Job Search Theory”, *Labour Economics* 1:3-24.

Dex, S. (ed.) (1991) *Life and Work History Analyses: Qualitative and Quantitative Developments,* London: Routledge.

Dex, S., Willis, J., Paterson, R., Sheppard, E. (2000) “Freelance Workers and Contract Uncertainty: The Effects of Contractual Changes in the Television Industry”, *Work, Employment and Society* 14(2): 283-305.

DiTomaso, N., Post, C., Smith, D. and Farris, G. and Cordero, R. (2007) “Effects of Structural Position on Allocation and evaluation Decisions for Scientists and Engineers in Industrial R&D”, *Administrative Science Quarterly* 52(2): 175-207.

Duncan, S., Edwards, R. and Reynolds, T. (2003) “Motherhood, Paid Work and Partnering”, *Work, Employment and Society* 17(2): 309-30.

Durlauf, S. (1999) “The Case ‘Against’ Social Capital”, *Focus* 20: 1-4.

----------- (2002) “Bowling Alone: A Review Essay”, *Journal of Economic Behaviour and Organization* 47: 259-73.

Ehrenberg, R. and Bognanno, M. (1990) “Do Tournaments Have Incentive Effects?”, *Journal of Political Economy* 98: 1307-24.

Fehr, E., Brown, M. and Zehnder, C. (2009) “On Reputation: A Microfoundation of Contract Enforcement and Price Rigidity”, *The Economic Journal* 119: 333-53.

Feldman, M., Bell, J. and Berger, M. (2003) *Gaining Access: A Practical and*

Theoretical Guide for Qualitative Researchers, California: Alta Mira Press.

Felstead, A. Ashton, D. and Green, F. (2001) "Paying the price for flexibility? Training, skills and non-standard jobs in Britain", *International Journal of Employment Studies* 9(1): 25-60.

Felstead, A. and Gallie, D. (2004) "For Better or Worse? Non-standard Jobs and High Involvement Work Systems", *The International Journal of Human Resource Management* 15(7): 1293–316

Fernandez, R. and Weinberg, N. (1997) "Sifting and sorting: Personal contacts and hiring in a retail bank", *American Sociological Review* 62: 883-902.

Fernandez, R., Castilla, E. and Moore, P. (2000) "Social Capital at Work: Networks and Employment at a Phone Center", *American Journal of Sociology* 105:1288-356.

Fevre, R. (1989) "Informal Practice, Flexible Firms and Private Labour Markets", *Sociology* 23:91-109.

Finlay, W. and Coverdill, J. (2002) *Headhunters*. New York: Cornell University Press.

Fischer, C. (2005) "Bowling Along: What"s the Score?", *Social Networks* 27:155-67.

Flap, H. and Boxman, E. (2000) "Getting started: The influence of social capital on the start of the occupational career", pp. 159-84, in Lin, N., Cook, K.S. and Burt, R.S. (eds.) *Social Capital: Theory and Research*, New York: Aldine de Gruyter.

Flap, H. (2004) "Creation and Returns of Social Capital: A New Research Program", pp. 3-24, in Flap, H. and Volker, B. (eds.) *Creation and Returns of Social Capital: A New Research Program*, London: Routledge.

Freund, A. (2005) "Commitment and Job Satisfaction as Predictors of Turnover Intentions among Welfare workers", *Administration in Social Work* 29(2): 5-21.

Gabbay, M. and Zuckerman, W. (1998) "Social Capital and Opportunity in Corporate R & D: The Contingent Effect of Contact Density on Mobility Expectations", *Social*

Science Research, 27(2): 189-217.

Gallie, D., White, M., Cheng, Y. and Tomlinson, M. (1998) *Restructuring the Employment Relationship*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Gallie, D. and White, M. (1994) “Employer Policies, Employee Contracts and Labour-Market Structure”, pp. 69-110, in Rubery, W., Rubery, J. and Wilkinson, F. (eds.) *Employer Strategy and the Labour Market*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gash, V. (2008) “Preference or Constraints? Part-time Workers’ Transition in Denmark, France and the United Kingdom”, *Work, Employment and Society* 22(4): 655-74.

Geddes, D. and Konrad, A. (2003) “Demographic Differences and Reactions to Performance Feedback”, *Human Relations* 56(12): 1485-513.

Gellner, D. and Hirsch, E. (eds.) (2001) *Inside Organisations: Anthropologists at Work*, Oxford: Berg.

Gibbons, R. and Waldman, M. (1999) “Careers in Organizations: Theory and Evidence”, Ashenfelter, O. and Card, D. (eds.) *Handbook of Labor Economics* 19: 247-77.

Gilbert, A. and Lownes-Jackson, M. (2005) “Blacks, Whites, and the New Prejudice: Does Aversive racism Impact Employee Assessment?”, *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 35(7): 1540-53.

Goldthorpe, J. (2000) *On Sociology*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gonzalez, J. and Denisi, A. (2009) “Cross-level Effects of Demography and Diversity Climate on Organizational Attachment and Firm Effectiveness”, *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 30(1): 21-40.

Graham, J. (1993) “Publicity”, pp.126-33, in Owen, P. (ed.) *Publishing Now: A Definitive Assessment by Key People in the Book Trade*, London: Owen.

Granovetter, M. (1973) “The Strength of Weak Ties”, *American Journal of Sociology*

78:1360-80.

----------- (1982) “The Strength of Weak Ties: A Network Theory Revisited”, Marsden P. V. and Lin, N. (eds.) *Social Structure and Network Analysis*, Beverly Hills: Sage.

----------- (1985) “Economic Action and Social Structure”, *American Journal of Sociology* 91(3): 481-510.

----------- (1986) “Labor Mobility, Internal Markets, and Job-Marching: A Comparison of the Sociological and Economic Approaches”, pp.3-39 in Robinson, R. (ed.) *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, Vol. 5, JAI Press.

---------- (1992) “Problems of Explanation in Economic Sociology”, pp.25-56, in Nohria, N. and Eccles, R. (eds.) *Networks and Organizations: Structure, Form and Action*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

---------- (1995) *Getting a Job* (2nd ed.) Cambridge, MA: Harvard Press.

Granovetter, M. and Tilly, C. (1988) “Inequality and Labour Processes”, pp.175-221, in Smelser, N. (ed.) *Handbook of Sociology*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Graves, L. and Elsass, P. (2005) “Sex and Sex Dissimilarity Effects in Ongoing Teams: Some Surprising Findings”, *Human Relations* 58(2): 191-221.

Green, J. and Stokey, N. (1983) “A Comparison of Tournaments and Contracts”, *Journal of Political Economy* 91: 349-64.

Greenwald, B. (1979) *Adverse Selection in the Labor Market*, Garland: New York.

Gustafson, J. (2008) “Tokenism in Policing: An Empirical Test of Kanter’s Hypothesis”, *Journal of Criminal Justice* 36: 1-10.

Hakim, C. (2000) *Work-lifestyle Choices in the 21st Century*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Haley-Lock, A. (2007) “Up Close and Personal: Employee Networks and Job Satisfaction in a Human Service Context”, *Social Service Review* 81(4): 683-707.

------------ (2006) “Ethnography: Problems and Prospects”, *Ethnography and Education* 1(1): 3-14.

Hammersley, M. and Atkinson, P. (1995) *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*, London: Routledge.

Han, Y. and Altman, Y. (2009) “Supervisor and Subordinate Guanxi: A Grounded Investigation in the People’s Republic of China”, *Journal of Business Ethics* 88: 91-104.

Harrison, D., Price, K., Gavin, J. and Florey, A. (2002) “Time, Teams, and Task Performance: Changing Effects of Surface- and deep-level Diversity on Group Functioning”, *Academy of Management Journal* 45(5): 1029-45.

Hanson, S. and Pratt, G. (1991) “Job Search and the Occupational segregation of Women”, *Annuals of the Association of American Geographers* 81: 229-53.

Heath, A.F. and Cheung, S.Y. (2007) *Unequal Chances: Ethnic Minorities in Western Labour Market*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Herman, S. (1994) *Hiring Right: A Practical Guide*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Hewlin, F. (2003) “And the Award for Best Actor Goes to …: Facades of Conformity in Organizational Settings”, *Academy of Management Review* 28(4): 633-42.

Hobman, E.V., Bordia, P. and Gallois, C. (2003) “Consequences of Feeling Dissimilar from Others in a Work Team”, *Journal of Business and Psychology* 17(3): 301-25.

Holt, R. (2006) “Principals and Practice: Rhetoric and the Moral Character of Managers”, *Human Relations* 59(12): 1659-80.

Holzer, H.J. and Neumark, D. (2000) “What does Affirmative Action do?”, *Industrial and Labour Relations Review* 53(2): 240-71.

Hoque, K. and Kirkpatrick, I. (2003) “Non-Standard Employment in the Management and Professional Workforce: Training, Consultation and Gender

Implications", Work, Employment & Society 17(4): 667-89.

House, J., Umberson, D. and Landis, K. (1988) "Structures and Processes of Social Support", *Annual Review of Sociology* 14: 293-318.

Huang, X.B. (2008) "Guanxi Networks and Job Searches in China's Emerging Labour Market: A Qualitative Investigation", *Work, Employment and Society* 22(3): 467-84.

Huber, J. (1979) "Book review: Men and Women of the Corporation", *American Journal of Sociology* 85(3): 689-91.

Hurlbert, J. S. (1991) "Social Networks, Social Circles, and Job Satisfaction", *Work and Occupations* 18(4): 415-30.

Inspired Selection "Handy Hints"

Izraeli, D. (1975) "The Middle Manager and the Tactics of Power Expansion: A Case Study", *Sloan Management Review* 16(2): 57-69.

Jackson, M. (2001) "Non-Meritocratic Job Requirements and the Reproduction of Class Inequality: An Investigation", *Work, Employment and Society* 15(3): 619-30.

------------ (2006) "Personality Traits and Occupational Attainment", *European Sociological Review* 22:187-99.

------------ (2007) "How Far Merit Selection? Social Stratification and the Labour Market", *British Journal of Sociology* 58(3): 367-90.

Kadushin, C. (2004) "Too Much Investment in Social Capital?", *Social Networks* 26:75-90.

Kalleberg, A. (2000) "Nonstandard Employment Relations: Part-time, Temporary and Contract Work", *Annual Review of Sociology* 26: 341-65.

Kalev, A. (2009) "Cracking the Glass Cages? Restructuring and Ascriptive Inequality at work", *American Journal of Sociology* 114(6): 1591-643.

Kanter, R. (1977) *Men and Women of the Corporation*, New York: Basic Books.

Katz, R. and Tushman, L. (1983) “The longitudinal study of the effects of boundary spanning supervision on turnover and promotion in research and development”, *The Academy of Management Journal* 26: 437-56.

Kim, H. (2009) “Market Uncertainty and socially Embedded Reputation”, *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 68(3): 659-701.

Kreps, D. and Wilson, R. (1982) “Reputation and Imperfect Information”, *Journal of Economic Theory* 27: 253-79.

Kreps, D. (1990) “Repeated Games with Long0Run and Short-Run Players”, *Review of Economic Studies* 57: 555-73.

Lambert, E., Hogan, N. and Barton, S. (2001) “The Impact of Job Satisfaction on Turnover Intent: A Test of a Structural Measurement Model Using a National Sample of Workers”, *Social Science Journal* 38(2): 233-50.

Langlois, S. (1977) “Les reseaux personnels et la diffusion des information sur les emplois”, *Recherches Sociographiques* 2:213-45.

Lazear, E. and Rosen, S. (1981) “Rank-Order Tournaments as Optimum Labor Contracts”, *Journal of Political Economy* 89: 841-64.

Leaperand, C. and Holliday, H. (1995) “Gossip in same-gender and cross-gender friends” conversation”, *Personal Relationships* 2(3): 237-46.

Lee, L.T.S. (2008) “The Effects of Team Reflexivity and Innovativeness on New Product Development Performance”, *Industrial Management and Data Systems* 108(3-4): 548-69.

Lee, M. (2004) *Bookmaking: Editing, Design and Production* (3rd ed.) New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Lee, S.H. and Phan, P.H. (2006) “The Effects of Ties Strength and Tie Diversity on Job Search, Pay Increases, and Promotions in Singapore and Thailand”, *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* 23(5): 820-39.

Liao, H. Joshi, A. and Chuang, A. (2004) "Sticking out like a Sore Thumb: Employee Dissimilarity and Deviance at work", *Personnel Psychology* 57(4): 969-1000.

Lin, N. (1982) "Social Resources and Instrumental Action", pp.131-45, in Marsden, P. and Lin, N. (eds.) *Social Structure and Network Analysis*, California: Sage Publications.

---------- (1983) "Social Resources and Social Actions: A Progress Report", *Connections* 6(2): 10-16.

---------- (1999) "Social Networks and Status Attainment", *Annual Review of Sociology* 25: 467-87.

---------- (2001) *Social Capital: A Theory of Social Structure and Action*, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Lin, N. and Bian, Y. J. (1991) "Getting Ahead in Urban China", *American Journal of Sociology* 97(3): 657-88.

Lin, N., Cook, K. and Burt, R. (eds.) (2001) *Social Capital: Theory and Research*, New York: Aldine de Gruyter.

Lin, N, and Walter, M. (1981) "Social resources and strength of ties: structural factors in occupational status attainment", *American Sociological Review* 46: 393–405

Lincoln, J. and Kalleberg, A. (1985) "Work Organization and Workforce Commitment: A Study of Plants and Employees in the U.S. and Japan", *American Sociological Review* 50: 738-60.

Maman, D. (2001) "The Organizational Connection: Social Capital and the Career Expansion of Directors of Business Groups in Israel", *Social Science Research* 30: 578–605.

Manski, C. (2000) "Economic Analysis of Social Interactions", *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 14: 114-36.

Marongui, S. and Ekehammar, B. (2000) “A gender perspective on person-manager fit and managerial advancement”, *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology* 41:175-80.

Marsden, P and Campbell, K. (1990) “Recruitment and Selection Processes: The Organisational Side of Job Searches”, pp. 59-79, in Breiger, R. (ed.) *Social Mobility and Social Structure*, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Marsden, P. (1996) “The Staffing Process: Recruitment and Selection Methods”, pp. 133-156, in Kalleberg, A., Knoke, D. and Marsden, P. (eds.) *Organisations in America: Analysing their Structures and Human Resources Practices*, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Marx, J. and Leicht, K. (1992) “Formality of Recruitment to 229 Jobs: Variations by Race, Sex and Job Characteristics”, *Sociology and Social Research* 76: 190-96.

McPherson, M., Smith-Lovin, L. and Cook, J. (2001) “Birds of a Feather: Homophily in Social Networks”, *Annual Review of Sociology* 27: 415-44.

Mello, A. and Ruckes, M. (2006) “Team Composition”, *Journal of Business* 79(3): 1019-39.

Mencken, F. (1998) “In Search of the ‘Right Stuff’: the Advantages and Disadvantages of Informal and Formal Recruiting Practices in External Labour Markets”, *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 57(2): 135-53.

Miller, T. and Triana, M.D. (2009) “Demographic Diversity in the Boardroom: Mediators of the Board Diversity-Firm Performance Relationship”, *Journal of Management Studies* 46(5): 755-86.

Miyamoto, D. and Whittaker, D. (2005) *The Book Publishing Industry in Japan and the UK: Corporate Philosophy/ Objectives, Behaviour and Market Structure*. ESRC Centre for Business Research, University of Cambridge Working Paper No. 309.

Moerbeek, H., Flap, H. and Ultee, W. (1995) *That”s what friends are for: Ascribed and achieved social capital in the occupational career*, paper presented at the

European Social Network Conference, July 6-10, London.

Mortimer, J. (1975) “Book Review: Getting a Job, A Study of Contacts and Careers”, *Work and Occupations* 2: 284-87.

Mouw, T. (2006) “Estimating the Causal Effect of Social Capital: A Review of Recent Research”, *Annual Review of Sociology* 32: 79-102.

Muchinsky, P. (1979) “The Use of Reference Reports in Personnel Selection: A Review and Evaluation”, *Journal of Occupational Psychology* 52:287-97.

Murray, V. and Corenblum, A. (1966) “Loyalty to Immediate Superior at Alternate Hierarchical Levels in a Bureaucracy” *American Journal of Sociology* 72: 77-85.

Nalebuff, B. and Stiglitz, J. (1983) “Prizes and Incentives: Towards a General Theory of Compensation and Competition”, *Bell Journal of Economics* 14:21-43.

Neuman, W. (2008) *Basics of Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Boston: Pearson.

Owen, P. (ed.) (1988) *Publishing: The Future*, London: Owen.

---------- (1993) *Publishing Now: A Definitive Assessment by Key People in the Book Trade*. London: Peter Owen.

Paunonen, S., Jackson, D. and Oberman, S. (1987) “Personnel Selection Decisions: Effects of Applicant Personality and the Letter of Reference”, *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 40: 96-114.

Penguin (2005) *A Route to Publishing*. (leaflet)

Petersen, L. and Dietz, J. (2008) “Employment Discrimination: Authority Figures’ Demographic Preferences and Followers’ Affective Organizational Commitment”, *Journal of Applied Psychology* 93(6): 1287-300.

Pettigrew, A. (1990) “Longitudinal field research on change: theory and practice”, *Organisation Science* 1(3): 267-92.

Pfeffer, J. (1983) “Organizational Demography”, pp.299-357, in Cummings, L. and

Staw, B. (eds.) *Research in Organisational Behavior* Vol.5, Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Pfeffer, J. and Cohen, Y. (1984) “Determinants of Internal Labour Markets in Organizations”, *Administrative Science Quarterly* 29: 550-72.

Posner, E. (2002) *Law and Social Norms*. Harvard: Harvard University Press.

Portes, A. (1998) “Social Capital: Its Origins and Applications in Modern Sociology”, *Annual Review of Sociology* 24:1-24.

Putnam, R. (1995) “Bowling Alone: America’s Declining Social Capital”, *Journal of Democracy* 6(1): 65-78.

Randel, A.E. and Jaussi, K. (2008) “Gender Social and Personal Identity, Sex Dissimilarity, Relationship Conflict, and Asymmetrical Effects”, *Small Group Research* 39(4): 468-91.

Raub, W. and Weesie, J. (1990) “Reputation and Efficiency in Social Interactions: An Example of Network Effects”, *American Journal of Sociology* 96(3): 626-54.

Rees, A. (1966) “Information Networks in Labor Markets”, *American Economic Review* 56: 559-66.

Rees, A. and Shultz, G. (1970) *Workers and Wages in the Urban Labor Market*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Ricart I Costa, J. (1988) “Managerial Task Assignment and Promotions”, *Econometrica* 56: 449-66.

Ritzer, G. (2008) *The McDonaldization of Society 5*. California: Pine Forge Press.

Rosen, S. (1982) “Authority, Control, and the Distribution of Earnings”, *Bell Journal of Economics* 13: 311-23.

---------- (1986) “Prizes and Incentives in Elimination Tournaments”, *American Economic Review* 76: 701-15.

---------- (1987) “Human Capital”, *The New Palgrave: A dictionary of Economics*

Volume 2, pp. 681-90.

Rosen, B. and Jerdee, T.H. (1978) “Perceived differences in managerially relevant characteristics”, *Sex Roles* 4: 837-43.

Rosenfeld, R. (1992) “Job Mobility and Career Processes”, *Annual Review of Sociology* 18: 39-61.

Rubery, J., Earnshaw, J. and Marchington, M., Cooke, F.L. and Vincent, S. (2002) “Changing Organisational Forms and the Employment Relationship”, *Journal of Management Studies* 39(5): 645-72.

---------- (2005b) “How to Close the Gender Pay Gap in Europe: Towards the Gender Mainstreaming of Pay Policy”, *Industrial Relations* Journal 36(3): 184–213.

Sampath, K., Saygin, C., Grasman, S. and Leu, M. (2006) “Impact of Reputation Information Sharing in an Auction-based Job Allocation Model for Small and Medium-sized enterprises”, *International Journal of Production Research* 44(9): 1777-98.

Saporta, I. and Farjoun, M. (2003) “The Relationship between Actual Promotion and Turnover Among Professional and Managerial-Administrative Occupational Groups”, *Work and Occupation* 30(3): 255-80.

Schaubroeck, J. and Lam, S.S.K. (2002) “How Similarity to Peers and Supervisor Influences Organizational Advancement in Different Cultures”, *Academy of Management Journal* 45(6): 1120-36.

Schein, V. (1975) “Relationship between Sex-role Stereotypes and Requisite Management Characteristics among Female Managers”, *Journal of Applied Psychology* 60: 330-34.

Schein, V., Müller, R. and Jacobson, C. (1989) “The Relationship between Sex-role Stereotypes and Requisite Management Characteristics among College Students”, *Sex Roles* 20: 210-19.

Schein, V. and Mueller, R. (1992) “Sex role stereotyping and requisite management characteristics: A cross cultural look”, *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 13: 439-47.

Siefert, K. Jayaratne, S. and Chess, W. (1991) “Job Satisfaction, Burnout, and Turnover in Health care Social Workers”, *Health and Social Work* 16(3): 193-202.

Siisiainen, M. (2000) *Two Concepts of Social Capital: Bourdieu vs. Putnam*. Paper presented at ISTR Fourth International Conference, Ireland, July, 5-8 2000.

Simon, C. and Warner, J. (1992) “Matchmaker, Matchmaker: The Effect of Old Boy Networks on Job Match Quality, Earnings, and Tenure”, *Journal of Labour Economics* 10(3): 306-29.

Sorensen, A. and Kalleberg, A. (1980) “An Outline of a Theory of the Matching of Persons to Jobs”, pp.49-74, in Berg, I. (ed.) *Sociological Perspectives on Labor Markets*, New York: Academic Press.

Sorensen, A. and Tuma, N. (1981) “Labor Market Structures and Job Mobility”, pp.67-94, in Treiman, D. and Robinson, R. (eds.), *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, Vol.1 Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Spence, M. (1973) “Job Market Signaling’, *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 87(3): 355-74.

Stanworth, C. and Stanworth, J. (1997) “Managing an Externalised Workforce: Freelance Labour-use in the UK Book Publishing Industry”, *Industrial Relations Journal* 28(1) 43-55.

Stewart, M. and Garcia-Prieto, P. (2008) “A Relational Demography Model of Workgroup Identification: Testing the Effects of Race, Race Dissimilarity, Racial Identification, and Communication Behavior”, *Journal of Organizational Behaviour* 29(5): 657-80.

Stevens, M. and Campion, M. (1994) “The Knowledge, Skill, and Ability

Requirements for Teamwork: Implications for Human Resource Management”, *Journal of Management* 20(2): 503-30.

------------- (1999) “Staffing Work Teams: Development and Validation of a Selection Test for Teamwork Settings”, *Journal of Management* 25(2): 207-28.

Stinchcombe, A. (1990) *Information and Organization*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

Stormer, F. and Devine, K. (2008) “Acting at Work – Facades of Conformity in Academia”, *Journal of Management Inquiry* 17(2): 112-34.

Tsao, H.Y., Lin, P.C., Pitt, L. and Campbell, C. (2009) “The Impact of Loyalty and Promotion Effects on Retention Rate”, *Journal of the Operational Research Society* 60(5): 646-51.

Tsui, A.S. and Farh, J. (1997) “Where Guanxi Matters – Relational Demography and Guanxi in the Chinese Context”, *Work and Occupations* 24(1): 56-79.

Tullock, G. (1985) “Adam Smith and the Prisoner’s Dilemma”, *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 100: 1073-81.

Utz, S., Matzat, U. and Snijders, C. (2009) “On-line Reputation Systems: The Effects of Feedback comments and Reaction on Building and Rebuilding Trust in On-line Auctions”, *International Journal of Electronic Commerce* 13(3): 95-118.

Waldman, M. (1984) “Job Assignments, Signaling, and Efficiency”, *Rand Journal of Economics* 15:255-67.

------------ (2007) “Theory and Evidence in Internal Labor Markets”, *MPRA* Paper No.5113, Cornell University.

Wanous, J. (1980) *Organizational Entry: Recruitment, Selection, and Socialization of Newcomers*, Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley.

Weber, M. (1978) *Economy and Society*, Vol. 2. Chapter XI. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Weigelt, K. and Camerer, C. (1988) “Reputation and Corporate Strategy”, *Strategic Management Journal* 9: 443-54.

Wellman, B. (1992) “Which Types of ties and Networks Provide what Kinds of Social Support?”, *Advances in Group Processes* 9: 207-35.

Wellman, B. and Berkowitz, S. (eds.) (1988) *Social Structures: A Network Approach.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Welters, R. and Muysken, J. (2008) “Inferring Employer Search Behaviour from Wage Subsidy Participation”, *Labour Economics* 15(5): 844-58.

White, H. (1970) *Chains of Opportunity: System Models of Mobility in Organizations,* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

White, R. and Althauser, R. (1984) “Internal Labor Markets, Promotions, and Workers: An Indirect Test of Skill ILMS”, *Social Science Research* 13: 373-92.

Whyte, W.F. (1954) Street *Corner Society: the Social Structure of an Italian Slum* (2nd ed.). Chicago: the University of Chicago Press.

Wiesenfeld, M. and Hewin, F. (2003) “Splintered Identity and Organizational Change: The Predicament of Boundary Spanning Managers”, *Research on Managing Groups and Teams* 5:27-52.

Williams, N., Sjoberg, G. and Sjoberg, A. (1980) ‘The Bureaucratic Personality: An Alternative View’, *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science* 16(3): 389-405.

Williams, H., Parker, S. and Turner, N. (2007) “Perceived Dissimilarity and Perspective Taking within Work Teams”, *Group & Organization Management* 32(5): 569-97.

Windolf, P. (1986) “Recruitment, Selection and Internal Labour Markets in Britain and Germany”, *Organizational Studies* 7: 235-54.

Wood, S. (1985) “Recruitment Systems and the Recession”, *British Journal of Industrial Relations* 23: 103-120.

Xie, E., Teo, H.H. and Wan, W. (2006) “Volunteering Personal Information on the Internet: Effects of Reputation, Privacy Notices, and Rewards on Online Consumer Behaviour”, *Marketing Letters* 17(1): 61-74.

Yoon, J. and Thye, S. (2002) “A Dual Process Model of Organizational Commitment: Job Satisfaction and Organizational Support”, *Work and Occupation* 29(1): 97-124.

Zang, X.W. (2003) “Network Resources and Job Search in Urban China”, *Journal of Sociology* 39(2): 115-29.

Zellmer-Bruhn, M., Maloney, M., Bhappu, A. and Salvador, R. (2008) “When and How do Differences Matter? An Exploration of Perceived Similarity in Teams”, *Organizational Behaviour and Human decision Processes* 107(1): 41-59.

Zhou, M., Dresner, M. and Windle, R.J. (2008) “Online Reputation Systems: Design and Strategic Practices”, *Decision Support Systems* 44(4): 785-97.

APPENDIX I: INTERVIEWEE INFORMATION

	Name	**Current job title**	**Function in publishing**	**Type of publishing house**	**Gender**	**Age[1] (~)**	**Ethnicity**	**Highest education attained**	**Type of university: The Russell Group or not[2]**	**The year started in publishing**	**Date of interview**
1	Anna	Press officer	Publicity	Fiction	F	24	British born Indian	BA (English literature)	Yes	2003	26/7/05
2	Louisa	Commissioning editor	Editorial	Education	F	25	British	MA (Human Sciences)	Yes	2001	1/8/05
3	Stephen	Freelance editor	Editorial	Academic (dictionary)	M	39	British	BA (French)	No	1997	2/8/05
4	Nancy	Primary literacy editor	Editorial	Education	F	25	British	BA (English)	No	2001	12/8/05
5	Elsa	Reporter	Writer	Education	F	32	British	BA (English)	Yes	2000	15/8/05
6	Jane	Senior medical writer	Writer	Medical	F	30	British	MA (Biological Sciences)	Yes	1997	16/8/05
7	Ben	Senior manager	Writer	Medical	M	40	British	MA (Biological Sciences)	Yes	1985	16/8/05
8	Elaine	Art editor	Arts and	Academic	F	27	British born	BA (Graphic	No	2002	18/8/05

---

[1] Age is based on the date of the interview.

[2] I categorize the universities in terms of the Russell Group. The Russell Group is an association of 20 major research-intensive universities of the UK. It was formed in 1994 at a meeting convened in Russell Square. These universities are: University of Birmingham, University of Bristol, University of Cambridge, Cardiff University, University of Edinburgh, University of Glasgow, Imperial College London, King's College London, University of Leeds, University of Liverpool, London School of Economics and Political Science, University of Manchester, Newcastle University, University of Nottingham, Queen's University Belfast, University of Oxford, University of Sheffield, University of Southampton, University College London and University of Warwick (http://www.russellgroup.ac.uk)

			design				Italian	and Design)			
9	Elizabeth	Product development editor	Editorial	Academic (legal)	F	25	British	MA (Classics and English); MBA	Yes	2001	19/8/05
10	Tina	Editor	Editorial	Children	F	33	Jewish-British	BA (Journalism)	No	2001	23/8/05
11	Rose	Book design manager	Arts and design	Academic	F	42	South African	Diploma in graphic design	No	1984	24/8/05
12	Sonia	Primary literacy editor	Editorial	Education	F	22	Chinese	BA (History and Education)	Yes	2004	1/9/05
13	Ella	Freelance manager	Editorial	Education	F	45	British	Certificate in theatre	--	1982	2/9/05
14	Annie	Senior art editor	Arts and design	Academic	F	55	British	*No explicit answer*[3]	--	1997	6/9/05
15	Angela	Senior editor	Editorial	Education	F	52	British	MA (Publishing)	No	1983	8/9/05
16	Catherine	Publication officer	Editorial, publicity	Cultural events	F	33	American	BA, in New York	--	2003	12/9/05
17	Susan	Designer	Arts and design	Academic	F	34	British	BA (Typography); BA (English and History of Arts)	No	1999	13/9/05

---

[3] When I asked her, “Did you study art in university?”, she said “ No, I was a photographer, that's where I came from”.

18	Simon	Communications consultant	Writer	Medical	M	34	British	D. Phil (Chemistry)	Yes	1998	7/10/05
19	Azura	Assistant production editor	Production	Academic	F	26	Spanish	MA (publishing)	No	2004	13/10/05
20	Julia	Staff writer	Writer (editorial)	Movie	F	23	British	MA (English literature)	Yes	2004	21/10/05
21	David	Project editor	Arts and design	Academic	M	29	British	*No explicit answer*[4]	--	2000	30/10/05
22	Helen	Brand development director	Marketing	Leisure	F	52	British	MBA	Yes	1976	16/11/05
23	Kathy	Publishing manager	Editorial, production	Voluntary association	F	33	British	MA (English); Diploma in publishing	No	1997	17/11/05
24	Isabel	Publisher and managing director	Marketing	Recreational	F	35	British	BBA; in the US	--	1997	19/11/05
25	Robert	Freelance designer	Arts and design	Academic (dictionary/ textbook)	M	38	British	Diploma in graphic design	--	1988	24/11/05
26	Iris	Publisher	Editorial	Legal	F	36	British	BA	*Not sure*	1999	29/11/05
27	Eva	Commercial director	Marketing	Print-on-demand	F	45	British	MBA	*Not sure*	15	2/12/05
28	Sue	Publisher	Editorial	Legal	F	36	Serbian	MA (literature, culture and modernity)	No	1998	9/12/05

---

[4] When I asked him "Did you do arts and design in university?", he said "I've been doing arts and design".

29	Angelina	International editor	Editorial	Cultural	F	46	British	MA (psychology and philosophy)	Yes	1981	9/12/05
30	Kitty	Editor	Editorial	Educational	F	33	British	BA (French)	Yes	1997	13/12/05
31	Michelle	Senior commissioning editor	Editorial	Fiction	F	30	British	MA (English)	Yes	1996	14/12/05
32	Janice	Publishing manager	Editorial	Academic (dictionary)	F	56	British	BA (English and Portuguese)	Yes	1989	15/12/05
33	Wilson	Freelance lexicographer	Lexicography /editorial	Academic	M	44	British	BA (English)	Yes	1987	2/2/06
34	Edna	Freelance lexicographer	Lexicography/ editorial	Academic	F	42	British	M.Litt (Slavonic Studies)	Yes	1991	26/4/06
35	Cherry	Production manager	Production	Academic	F	40	Spanish	BA (Geography) in Spain	No	1995	27/4/06
36	Vicky	Senior editor	Editorial	Academic	F	46	British	MA (English literature)	Yes	1983	9/5/06
37	Nelson	Head of production	Production	Academic	M	50	British	O-Level	--	1984	16/5/06
38	Terry	Production manager	Production	Academic	M	34	British	B.Sc	No	1992	16/5/06
39	Calvin	Freelance editorial project manager	Editorial	Academic	M	57	British	MA (English)	Yes	1974	27/4/06
40	Peter	Director	Editorial and production	Audio book	M	53	British	MA (psychology)	Yes	1976	19/10/06

APPENDIX II: DETAILED CAREER PATH OF EACH INTERVIEWEE (BASED ON CVs AND TRANSCRIPTS)

1. **Anna**: She started working as a publicity assistant. One year later she was promoted to press officer and has stayed in the same position for 1 year.[96]
2. **Louisa**: She was promoted from trainee to editor to managing editor to commissioning editor within 1 year. One and half years later, she was promoted to senior commissioning editor.
3. **Stephen**: He had been an English teacher for 6 years. He then became a dictionary editor for 7 years. He is now a freelance writer/ editor for 1 year.
4. **Nancy**: She did 1 year graduate trainee and then stayed as an editor for 3 years until now.
5. **Elsa**: She had been an assistant reporter for 2 years; and then became a reporter for 3 years.
6. **Jane**: She did a one year trainee medical writer and was promoted to medical writer the next year; senior medical writer the year after next; and an editorial team leader two years after next. She is now a part-time senior medical writer (‘downwardly mobile’ due to childcare responsibilities).
7. **Ben**: He started his career as a trainee medical writer. After the three-month probation period, he became a medical writer for 2 years and then promoted to senior medical writer (that was during 1988-92). Since 1992, he started managing and developing a team. Before setting up his own publishing company, he was a senior manager in a medical publishing house. He joined the company for 19 years and within 12 years, he was promoted to the senior management level. In late 2005, he established his own company.
8. **Elaine**: She worked as award assistant for a design and advertising award company for 8 months. Then she worked as a freelance runner for various production companies in London for 2 years. Then she worked for a magazine as a graphic assistant for another 8 months and eventually worked as an art editor in Oxford for 2 years.
9. **Elizabeth**: She had been a commissioning assistant for 1 year; and was promoted to assistant commissioning editor. One and half years later, she was promoted to publishing editor; and 2 years later she was promoted to product development editor and within 7 months she was promoted to commissioning editor.
10. **Tina**: She did a 1 year editorial assistant and then 3 years editor afterwards.
11. **Rose**: She started working in 1984 as a magazine publisher for 3 years. She then

---

[96] All information is updated by late 2005 to 2006, depending on the date of the interview and the date the interviewees emailed their CV to me.

moved to South Africa to work as an educational publisher for 4 years. She worked as a freelance designer for 5 months and then moved back to Oxford in 1991 and worked there until now. She renewed 3 one-year contracts with the current company before becoming permanent. She is now a design manager.

12. **Sonia**: She had done 9 months as a trainee and became an editor for 3 months.
13. **Ella**: She started her career as an actress in the theatre and has committed to acting for her career. However, she worked as a freelance editor and lexicographer at various publishing houses for 23 years. She worked in-house permanently from 2000-02 but was made redundant because of the collapse of the department. Now she is a freelance software product manager at one publishing house at oxford.
14. **Annie**: She was a photographer for 3 years after university. She worked in London as a picture researcher for about 20 years (for 4 different publishing houses). She then moved to Oxford and worked as a freelancer for a couple of months and now she is an art editor (also taking managerial role) at Oxford. She has been staying in the current position for 8 years.
15. **Angela**: She worked as a secretary for 5-6 years before entering into publishing. She worked as a desk editor for 4 years at Oxford after taking a course in publishing. She then worked as a freelance editor for 10 years and then became in-house senior editor again for 7 years. In the current company, she first she got a half-year contract, then renewed one year and became permanent.
16. **Catherine**: She did 8 years editorial work in the US. After moving to London, she has worked as a part-time and 6-months contracted editor for 2 years.
17. **Susan**: She was promoted from designer, senior designer to art director within three years in a small-scale publishing house in London. She worked six months freelance afterwards. She then moved to Oxford and worked as a senior art editor in a publishing house there.
18. **Simon**: He was a consultant in a management company for 2 years after D.Phil. Then he became an account manager (and junior writer) at a pharmaceutical company for 3 years, communication consultant (managing medical writing) at another pharmaceutical publishing house for another 2 years.
19. **Azura**: She did freelance translation for 1 year when first migrated to the UK. Then she became a part-time administrative staff in science publishing for another one year and a half year administrative staff in children’s publishing. She worked as a 4 months part-time editorial assistant at academic publishing and then 4 months assistant production editor at another academic publishing house.
20. **Julia**: She was promoted to writer after working as an assistant writer for 6 months.
21. **David**: He did one year assistant designer and then 5 years art editor in Oxford.

22. **Helen**: She worked in publishing from 1976 to 1997 (21 years). She started her career as an editor, and then senior editor and eventually moved to a large publishing house and became a publishing manager. Until 1994, she became brand development director. Then she did an MBA in London and established a consultancy firm since late 1990s.
23. **Kathy**: She worked as an assistant editor for one year, as a production editor for one and half years, an assistant editor for 9 months and eventually as a publishing manager for two years. (all in different publishing houses).
24. **Isabel**: After completing an undergraduate business degree in the US, she worked as a management consultant for 3 years for world-wide brands. She then moved to a recreational magazine seven years ago and now works as a publisher and managing director.
25. **Robert**: He worked for 10.5 years as an in-house designer in the same publishing house in Oxford and then Cape Town. He then took up another designer role in Cambridge for 2 years. He became a freelance designer in 2000.
26. **Iris**: She initially worked as a legal editor for one year; and worked as a senior legal editor for three years and eventually as a publisher for two years.
27. **Eva**: promoted from sales to marketing director in less than 22 years
28. **Sue**: she had been a secretary for three years after moving to England from Serbia. She worked as a legal editor for 4 years and then moved to a publisher position at another legal publishing firm for 3 years.
29. **Angelina**: She was promoted from an editorial trainee to project editor within 4 years. She then moved to another firm for senior editor for 3 years, and to another one for office manager. She moved to an international magazine for series editor and associate director within the next two years; and to another firm for editorial director for 4 years and eventually she moved back to the international magazine for international editor (equivalent to editorial director) a few months before the interview.
30. **Kitty**: She first worked for a one-month editorial assistant; and then three years assistant editor and eventually a commissioning editor for 5 years.
31. **Michelle**: She initially worked as an editorial assistant and was promoted to editor one year later; and was promoted to senior editor three years later; and to commissioning editor 2 years later and eventually was promoted to senior commissioning editor after 2 years.
32. **Janice**: Initially she was a teacher for 20 years until 1992. Since 1989, she worked as a freelance dictionary editor. She has been a publishing manager in Oxford since 1997.
33. **Wilson**: He worked as a lexicographer for 3 years, changed to associate editor position for 2 years, then dictionary publisher for another 2 years (all in different

companies). A freelance lexicographer and dictionary editor for 15 years.

34. **Edna**: She was a research assistant for a dictionary for 2 years, and has become a freelance linguist/ lexicographer for 10 years.
35. **Cherry**: She has moved to the UK since 1994. She first worked as an editorial assistant in Oxford for an 18-month contract. She then moved to another publishing house in Oxford as an administrative assistant in an electronic production department. A year later she was made training officer and a year later she became a production manager.
36. **Vicky**: She was initially a desk editor and was promoted to editor one year later. She was then promoted to senior editor 5 years later. She has stayed in the same position for 16 years.
37. **Nelson**: He worked as a production assistant all the way through to the head of the production team within 30 years, working in different companies.
38. **Terry**: He worked as a production assistant in 1992, then as a production editor one year later and then production manager 2 years later. (Stays in the same company).
39. **Calvin**: He has worked for a publishing house in Oxford for 32 years, mostly as a copy-editor and proofreader of academic books. He became a full-time freelance editor and project manager from 1992 (until now), mostly serving in academic publishing houses in Oxford.
40. **Peter**: In 1976, he joined a training scheme for production. In 1976 after graduating from Oxford, he joined a general training scheme at a large publishing house where he worked for 3 years subsequently. Then he became a publishing manager for 6 years, working on television tie-in books. In 1995, he established his own company to provide editorial and production services for publishers of both printed and audio books.