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**Sharing Leadership in Top Teams: A Qualitative Case Study of One
Governing Board in the Nonprofit Sector**

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Dissertation submitted for the degree of Master of Research

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Abstract

Shared leadership is increasingly important in organisations today in order to meet the needs of changing environments, complex problems, and to accommodate transparency and accountability. This is especially applicable to nonprofit organisations (NPOs) where good governance has been a concern for years not only because of underdeveloped theories of nonprofit governance (Cornforth, 2012) but also public pressure to demonstrate accountability, after reported cases of failed governance.

This research has a qualitative exploratory methodological design that interprets emerging data to develop and clarify concepts. The thesis adopts an ontological relativist position towards the epistemology of constructionism, and employs an interpretivist methodology to discuss findings and concepts.

The case study employs the concept of shared leadership, a mutual influence process in teams, (Pearce and Conger, 2003) and an 'ethical form of board leadership' for corporate boards following poor governance and various scandals (Vandewaerde et al, 2011, p.404) to explore sharing leadership and governance in one nonprofit board in practice. Three data collection techniques namely interviews, observation and document review have been carried out. Specifically, eight interviews, observation of one annual general meeting and one routine board meeting, and a review of twenty one documents including seven board minutes and eight reports.

The participants' richly described their experiences, having been identified using a Braun and Clarke (2006) interpretive process that examines the following themes; compliance; core

purpose; expert knowledge; and leadership. Findings inductively identified from the data suggest support for the concept of co-leadership between two individuals; for board governance moving towards a pluralist perspective in 2017; and changing context as the locus of leadership during 2014 – 2017.

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Chapter 1

Aims and Objectives

1.1 Introduction

Today organizations are faced with challenges of responding to changing environments, complex technology, increased team working and a knowledgeable and informed workforce that has the right to request flexible working arrangements such as job sharing; flexitime and mobile working (Acas 2017). Against this background, organizations are open to replacing or supplementing traditional top down single leadership with shared leadership in order to meet these challenges. In nonprofit organizations (NPOs) these challenges are further complicated by multiple stakeholders, and organizational goals delivered by a diverse workforce of volunteers and professionals (Coule, 2015).

Following poor governance and various scandals, the concept of ‘shared leadership’ (Pearce and Conger, 2003) is proposed as ethical leadership for the boardroom (Vandewaerde et al, 2011). Also, as a way to extend our understanding about the intersection between leadership and governance ‘the activity of steering’ the organization (Oxford English Dictionary).

1.2 Why this Research Matters

Research about good governance in nonprofit boards matters, has long been identified as a concern (Mordaunt et al, 2004) and remains a predominant interest for NPOs (Coule, 2015). Arguably governance is poorly understood due to a narrow underdeveloped research focus, and immature theories of nonprofit governance, when compared to corporate governance (Cornforth, 2012). Moreover ‘a decrease in public trust in nonprofit organizations’ (Liket

and Maas, 2015, p.270) fuelled by visible cases of failed governance such as ‘Kids Company’ (UK Parliamentary Report, 2016) makes this research timely and important in the UK context. Additionally, little is known about the process of how leadership is socially constructed and how it emerges in particular contexts (Uhl-Bien, 2006).

Accountability has long been considered a crucial element of good governance (Tacon et al, 2017) as has the governance mechanism of board leadership, the subject of previous research (Cornforth, 2012). Nevertheless how boards govern in practice is less well researched.

1.3 Rationale

The rationale for this study is threefold. 1) NPO board leadership and governance is dominated by cross-sectional and positivist research designs (Cornforth, 2012) so by employing a qualitative research design that takes account of contextual factors we can construct knowledge from different participants’ meaning-making: 2) to overcome limitations of previous board research by focussing on ‘leadership processes and behaviours ...that take place within the boardroom’ (Vandewaerde et al, 2011, p. 404): 3) to contribute to research about the intersection between leadership, and governance, the ‘activity of steering’ the organization (Oxford English Dictionary).

1.4 Aims

This research aims to extend contemporary work about board leadership, and governance in nonprofit organizations (NPOs), in three ways. First by conceptualising the locus of leadership as something that can be shared and found in the leadership processes and social interactions constructed in practice by trustees in the boardroom. Secondly by exploring

internal processes and governance mechanisms employed by trustees to ‘actually enact accountability’ (Tacon et al, 2017, p.11). Thirdly, by exploring the contextual influences that shape leadership practice in one governing board.

This empirical study of leadership processes and governance mechanisms shaped by a particular context, employs the following concepts:

- ‘shared leadership’ is defined as ‘a dynamic interactive influence process among individuals in groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organizational goals’ (Pearce and Conger cited in Avolio et al, 2009, p.431)
- the board is defined as a team employing an integrated definition of a collective who a) ‘exist to perform organizationally relevant tasks; b) share one or more common goals; c) interact socially; d) exhibit task interdependencies; e) maintain and manage boundaries; f) are embedded in an organizational context that sets boundaries, constrains the team, and influences exchanges with other units in the broader entity’ (Kozlowski and Bell, 2001, p.6)
- governance is defined as Board direction of the organization within a governance system that includes relations with stakeholders (Cornforth, 2012)
- context is defined as a two-way influence and ‘not simply the situation in which leadership is enacted’ but also ‘as a direct determinant of the nature of leadership’ (Hernandez et al, 2011, p.1167).

1.5 Objectives

The objectives of this dissertation are:

1.5.1 to advance our understanding of the concept of shared leadership in practice in a natural occurring setting;

1.5.2 to diminish the gap in academic literature about how nonprofit board leadership governance works in practice and the associated contextual influences.

To the above ends, this study looks to the concept of ‘shared leadership’ which is essentially about sharing power and influence with all members of a team (Pearce and Conger, 2003). Similar to governance research, previous research here has been oriented towards cross-sectional and positivist research designs, but to date this has not led to agreement about an integrated definition of shared leadership (Carson et al, 2007).

A constructionist approach has the advantage of studying what is conceptualised as a dynamic process as it happens in a naturally occurring setting, and in this way illuminates knowledge constructed by participants. UK nonprofit organisations, and their tradition of participation, offer an ideal context for this exploratory study and the following research question.

1.6 Research Question

How do trustees of a NPO governing board construct and make sense of sharing leadership in practice, and jointly enact governance in the boardroom?

1.7 Conclusion

The concept of ‘shared leadership’ (Pearce and Conger, 2003) has been proposed as an ‘ethical form of Board leadership’ for corporate boards following poor governance and various scandals (Vandewaerde et al, 2011, p. 404). Moreover, it will be argued that the

formal structure of the board, conceived as a self-managing team, is an ideal context for shared leadership to flourish.

Shared leadership in nonprofit boards performs additional function. For example, the transparency associated with shared decision making, is not only ethical but offers potential to overcome concerns about accountability (Coule, 2015; Tacon et al, 2017) and public ‘demand for greater transparency about and accountability for the difference NPOs make to society’ (Liket and Maas, 2015, p. 270). Moreover the flat, decision-making structure with chairs characterised as ‘first among equals’ (Harrison and Murray, 2012, pp.413) offers potential ‘to develop more thoughtful leadership at all levels of today’s organizations’ (Pearce and Manz, 2005, p.130).

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In contrast to traditional leadership and its ‘top heavy model’ and ‘romantic conceptions of leaders as heroic figures who single-handedly save followers’ (Pearce and Manz, 2005, p.130), the concept of shared leadership (Pearce and Conger, 2003) is distinguished by the mutual influence processes that take place among individuals within a team (Ensley et al, 2006). Consequently the locus of leadership is not seen as vested in a single individual but emerges from official as well as unofficial leaders. Shared leadership is a potential model of leadership for nonprofit organizations for several reasons.

First shared leadership is recommended in literature as ‘highly applicable’ to a board context (Vandewaerde et al, 2011, p.404). Conger and Lawler (2009, p.184) argue that ‘the place where most organizations have the greatest need for an effective team is in the boardroom’ which is ‘the first place to start in terms of building teamwork on the board is with a shared leadership approach’. Secondly, evidence suggests that it fosters positive outcomes for teams, and individuals (Avolio et al, 2009). Thirdly that shared purpose, social support, and the opportunity for different voices to be heard enable shared leadership, and support an organizational environment where individual contribution is valued (Carson et al, 2007; Serban and Roberts, 2016) which is relevant for NPOs characterised by a governing board of unpaid trustees, not-for-profit orientation and providing benefits for, or services to stakeholders.

In the past, much research into corporate Board leadership has focussed on structure, particularly chief executive officer (CEO) duality, where an individual concurrently performs the role of CEO and chair, with the disadvantage being that it diminishes the monitoring role of the board. Recently it has been argued that this preoccupation with structure represents only a small part of leadership in the boardroom (Vandewaerde et al, 2011). CEO duality is not an issue for the nonprofit board of this study as UK charity law does not allow it.

Notwithstanding this constraint, scholars' previous focus on structure has resulted in opacity about how leadership works in practice, and the notion of a 'black box' of board leadership from which there is little knowledge about how a 'board team is actually led' (Vandewaerde et al, 2011, p.404). The aim of this study is to open the 'black box' by exploring leadership processes and trustees' interactions to concentrate on shared leadership in a nonprofit governing board, conceived of as a team.

To that end, this literature review has two purposes. Firstly to inform theoretical understanding and empirical work relating to NPO board governance (Cornforth, 2012; Coule, 2015; Tacon et al, 2017) and shared leadership (Pearce and Manz, 2005; Pearce and Conger, 2003). Secondly to illustrate the gap in literature and the opening for this study to contribute to research about governance and shared leadership in the boardroom, taking account of contextual influences.

2.2 Nonprofit Governance

More than a decade ago, Mordaunt et al. (2004) in conference, highlighted good board governance as a matter of concern for all sectors following several prominent corporate

scandals. In the corporate sector interest in board leadership and governance has grown fuelled by prominent scandals of failed governance such as Enron's (Vandewaerde et al, 2011) financial deception and executive corruption (Pearce et al, 2008) and 'Corporate Social Ir-Responsibility' (Pearce and Manz, 2011, p.563).

In the nonprofit sector however, interest in board leadership and governance has not grown at the same pace for varied reasons. Firstly a challenging landscape that traditional governance models cannot adequately respond to, and which is sometimes complicated by board dysfunction (Freiwirth, 2017). Secondly multiple theories of governance are not as mature in the nonprofit sector as in the corporate sector (Cornforth, 2012; Coule, 2015). Recently a report in relation to 'Kids Company' underlined trustees' responsibility for 'every aspect of governance – including the financial and reputational stability of an organization' (UK Parliamentary Committee, 2016, p. 1) thereby promoting continuing scholarly interest in leadership and good governance in other NPOs.

Yet several years on from Mordaunt et al. (2004) there is little evidence about what constitutes good governance and board effectiveness in the corporate (Vandewaerde et al, 2011) and nonprofit sector, and organisations remain under-researched in relation to board processes and contextual influences (Cornforth, 2012).

Governance as 'the systems and processes concerned with ensuring the overall direction, effectiveness, supervision and accountability of an organization' (ACEVO 2017) informs this study. However it also looks to Cornforth (2012) for insight about a wider governance system and to Coule (2015) for insight about unitary and pluralist governance theories and their implications for accountability.

2.3 Why is Good Governance Elusive?

Research about what makes good governance in NPOs is elusive for several reasons. NPO governance is poorly understood because the NPO literature has so far failed to acknowledge the contributions of board chairs (Harrison and Murray, 2012; Harrison et al, 2012); a narrow, underdeveloped research focus when compared to corporate governance; (Cornforth, 2012). Furthermore there has been a ‘narrow compliance-based interpretation of accountability’ (Coule, 2015, p.75).

The concept of accountability however has various interpretations depending upon the governance theory employed. So in unitary agency and stewardship theories, accountability is ‘compliance based’ and in pluralist democratic and stakeholder theories, accountability takes a broad view beyond legal provisions and ‘formal HRM practices’ (Coule, 2015, p.85). Knowledge of governance and the practices that deliver ‘broadened accountability’ (Morrison and Salipante, 2007, p.195) has dallied behind public and stakeholder demands. From an epistemological position, predominantly positivist and cross-sectional research designs have not provided breadth of knowledge about a) processes and contextual influences in NPO organisations (Cornforth, 2012; Cornforth and Macmillan, 2016) b) improving overall governance (Lee, 2016) c) the impact of changing contextual influences such as funding and staff changes (Harrison et al, 2012) d) how governance structures and practices have developed over time (Cornforth, 2012).

2.4 Current Debate in Nonprofit Governance

Nonprofit research about transparency (Ward et al, 2012); leadership of board chairs (Harrison and Murray, 2012); and board-CEO dyadic relationships (Cornforth and

Macmillan, 2016) contribute important knowledge about board governance. The current debate in literature seems shaped by three areas. Firstly NPOs accountability (Tacon et al, 2017; Coule, 2015) and the need ‘to be seen to manage to be accountable’ (Osbourne cited in Chadwick-Coule, 2011, p.34). Secondly contextual influences flowing from blurred boundaries between ‘public, private and third sectors’ (Cornforth, 2012, p.1120; Cornforth and Macmillan, 2016) and the importance of stakeholder accountability of NPO governance in cross-sector collaborations (Jacklin-Jarvis, 2014). Thirdly, a wider concept of governance as a system within which NPOs operate; their relationship to elements of the system, such as stakeholders, regulatory audit, funders, and federal structures (Cornforth, 2012) and governance that is shared beyond the board through participatory principles with all key stakeholders (Freiwirth, 2017).

Accountability is a central challenge for NPOs to manage and for scholars to offer different sets of ideas. The central challenges include: proper accountability mechanisms such as good standards set out in written policies (Lee, 2016); greater contact between board chairs and their communities as well as advocacy and community engagement (Freiwirth, 2017); practices that relate to nonprofit effectiveness (Liket and Maas, 2015); broadened accountability linked to performance (Morrison and Salipante, 2007) and maintaining a positive reputation (Hyndman and McDonnell, 2009). Coule (2015) in her review of four governance theories tells us unitary (agency and stewardship) and pluralist (democratic and stakeholder) theories and concepts of accountability are grounded in very different assumptions about how organizations work, yet the question of ‘how to govern nonprofits’ (Coule, 2015, p.94) remains elusive.

2.5 Shared Leadership and Board Context

At the heart of this research is the concept of shared leadership defined as ‘a dynamic interactive influence process among individuals in groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organisational goals’ (Pearce and Conger cited in Avolio et al, 2009, p.431). As mentioned in chapter 2.1, it is the preferred concept of leadership for this study for several reasons. Firstly it is recommended in the literature as ‘highly applicable’ to a board context (Vandewaerde et al, 2011, p.404) ‘the place where most organizations have the greatest need for an effective team is in the boardroom’ ‘the first place to start in terms of building teamwork on the board is with a shared leadership approach’ (Conger and Lawler, 2009, p. 184). Secondly, it has been argued to foster positive outcomes for teams, and individuals (Avolio et al, 2009). Thirdly shared leadership uncovers shared purpose, social support, and the opportunity for different voices to be heard and an organizational environment where individual contribution is valued (Carson et al, 2007; Serban and Roberts, 2016). This is relevant for NPOs characterised by a governing Board of unpaid trustees; not-for-profit orientation and providing benefits for, or services to stakeholders.

Shared leadership as a model for good governance in the boardroom (Vandewaerde et al, 2011; Conger and Lawler, 2009) is relevant for this study because the ‘horizontal authority structure’ of the board offers a ‘more collective form of leadership’ (Vandewaerde et al, 2011, p.414) which adopts power sharing and focuses on group rather than individual goals (Hernandez et al, 2011) characterised by NPOs. Moreover it is argued to ‘deter corruptive tendencies’ (Pearce et al, 2008, p. 353). Shared leadership enables consensus in decision-making (Bergman et al, 2012) and its effectiveness has been operationalised in diverse contexts. For example: business (Schoeler Fausing et al, 2015; Hoch, 2014), medical (Klein

et al, 2006), military (Ramthun and Matkin, 2014) and student teams in a laboratory setting (Bergman et al, 2012).

2.6 Shared Leadership Contrasted with Traditional Leadership

The underlying assumption of traditional leadership, that the locus of leadership is vested in a single individual exercising top-down influence and control, is longstanding and rooted in the concept of ‘leader as commander’ the leadership model of the scientific management approach of the 1900s (Ensley et al, 2006). These scholars cite the influential works of Burns (1978) whose theories of transformational leadership and the process leaders employ to motivate followers, developed by Bass (1985) focusing on the importance in an organizational context, and Lawler (1986) to ‘flatten hierarchical structures’ and ‘allow workers to have added input into the design of their work’ and ‘decision-making processes’ (Ensley et al, 2006, p. 218). However the locus of leadership remained vested in a single individual. In organizations today this view of leadership prevails as a ‘directive’ or ‘heroic’ leader (Pearce and Manz, 2005).

Contrastingly, contemporary scholars are ‘less accepting’ of the virtues of hierarchical leadership (Ensley et al, 2006, p. 217) and argue that it is ‘ever more difficult for any leader from above to have all of the knowledge, skills and abilities to lead all aspects of knowledge work’ (Pearce and Manz, 2005, p. 132). Contemporary models of leadership include leadership theories such as ‘shared leadership’ and ‘relational leadership (Uhl-Bien, 2006) considered by some scholars to overlap with one another (Avolio et al, 2009) albeit that their epistemology differs. For example Foldy and Ospina (Brandeis conference) propose the overarching term ‘collective leadership’ to map the dimensions for a ‘locus of leadership’ and ‘view of ‘self’’ to situate different leadership models as follows:

- (i) the locus of leadership as individual, relationship or system;
- (ii) the view of 'self' as the 'individuated self' or the 'connected self'.

Mapped here, shared and relational leadership are differentiated by the view of the 'self' as either a positivist 'individuated self' or 'constructionist connected self-in-creation'. So while scholars of shared and relational leadership are united in rejecting the assumption that leadership is vested in a single individual, their views are rooted in these different epistemologies.

For the present study, this mapping helps to situate theories relied upon here. For example, shared leadership (Peace and Conger, 2003) is seen as having a relationship locus of leadership and an 'individuated self'; co-leadership (Sally cited in Kocolowski, 2010) as having an individual locus of leadership and an individuated view of 'self', and shared leadership is seen as an emergent team property (Carson et al, 2007) having a system locus of leadership and an individuated view of self. The concept of relational leadership is viewed as a relationship locus of leadership and a connected 'self-in-creation'.

The idea of mapping these theories is introduced here as something to be explored in future research together with the processes of self-leadership in relation to how these are linked to shared leadership (Pearce and Manz, 2005; Bligh et al, 2006). The idea that the 'self' 'is a 'collection of performances that take place in and across specific locations' in everyday life (Goffman, 1959, p.50) is also something to be explored as data from the present study suggests different performances by some participants in interview and meetings.

2.7 Challenge in Advancing Shared Leadership

The challenge in advancing knowledge about shared leadership stems from contradictory views about the construct and what it entails (Carson et al, 2007; Bergman et al, 2012). Meta-analysis of shared leadership (D'Innocenzo et al, 2014) illustrates this complexity. From analysis of 43 studies representing 3,198 teams nine definitions are summarised for the period 1998-2012. These studies differentiate shared leadership theoretically by the concepts of aggregation (collective process and influence) centralization (shared phenomenon not owned by a particular team member) and density (emergent team property across team members). D'Innocenzo et al. (2014) cite three unsuccessful studies (Berkowitz, 1953; Bowers and Seashore, 1966; Boies et al, 2010) but argue that research in this area has been advanced by over 100 theoretical models and 'dozens of qualitative studies' (p. 1968). No examples of qualitative studies are provided.

So despite contested consensus around an integrated definition of shared leadership (Carson et al, 2007; Koccolowski, 2010) accumulated evidence in support of shared leadership and team effectiveness is persuasive because it is drawn from diverse contexts. For example, the following studies report positive results: new venture top management (Ensley et al, 2006); change management (Pearce and Sims, 2002); consulting (Carson et al, 2007); ad hoc decision-making teams of students (Bergman et al, 2012) and knowledge and manufacturing teams (Schoeler Fausing et al, 2015).

However a closer look at three of these well cited studies suggests that claims need to be considered carefully. First looking at the comprehensive study of Ensley et al. (2006), we are told 'we feel particularly confident in the validity of our findings' due to multiple samples (p.226) but researchers here are relying on a low response rate of 17.6% for study 1 and 33.5% for study 2 for such a strong statement.

In relation to studies by Carson et al. (2007) and Bergman et al. (2012) samples were drawn from student populations raising issues about data from ‘artificial situations’ (Yates, 2004, p. 140) and relevance to teams in organizational contexts. Moreover Carson et al. (2007) reported that by not specifying ‘the meaning of leadership’ that shared leadership ‘as network density’ may not have measured leadership influence (p.1230) in consulting teams with MBA students, but aspects of participation or co-operation. Thus the design issue raises questions about accepting other results with confidence.

In Bergman et al. (2012) 180 students were randomly assigned to four prescribed roles in ad hoc teams, in a controlled laboratory setting. Despite the laboratory setting what is interesting here in relation to consensus, is that individuals privately indicated their agreement with team decisions, after decisions were taken. Findings suggest a strong positive correlation between satisfaction and consensus, although the result for satisfaction was not significant suggesting that while shared leadership may increase understanding of building consensus, team members ‘did not like the decisions (i.e. satisfaction)’ (Bergman et al, 2012, p. 34). A laboratory setting and student samples raise questions about validity for organizational contexts, but this insight has some relevance for the present study since data suggests that participants are committed to consensus, but less satisfied with decisions.

Other contemporary studies about shared leadership seek knowledge in different cultural contexts for organizations to compete globally, which counters USA research dominance. To this end, Schoeler Fausing et al. (2015) cite Hofstede (1980) and cultural dimensions theory, to argue that countries with a low power distance index (PDI) will enable a ‘higher level of shared leadership’ (p. 273). For example, the USA is indexed at 40; Denmark at 18 and the UK at 35. Based on a study of 81 teams in a Danish organisation, these scholars

claim ‘the present study offers significant contributions’ (p.284). Admittedly the study expands cultural context, however this cross-sectional design reports, low coefficients between shared leadership and team performance. Nevertheless the idea that countries indexed with lower power distance enable shared leadership is interesting for this study in a UK setting with a PDI of 35 and likely to be more participative.

In concluding this section, while many studies in diverse contexts advance knowledge about shared leadership, little attention is given to nonprofit organisations. An exception is case of the Braille Institute of America cited in Pearce and Manz (2005).

2.8 Current Research in Shared Leadership

The literature highlights that current interest in shared leadership is continuing to emerge around understanding proposed antecedents such as empowering leadership and interdependence (Schoeler Fausing et al, 2015) information sharing (Hoch, 2014) a ‘clear and unifying direction’ and ‘a high level of voice’ (Carson et al, 2007, p.1229) and ‘the processual nature of the ‘relationship between self and shared leadership’ (Bligh et al, 2006, p. 298) and context, which is defined as a locus of leadership and a ‘direct determinant of leadership’ (Hernandez et al, 2011, p. 1167). Significantly for the present study, the notion that ‘shared leadership’ itself may become the context through which leadership acts are interpreted’ (Yukl, cited in Hernandez et al, 2011, p.1178) resonates with the interpretive sensemaking approach being adopted here.

From an epistemological position, to date, most research about shared leadership has been conducted from a positivist orientation including cross-sectional studies, in a US context (Carson et al, 2007; Pearce and Sims, 2002). This approach includes experiments with

student populations (Bergman et al, 2012; Serban and Roberts, 2016). Additionally, much empirical research has involved some form of measurement of shared leadership based on self-reports to leadership questionnaires, aggregated to a team level. For example, the amount of leadership exercised by each team member (Carson et al, 2007) and ratings on a behavioural scale aggregated to a team level (Ensley et al, 2006). More recently meta-analysis studies of team effectiveness have emerged, for example D'Innocenzo et al. (2014) along with cross-sectional studies in non US contexts (Schoeler Fausing et al, 2015; Hoch, 2014).

However these studies do not offer insight about how shared leadership happens in practice in a naturally occurring setting. A notable exception is the qualitative study of Klein et al. (2006) and the concept of dynamic delegation that shapes practice in medical trauma teams in relation to 'deep commitment to...novice members' 'commitment to high quality outcomes' and 'a hierarchy of expert authority' (Klein et al, 2006, p.615). The lack of qualitative studies in USA (where much research about shared leadership has originated) and non-USA context highlights the research gap that this study looks to fill in exploring shared leadership in context - the meaning, underlying ideas and assumptions that are held by participants.

To conclude this section, shared leadership is not without limitations and 'not every situation is appropriate' (Pearce and Manz, 2005, p.135). For example, contexts with 'high power distance' or 'individualist viewpoints' that do not share assumptions of power sharing and group goals (Hernandez et al, 2011, p.1178) will not enable shared leadership to succeed. Moreover introducing shared leadership in traditional hierarchical organizations where

individual accountability ‘may be difficult to realize’ (Bligh et al, 2006, p.311) is likely to be challenging.

2.9 Team Concept Applied to a Board Context

Following a review of academic literature about teams Vandewaerde et al. (2011) argue that applying the concept of a team to board context has been established in literature, using definitions of teams as collectives with responsibility for organizational tasks, sharing goals, interacting socially and task interdependence (Kozlowski and Bell, 2001). This definition is broadly accepted in this MRes study, however further research will employ a more in depth review of the team literature.

2.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter introduced the concepts of shared leadership (Pearce and Conger, 2003) and accountable governance (Tacon et al, 2017; Coule, 2015) together with the current debates in both areas. Additionally, the importance of context is here introduced and viewed as resonating with both shared leadership in practice (Hernandez et al, 2011) and accountable governance in nonprofit boards (Cornforth and Macmillan, 2016; Tacon et al, 2017).

While good governance is elusive across all sectors, we are told governance in the nonprofit sector is of particular concern due to multiple theories of governance that have yet to mature (Cornforth, 2012; Coule, 2015) and little evidence about good governance and board effectiveness in practice. In turn while a small cohort of researchers have advanced empirical research about shared leadership and developed over 100 theoretical models, little is known about the ‘science supporting the value of shared leadership’ (D’innocenzo et al, 2014, p.

1968); additionally how shared leadership happens in practice. This qualitative study is about exploring both governance and shared leadership in practice in one nonprofit board in order to extend our understanding about the intersection between leadership and governance ‘the activity of steering’ the organization (Oxford English Dictionary).

Chapter 3

Methods of Data Collection

3.1 Methodology

By way of introduction, the assumptions underpinning this research are briefly set out. This research has a qualitative, exploratory methodological design. It takes a relativist position that there is no ‘one way of evaluating the truthfulness or factualness of people’s claims or accounts’ (Yates, 2004, p. 137) and draws on constructionist epistemology to make sense of leadership practices and governance enacted in the boardroom. It uses an interpretivist methodology that moves between understanding each participant’s account and a holistic picture, in order to develop concepts (Hammersley, 2015).

3.2 Research Design

The purpose of this study has three strands 1) to explore how one nonprofit governing board shares and socially constructs leadership in practice; 2) how governance is enacted in the boardroom; 3) the contextual influences that facilitate and shape these processes and practices.

Aligned with these purposes, an interpretive approach to a single case analysis is proposed for several reasons. Firstly, because several qualitative methods can be combined with the advantage that there is not too much reliance on a single approach (Knights and McCabe, cited in Bryman and Bell, 2003). Secondly, it comes close to a natural experience (Stake, 1978) where a holistic understanding can be gained through events that are context bound.

unlike the procedural objectivity of the positivist approach (Hammersley, 2015) and quantitative methods where data are collected in ‘artificial situations’ (Yates, 2004, p. 140) and effects are measured. Thirdly it has the potential to ‘provide an analysis of the context and processes which illuminate the theoretical issues’ (Hartley, 2004, p. 344). Finally it reflects the ‘complexity of social life’ (Blaxter et al, 2010, p.74). This research is exploratory, taking an idiographic approach to illuminate the uniqueness of this case, through participants’ lived experiences and practices in one board setting, then understanding what it means to them.

3.3 Case Study Selection

This case was selected on ‘convenience logic’ (Poulis et al, 2013, p.304) (Easterby-Smith, 2015, p.82) in agreement with the federation CEO who is seeking insights about Scropton and ‘what drives this team’s success’ (Researcher’s diary 20/03/2017). The case remains open to the idea of the evolving case (Ragin cited in Poulis et al, 2013) through the iterative process of moving between theory and evidence throughout the study in order to keep the ‘research focus’, ‘the unit of analysis and case-study boundaries’ as shaped by the context under review (Poulis et al, 2013, p.306).

A case study was selected in preference to other qualitative methods such as applied action research. While the applied approach is an appropriate method for this small scale study, and the focus on context in the research question, it is not ideal for the research purpose here, which is exploratory rather than problem-solving and evaluative (Blaxter et al, 2010).

Moreover a case study offers the advantages of rich data collected in a natural setting that illustrates the contextual influences that shape everyday practices and meanings for

participants (Hartley, 2004) scope for future analysis and different interpretations. Admittedly the complex nature of case analysis is a disadvantage (Blaxter et al, 2010).

3.4 Data Collection

Primary and secondary data inform this study.

3.4.1 Primary Data

Data from one nonprofit board was collected in two phases, during the period 10 – 16 June 2017. Starting with seven individual semi-structured interviews and one unstructured interview of one to one and a half hours around the topics of how leadership and governance works at Scropton RDA. Interviews were digitally recorded, and transcribed by the researcher, and supported by working field notes. The interview design is set out under Appendix 1.

In order to understand how shared leadership works in practice, interviews were followed by observation of the board AGM and shortly thereafter by a routine board meeting recorded by video. Observation lasted one and a half hours and therefore of short duration which did not seek to mimic an ethnographic strategy (Easterby-Smith, 2015).

3.4.2 Secondary Data

Secondary data were collected from textual thematic analyses of governance mechanisms such as the procedures around board management and regulatory documentation for the 2017 AGM agendas, minutes, operating reports and annual accounts together with reports requested during the financial period.

Thereafter data from three collection techniques were compared and contrasted to surface themes from across the entire dataset that suggested concepts that resonated or contrasted with shared leadership and governance theories.

3.5 Data Analysis

This design employed thematic analysis of ‘underlying ideas, assumptions and conceptualizations’ (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 13) using the six phase process in Appendix 2. Thematic analysis was selected because it accommodates a constructionist perspective and offers flexibility due to its ‘theoretical freedom’ and ability to account for meaning, experience and context (Burr cited in Braun and Clarke, 2006). It can be employed iteratively across the data set in order to bring out important themes and meet the challenge of ensuring that the themes identified and coded from across the data, broadly represent an accurate picture of the entire data set. Thematic analysis looks for patterns and themes across a data set, but it is recognised that a potential disadvantage is retaining depth in relation to individual accounts.

There may not be consensus around a precise definition of thematic analysis, (Braun and Clarke, 2006), moreover other methods can analyse and describe patterns in qualitative data. For example, conversation analysis and discourse analysis (Wetherell et al, 2001). However it is argued here that given the small size and limited scope of this study, thematic analysis is likely to provide good insights about meaning, experience and context. The intention is to provide a rich description (Fusch and Ness, 2015) drawn from a small sample size that is in search of meaning which is open to understanding that comes from both frequent occurrences, but also from a single occurrence that may carry the same importance in understanding (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007).

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical guidelines involving human participants and the principle of informed consent, have their roots in The Nuremberg Code of 1947 and the Declaration of Helsinki 1964 (Bell and Bryman, 2007). Approval to proceed with this study was granted by The Open University on 19 April 2017 and by the RDA federation on 25 April 2017.

Ethical dilemmas may arise at different stages in the project. Firstly for example information shared in interview might suggest harm to the participant or another person, or knowledge about an intended crime. HREC guidance suggests advising participants at the start, about how the researcher will respond, including alerting others for assistance.

Secondly, a requirement to produce a report for the RDA federation and Scropton Board presents a dilemma in providing a descriptive narrative account that sits between sociological analysis and conversation (Buchanan et al, 1988) which might be construed as a construction by the researcher, than surfacing participants' voices.

Thirdly as this is a pilot study for future research, potential risks are a) 'negotiating re-entry' (Buchanan et al, 1988, p. 66); b) staff changes at the federation; c) the principle of reciprocity (Bell and Bryman, 2007) in selecting future RDA board teams within the federation. Keeping focussed on the research objectives in discussion with the RDA and being transparent and cognisant of the researcher's influence in selecting RDA teams will help to ensure ethical practice.

Similarly it is important to follow ethical practice across all methods of data collection. For example, making reasonable adjustments by conducting a home interview for one participant on long-term sick leave. Finally observing the OU policy on data management.

Chapter 4

Collecting and Analysing the Data

4.1 Introduction

The structure of this chapter is in two sections.

Section 1 Data Collection

The layout of this chapter outlines the approach adopted by the researcher in collecting and analysing data. Additionally it identifies the researcher's role in the collection process and provides a summary table of the data sources, the collection technique, and the relationship to the research questions.

Section 2 Data Analysis

This study followed the process of thematic analysis set down by Braun and Clarke (2006) in Appendix 2. Data analysis was twofold. Firstly it followed the order in which the data were collected starting with interviews followed by observation of two meetings and a review of documentation. Secondly a recursive process coded features and occurrences which were then collated into initial themes, and subsequently reduced to four final themes. Illustrative tables are provided at intervals throughout the section to illustrate the process, and emerging themes.

4.2 Data Collection

4.2.1 Background

This qualitative case study about Scropton RDA draws on different sources of data in order to explore the locus of leadership as something that is shared, shaped by context, and found in the leadership practices, processes and governance employed by one governing board to ‘actually enact accountability’ (Tacon et al, 2017, p.11). How this particular board goes about sharing leadership and enacting governance is explored through participants’ subjective experience (verstehen) in preference to causal explanation (erklaren) (Welch, et al, 2011). So the goal here is to understand the uniqueness of this naturalistic case study. The unit of analysis is one nonprofit board made up of six trustees who became directors on 01 January 2017 following legal incorporation to a company limited by guarantee, and a new chair elected on 14 June 2017 increasing the board to seven directors.

Data collection here, or put another way, the activity of selecting and producing data (Hammersley, 2015) was sequential starting with interviews, followed by observation and concluding with documents’ review. Data were collected from flexible semi-structured interviews, about leadership and governance, with six Scropton directors. This format enabled topics to be introduced by the researcher and for participants to set the direction.

Topics were initiated by the following questions:

- Tell me about Scropton RDA board and your role in it?
- How does Board leadership work around decision making and information sharing?
- What is your sense of how governance works at Scropton?

Additionally the former chair of Scropton RDA, and now employed as the charity manager, and the incoming chair of the board as at 14 June 2017 were interviewed, giving a total of

eight interviews. The interview with the incoming chair was an unstructured conversation around leadership and governance.

4.2.2 Three Techniques of Data Collection

At the heart of this study is the concept of shared leadership (Pearce and Conger, 2003) and the idea that leadership happens in teams through a process of mutual influence that emerges through both formal and informal leaders on an on-going basis and thereby can be 'considered....fully developed empowerment in teams' (Pearce and Manz, 2005, p. 134). Therefore it was important to explore through observation whether the themes surfaced by individuals in interview, were illustrated in practice in the boardroom and reflected in board documentation.

Interviews were recorded and transcribed by the researcher. Seven interviews took place in the annex of the RDA Scropton yard and one interview took place in the participant's home. Each interview was carried out face to face in a single uninterrupted session, supported by handwritten researcher notes and digital recording. Digital recording equipment was reliable, but sometimes words and voices were indistinct and faded away.

Observation of two meetings to suit a convenience timeframe but also for their potential to provide insight around the research objectives were selected and agreed between the researcher and Scropton's charity manager (CM). Namely, the AGM of 14 June 2017, followed by one routine board meeting which was transcribed by the researcher.

Meetings took place in the yard coffee bar where tables and chairs were randomly spread throughout the room. Dress code was mixed with those coming from work in business dress and those from the riding centre in casual or typical riding dress. While the digital recordings

are a substantially fair and accurate representation of what happened in interviews and meetings, they are not verbatim recordings and look more towards common ethnographic work rather than discourse analysis (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007).

The AGM appeared to be a characteristic meeting in terms of board members' attendance compared to 2016, but with fewer stakeholders (non-board members). Full attendance at the following Board meeting however was not characteristic, based on a review of six sets of board minutes, which reflected absences in each case. Given the regulatory framework of these meetings, the researcher took the stance of 'complete observer' (Easterby-Smith et al, 2015, p.162) and maintained a detached distance. One intervention was made however (with the new chair's agreement) to rearrange rectangular tables in a large square to facilitate digital recording and videoing of participants. This was a pragmatic intervention and participants readily acquiesced and sat around the newly formed table.

The final step in collecting data was a review of board governance documents including financial and operating reports and proposals in relation to restructuring, staff roles and salaries. Codes were generated manually from participants' own words then categorised. Interview transcripts were colour coded and categorised in order to find patterns and develop themes. The board meeting transcript was coded in terms of time speaking, questions raised on topics, who initiated talk and consensus. An adapted contact form (Miles and Huberman cited in Easterby-Smith et al, 2015) was employed to document observations which can be found under Appendix 3. Data from documentation were initially coded around sets of minutes, financial reports, operating reports and strategy papers.

4.2.3 Section Summary

An inductive (bottom-up) process of surfacing themes mapped data from the three collection techniques following the established procedure of Braun and Clarke (2006). This approach was preferred to that of Gioia et al. (2012) because of its step by step approach for novice researchers. NVivo software was requested but due to the lengthy turnaround time, manual coding of data, a process already underway from field work, continued and was followed throughout. Manual coding was a challenging process, but as familiarisation with the data developed so did confidence in the data.

Table 1 - Summary of Data Collected

Source of data	Collected from	Nature and variety of research topics	Disclosed
Individuals	7 semi-structured digitally recorded interviews 1 unstructured interview new chair (elected 14 June 2017)	Leadership in decision-making and information sharing Governance enacting practices at Scropton Leadership style	Views and subjective experience of being a director and enacting governance Leadership practices and processes that happen
Board at work	Observation and note-taking of 2 meetings 1 AGM 1 board meeting following the AGM	Observation Leadership in action. The board governance mechanism in action Individuals performing the role of director governance Themes raised in interview	Decision-making being enacted The board functioning in a natural setting and complying with its regulatory obligations Individuals' compromising to reach consensus

<p>Board documentation</p>	<p>1 AGM agenda 2017 1 AGM minutes 2016 Treasurer's annual report 31/12/16 1 board agenda 14/6/2017 7 x sets of board minutes for 2016 1 x 2017 8 x reports both routine and strategic</p>	<p>Constitution and articles about the legal identity of the board Regulatory documents Reports Financial RDA activities Restructuring and staffing Documents on yard notice boards</p>	<p>Compliant governance being enacted Leadership action inside and outside of the boardroom Role of traditional leadership at time of change Potential move to a more pluralist theory of governance</p>
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4.3 Data Analysis

4.3.1 Organization

This study followed sequential data collection over a period of five days between 10 June and 14 June 2017. Initial analysis of interviews was carried out as transcripts were completed in order to get a preliminary sense of participants' views. After the three collection phases were complete, thematic analysis proceeded. A semantic approach identified themes in the surface meanings of the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 13). The original intention was to follow a latent approach to thematic analysis to interpret the ideas and assumptions underlying the data, but given the time constraints of the MRes, this level of analysis was not pursued.

4.3.2 Interviews

Thematic analysis started with the transcription of eight interviews, which were uploaded to a laptop. Each transcript was read several times for familiarisation, alongside the researcher's notes. Interviews were then colour coded around the main concepts set out in the research objectives, with focus on the locus of leadership as something that is shared, shaped by context, and the leadership practices, processes and governance that are employed.

Each transcript was interrogated around the questions – ‘what are these data about?’; ‘do they support existing knowledge?’ and ‘do they challenge it?’ (Easterby-Smith et al, 2015, p. 192). Participants' views expressed in interview were then compared with data collected by different techniques. An illustration of data compared across three collection techniques is set out below.

Table 2 - Illustration of Theme Across Three Different Collection Techniques

Theme ‘Strong Core Purpose’

Interview	Observation	Document Review
Core purpose (commitment to aims of charity)	Chair affirms purpose at AGM on 14/06/2017	Proposal to register members and comply with Charity Commission and RDA federation

4.3.3 Observations of Meetings

The AGM was held in the evening of 14 June 2017 in the natural setting of the coffee bar at the Scropton yard. One rectangular table, already placed at the end of the room was where the chair and treasurer seated themselves, together with the secretary.

The researcher assumed a ‘complete observer’ role and distance from the participants (Easterby-Smith, 2015, p.162) due to the regulatory nature of both meetings. The observation framework was open and categories were not pre-coded, but ‘observer-identified categories’ (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, p. 38) were constructed around the topics of leadership and governance. This formed the starting point for the process of developing initial codes and potential themes in line with step two of Braun and Clarke (2006). Illustrations of initial observations and features follow.

Table 3 - Illustrations of Initial Observations Linked to Participant Codes

Index	Meaning or feature	Example – AGM
	Orientation to physical environment and context	Researcher’s notes Chair and treasurer sat at one rectangular table at one end of room. Digital recording device was on table. Space was made for secretary on the end

	Seating arrangements for participants	<p>Remaining three directors clustered at a small round table some distance apart</p> <p>The incoming chair and charity manager sat together at a rectangular table at rear</p> <p>Two members of the public sat at a small table at the rear in the corner</p>
G01	<p>Accountability to stakeholders</p> <p>Proposal for membership</p>	<p>AGM ‘...important ... you have the opportunity to check up on what we are doing, how we are getting on and have some influence on where we are going’ (participant 0048)</p> <p>‘We have agreed this as a board. But we have to formally agree it at a general meeting’ (participant 0043)</p>
G02	Transparency - disclosure of financial rule	‘Charity commission recommend that you keep half a year’s worth of running cost in your reserves which we fall short of quite considerably’(participant 0043)

4.3.4 Analysis of Observation

Observations during the board meeting of 14 June 2017 were documented around five points. Specifically, the main themes that surfaced; how these related to the research objectives; a summary of information from the contact; what jumped out as being important in this contact and questions to be explored. Detail can be found under Appendix 3.

What stands out from observation of the two board meetings and resonates with other data is the changing board context and implications for practice. For example, potential impact is illustrated through the difference in the leadership style of the two chairs. Chair 1 (prior to 14 June 2017) stepped into the vacancy to assist the charity in the short term. Chair 2 (post 14 June 2017) was invited to put his name forward.

At this stage it is not clear what leadership role and impact (Harrison and Murray, 2012) the new chair will have on Scropton Board.

Table 4 - Comparison of Chair Leadership Style Across Three Different Collection Techniques

Interview	Observation	In text
	Chairs in action	Researcher's Summary
Chair 1 [on the role] 'We haven't defined the role of chair ourselves we've been meaning to for quite a while'	AGM [on retiral] 'I've enjoyed.... But as you know I prefer to be in the back	Minute of 01 February 2017 The chair suggested that each director and members of staff should make a list of priorities and send them to her before the next meeting.
Chair 2 [on the role] 'You know you've got to lead em in the right direction and say well I don't think we can quite do that'	AGM [on acceptance] 'I am very honoured to be asked I can assure you I will give it every effort I can' 'My experience in running a company goes back over my career as a chartered surveyor.....I hope that I will be able to assist the board as directors if you so wish it'	Minute of 14 June 2017 expected to reflect the chair's summary of items questioning monthly reports and motivating his own proposal to appoint a full-time fund raiser (Researcher's notes).

4.3.5 Review of Board Documents

Secondary data in the form of seven sets of board minutes (1 x 2017; 5 x 2016; 1 x 2014) were reviewed together with the treasurer's report for the financial year 31 December 2016.

Current documents prepared by the treasurer and charity manager (former chair) relating to the AGM of 14 June 2017; the board meeting of 14 June 2017 and monthly reports for January; February and May 2017 were reviewed along with a current membership proposal; a ‘review of non-yard roles’ and an RDA document about group membership.

A significant report dated 28/06/2017 (v2) entitled ‘New Organisation Structure at Scropton RDA’ and referring to an earlier period was reviewed. These documents represent the social setting of Scropton RDA and the written material produced reflects ‘documentary constructions of reality’ (Coffey and Atkinson cited in Hammersley et al, 2007, p. 121). Illustrations of initial document codes and features follow.

Table 5 - Secondary Data – Illustrations of Document Codes and Features with Links to Participants’ Codes

Index	Features and links to participants’ codes	Example
DC1	Context arising from situation and which influences leadership	Document ‘New Organisation at Scropton RDA’ sets out decision options for trustees in relation to structure and roles together with financial analysis – [original date of paper not reflected]. Context category here is at board level
DG1	Governance in practice	AGM - agenda 14 June 2017 and minute of AGM meeting on 20 June 2016 Minute of 16 November 2016 – board advised of changes to accounting procedures following incorporation Minute of 16 September 2014 ‘Extraordinary Meeting’ to discuss incorporation – 5 trustees absent and no formal resolution. Minute unsigned

DL1	Leadership through sharing knowledge	AGM – report 31/12/2016 providing explanatory context to year-end financial results (participant code 0043)
DL2	Leadership through sharing knowledge and information	Ongoing monthly reports for board January 2017; February 2017 (participant 0043) May 2017 (participant 0047)

4.3.6 Data Analysis of Themes

The focus of this exploratory analysis is on participants’ subjective experience of the practices at work in the Scropton Board and anchored in the technique of triangulation to establish credibility (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Aligned to the thematic analysis approach (Braun and Clarke, 2006) data from three different collection techniques were mapped and 44 initial codes were suggested. An iterative process of reading, listening, reviewing and returning to interview transcripts was carried out to identify common themes across the entire dataset. These were then reviewed for redundancy and resulting in the following 10 initial themes.

Table 6 - Initial Themes Surfaced Across the Entire Dataset

Communication	Expert knowledge
Compliance	Leadership
Core purpose	Responsibilities
Decision-making	Change
Different Priorities	Technology

Themes were developed in terms of step three (searching for themes) and step 4 (reviewing themes Braun and Clarke (2006) leading to the following four themes.

Table 7 - Final Themes

The following themes suggest main concepts relating to the research question.

Compliance	Expert knowledge
Core purpose	Leadership

(An elaborated table reflecting associated sub-themes, can be found in Appendix 4)

Table 8 - Illustration of Themes Linked to Participant Voices (abridged)

Themes	Participants' Voices
Compliance	<p>‘We are trying to make sure that we are covering everything ...’ (participant 0048)</p> <p>‘We know that we need to do some work around health and safety’ (participant 0045)</p>
Strong core purpose	<p>‘We are all here for the good of the centre’ (participant 0045)</p> <p>‘My priorities are the horses and riders because without the horses we don’t have any riders’ (participant 0046)</p>
Board reliance on expert knowledge	<p>‘I produce a set of accounts and produce some nice graphs for them’ (participant 0043)</p> <p>‘I produce a monthly report for them about things that are happening or have been done....’ (participant 0047)</p> <p>‘When we became directorsI pulled together a fact sheet’ (participant 0045)</p>
Leadership in practice	<p>‘It’s pretty much done by the CM and treasurer’ (participant 0051)</p> <p>‘We try for consensus before challenging decisions (participant 0044)</p> <p>‘I felt strongly that we needed to change what we were doing as a centre... it resulted in a ...significant restructure...there were no trustees who argued against that’ (participant 0047)</p>

(Expanded table under Appendix 5)

4.4 Chapter Summary

The data collection strategy here employed semi-structured and unstructured interviews (see Appendix 1 for interview design) in order to surface rich descriptions from participants about subjective experiences of the practices at Scropton Board. Observation of leadership and governance enacted in the boardroom and a review of board documents followed sequentially. Participants' voices are reflected throughout the chapter, and illustrated in the final themes in Table 8.

Chapter 5

Interpreting the Data

5.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on interpreting the themes from three data collection techniques and the concepts being inferred. The interpretivist belief in multiple realities offers depth and validity but Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) remind us that it is in the inferences drawn from data that validity can be found.

The chapter provides a rich description of governance at Scropton. Data collected in relation to leadership practices suggest the following:

- (i) that there is some support for a form of shared leadership
- (ii) the board's changing legal context is leading to a process of adapting to a wider form of governance (Cornforth, 2012)
- (iii) the locus of leadership during 2014 – 2017 is determined by the changing context and situational opportunities that provide leadership (Hernandez et al, 2011).

5.2 Background to Scropton RDA

Scropton is one of 482 charities within the UK RDA federation, championing disabled people and providing disability sport. Scropton RDA has existed for over fifty years and owns the site (infrastructure and land) where it is based. It has six directors of whom four have been volunteers for over twenty years. Two directors have been volunteers since

childhood. Scropton has 11 employees (4 f/t; 6 p/t and 1 apprentice); 3 regular freelance staff; 25 volunteers and 25 school horses.

Until January 2017 Scropton was constituted as an unincorporated association. At an ‘extraordinary meeting’ of the trustee on 16 September 2014 the matter of becoming incorporated as a company limited by guarantee was discussed with a view to giving Scropton ‘the chance to steer the group long term’ (minute 16/09/2014) and align itself with RDA National.

The constitution of 14 June 1976 and subsequently amended, is silent on holding an extraordinary meeting and being quorate. The minute of 16 September 2014 does not reflect a resolution adopting incorporation, because five trustees were absent. Incorporation was implemented in January 2017 apart from the transfer of land to the Scropton Board, which is now imminent (observation board meeting 14 June 2017).

5.3 Interpretation

This interpretation argues that the four themes of compliance core purpose expert knowledge and leadership surfaced here, contribute to a rich description that suggests the following:

- i) the idea of sharing leadership through the practice of co-leadership; shared purpose and expert knowledge
- ii) the changing legal context that requires the board to adapt to a more pluralist form of governance (Cornforth, 2012) and greater stakeholder accountability
- iii) that the locus of leadership during 2014 – 2017 is the changing context of restructure, redundancy and change in legal status (Hernandez et al, 2011).

The concept of shared leadership was surfaced in the co-leadership of the treasurer and charity manager, two independent individuals who interrelate to perform leadership (Sally cited in Kocolowski, 2010). From another lens, the idea of shared purpose (Carson et al, 2007) appears present through knowledge sharing amongst one or two individuals, for example the treasurer and the director with HR knowledge. However the case did not suggest a dynamic mutual influence amongst all the directors (Pearce and Conger, 2003).

5.4 Concepts suggested by the data

The above ideas are developed further in the remainder of the chapter.

5.4.1 Sharing Leadership at Scropton

Sharing leadership at Scropton materialises in three ways. Firstly through the co-leadership of the treasurer and charity manager. This seems well understood in practice, through monthly reports, and an email decision-making process between meetings. Secondly through a sense of shared purpose that may or may not be facilitated by consensus building. Thirdly through expert knowledge that is willingly shared. These are illustrated below.

5.4.2 Co-leadership Between the Treasurer and Charity Manager.

Participants' voices:

- *'A lot of it comes from the treasurer'* (participant 0044)
- *'it's pretty much done by the CM and treasurer'* (participant 0051)
- *'We only tend to meet every 2 months... so ping out an email and just say – anybody got any objections we need this? People will come back with more comments than in*

the meeting ...on email I've noticed that people will challenge a bit more or come up with something else' (participant 43).

In looking towards theory (Sally cited in Kocolowski, 2010) suggests that co-leadership is a successful form of shared leadership. But this definition does not encapsulate influence shared among an association of individuals in order to achieve organizational goals (Pearce and Conger, 2003).

5.4.3 Shared Purpose and Voice

Shared purpose and commitment to Scropton RDA is evident in the practice of sharing expert knowledge such as finance and commitment to the charity, articulated in different ways. Participants' voices:

- *'We've got quite a strong core purpose in the centre and in the charity, although people don't always have exactly the same view everyone tends to be focussed to that so that we are all facing in the same direction from that point of view'* (participant 0045)
- *'It's just the passion.....we are keen to be involved and make the centre a success' and 'I would never want to see this place fail in any way'* (participant 0043)
- *'My passion is out there I don't want to get lost in officialdom I want to be sure that the kids come and enjoy it'* (participant 0051)
- *'My priorities are the horses and riders because without the horses we don't have any riders'* (participant 0046).

Looking towards theory, shared purpose is one of the ways in which shared leadership can develop (Carson et al, 2007) and the Scropton idea of core purpose is potentially evidence

of this. However other required elements in this definition, such as internal team environment; social support and voice, were not surfaced here, most notably voice.

The idea of 'voice' relates to the concept of consensus building in that voice 'connotes participation and input' (Carson et al, 2007. p.1222). Conversely these scholars tell us that 'no standard definition of voice exists' (p.1222).

While participants expressed a clear commitment to the notion of achieving consensus, voice was more difficult to surface. Both supporting and opposing views of consensus were clearly expressed in interview, but were more muted in other contexts and illustrated below.

Participants' voices in interview:

- *'We try for consensus before challenging decisions'* (participant 0044)
- *'Consensus is easy it's a nice group to work with'* (participant 0045)

Other participants suggest a more opaque picture

- *'It's like are you happy? I think that there's a few of us that are bulldozed into things'* (participant 0051)
- *'They can have their say and put their views forward. Hopefully they are listened to and at times because when some members of the Board haven't necessarily worked in leadership positions before sometimes they can confuse not having their ideas acted on with not having them listened to'* (participant 0045)

Illustrated in relation to decision-making about the restructure

- *'There were no trustees who argued against that'* (participant 0047)

- *'We had a bit of an issue with a couple of trustees who didn't want it to happen'* (participant 0044).

In making sense of the opaque picture, suggested by the data, it is helpful to look at decision-making exercised by the board. So while directors who might be characterised as experts view consensus as being present in decision-making at the board other directors seem to suggest that decisions are already made before coming to the board.

In looking towards literature Bergman et al. (2012) argue that teams practising shared leadership illustrate greater consensus and less conflict. Findings suggest consensus and satisfaction, 'were highly correlated' but satisfaction was 'not significant' (p. 34). These findings highlight that while shared leadership may have increased consensus, in practice satisfaction with decisions may not be at the same level, and more difficult to achieve. Pearce et al. (2008) argue that 'team decision-making with consensus' should 'only be supplanted when organizational circumstances necessitate it' (p.626). However they also state that 'a single individual may have strategic insights or wisdom.....shaping strategic visions without broader consensus' (p.626). At Scropton it can be argued that one participant performed that role in relation to the restructure.

At the board meeting on 14 June 2017 it was difficult to see consensus in action where directors agreed a BBQ event as a compromise for not holding a full open day in 2017. So on the face of it there is support for the concept of consensus-building in the boardroom, but when all the above views are taken into account a more complicated picture emerges. Clearly consensus is readily achieved by the treasurer and charity manager about decisions to take forward, but the case does not suggest consensus building across the board. For example, in relation to strategy and mission, reflected in the words of one participant:

- *'We had a meeting once to discuss a mission statement - very unproductive we came to no conclusion'* (participant 0046).

In a board that reportedly meets about six times a year, and which has some directors for whom Scropton is a secondary activity, consensus is difficult to build, especially at a strategic level (Vandewaerde et al, 2011). At Scropton influences from a changing context (Hernandez, 2011) for example the new chair and different legal responsibilities are yet to unfold.

Consensus at Scropton seems important to participants but is contested through the power issues surfaced. For example:

- *'I think we only really seem to get asked for approval or disapproval – there's a little bit of conversation but pretty much the decisions are made..... there's a few of us that are bulldozed into things'* (participant 0051)
- *'Before we made more decisions in the meeting'* (participant 0044).

This theme might be further uncovered in future research by a different theoretical perspective such as discourse theory.

5.4.4 Expert Knowledge

The concept of expert knowledge is a theme that resonates with the concept of shared leadership (Pearce and Conger, 2003). In practice shared leadership was illustrated consistently by two or more participants and sometimes with a third participant.

The case suggests that while the board does not follow a portfolio structure, individual directors cover specialist areas such as finance and human resources. Additionally the charity manager reports to the board by providing historical information (CM Report May 2017)

and also by submitting papers for consideration. For example, the 'Review of Non Yard Roles' (CM, June 2017).

Participants' voices:

- *'We get a financial report – that's good – it's a very good report and we can see where we are' and 'this year budget set at the start of the year with projections and year to date accumulated figuresso good information to control financial figures and a helpful overview'* (participant 0044)
- *'We've adopted an approach where we get a report from the charity manager I think it's working well'* (participant 0045)
- *'I produce a monthly report for them about things that are happening or have been done – there's quite a good communication'* (participant 0047)
- *'When we became directorsI pulled together a fact sheet to say this is what it means'* (participant 0045).

Data here leads us towards theory around the concept of information sharing as an element of shared leadership. For example: 'knowledgeable members that demonstrate an ability and willingness to share information' (Taylor, 2013, p. 85; 93) and 'information sharing represents one mechanism through which shared leadership operates' (Hoch, 2014, p.555). So there is a sense of shared leadership, though what is more opaque is the extent to which directors not characterised as experts, influence or question the content of such reports.

Participant's voice:

- *'Wellwe share information at the meetings.....I don't think we get together often enough to discuss things'* (participant 0044).

5.5 Board Adapting to Changing Contexts

Compliance

Participants' concern for compliance peppers the narrative for the following reasons: serious financial troubles 20 years ago, Scropton's restructure in 2014, incorporation on 01 January 2017, and the added responsibility of being a director as opposed to a trustee.

Participants' voices:

'We are trying to ensure that we cover everything' (participant 0048)

'We know we need to do some work around health and safety' (participant 00045).

Additionally, the importance of compliance featured in the new chair's address to the Board (14/06/2017) and his question to the treasurer about why the AGM paperwork had not appointed a firm of chartered accountants as auditors (*the board has 12 months to do this*).

While compliance was a dominant theme, the sub-themes of transparency and accountability were present, but less frequent. Accountability is demonstrated in the board's initiative to register members, leading to more transparency towards stakeholders (proposal AGM and Board 14/06/2017).

On the face of it, this is a compliance matter for the charity commission. However this regulatory requirement also creates a new context for the board that looks more towards 'a broader conceptualization of nonprofit governance' (Cornforth, 2012, p.1122) through transparency in everyday practices that deliver 'broadened accountability' (Morrison and Salipante, 2007, p.195). For example putting the principle of 'conflict of interest' on the

bottom of the agenda (participant 0045 and approved by board 14 September 2016). Notably the agenda for 14 June 2017 did not reflect this text.

Participant's voice on 'conflict of interest':

- *'We drew up a form for directors.....about their role on the board' and 'we talk about conflicts of interest in that document'* (participant 0045)

Concern about 'conflict of interest' was minuted on 20 July 2016 and the board approved a 'list of conflict of interest' on 14 September 2016.

Participants' voices on accountability practices:

- *'Making sure that we've got all of the policies that we need....that's something we are hoping that ...[incoming chair] is going to help out with'* (participant 0048)
- *'I think the split between the board and executive now works better' and 'it's created a gap between the decision making and therefore it is far more transparent'* (participant 0045).

Looking towards theory in relation to governance, Scropton appears to be governed by unitary logic (Coule, 2015) in that transparency is illustrated in the reports to the Charity Commission and Companies House. Thus Scropton adopt a form of 'principal-agent theory' where accountability is conceived of as the process through which organisations report to authority and are 'held responsible for their actions' (Coule, 2015, p.78).

The recognised challenge for Scropton is how to demonstrate transparent accountability to its stakeholders, and according to board documents, has been the subject of discussion for many months. For example:

- Minute 20 July 2016 – reflects need for ‘a mission statement’; the principle of ‘conflict of interest’ for directors set out in RDA governance documents and fact sheet prepared for directors (participant 0045)
- Minute 14 September 2016 – ‘Vision/mission meeting’ organised for 19 October 2016
- Meeting 14 June 2017 membership proposal approved at the 2017 AGM in line with RDA National and thereby granting members [stakeholders] the vote on any resolution at any general meeting.

In the context of theory, Scropton’s practice of working on strategy and mission and re-registering members in 2017 suggests an organisation ‘advancing its mission in a clear and focussed manner’ (Likert and Maas, 2015, p.278). Moreover it is a move beyond legal compliance to ‘values-driven’ accountability (Coule, 2015, p.85) and governance theory shaped by pluralist logic that reinforces democratic and stakeholder theories. Thus Scropton demonstrate a commitment to transparency and accountability to stakeholders, but how accessible are they to stakeholders? In other words, how is Scropton RDA ‘accessible for questions and complaints’ (Liket and Maas, 2015, p.278).

Participants’ voices in relation to stakeholder accountability:

- *‘We have agreed this as a board but we have to formally agree it at a general meeting’* (participant 0043 at AGM)
- *‘As with a lot of charities we are looking to involve them more [stakeholders] and understand their needs and feelings we’ve done some little surveys’* (participant 0047)

- *‘Important ...you have the opportunity to check up on what we are doing, how we are getting on and have some influence on where we are going’* (participant 0048 observed at AGM).

This case reveals not only compliance matters but also the complexity of changing contexts of governance and accountability for nonprofit boards. For example, Coule (2015) in her comparative study of four cases suggests that different governance theories and practices hold particular implications for accountability.

While this case did not reveal Scropton’s accountability to stakeholders through practices such as fund raising (Tacon et al, 2017) or transparent complaints’ procedures (Liket and Maas, 2015), it does practise multi-level governance (Cornforth, 2012) through sharing its facilities with other RDA groups and engaging with local donors such as Rotary, The Lions, Tesco, and the various auditors. Moreover, while currently governed by agency theory and a ‘rule based view’ (Coule, 2015, p.85) Scropton is already practising or moving towards multi-level governance.

5.6 Locus of Leadership 2014 – 2017

Two significant events occurred between 2014 and 2017 that shaped leadership decisions. Firstly Scropton RDA restructured and made the former centre manager redundant; secondly it changed legal identity. The context of the restructure and incorporation corresponds with the idea of context that employs and accepts influence, and determines leadership (Hernandez et al, 2011). Participants’ voices:

- *‘This - the restructuring – it was a massive thing for us.... it probably took us 12 months to stabilise the situation’* (participant 0043)

- *'I think it was a bit brave telling somebody we didn't want them to be working here anymore, and that's not the sort of thing I'm used to doing'* (participant 0044)

One of the many challenges of this study was to understand board leadership and governance against the changing legal context, and the loss of an experienced chair to employment as charity manager, a role that reports to the board. The board context is integral in the restructure and subsequent incorporation of Scropton. These events can be conceptualised as situational opportunities that influenced 'organizational members' (Hernandez et al, 2011, p. 1167) and acted as a spring for leadership decisions (Uhl-Bien et al, 2007).

Participants' voices in relation to the restructure illustrate contested consensus:

- *'I felt strongly that we needed to change what we were doing as a centre It resulted in a significant restructure.... there were no trustees who argued against that'* (participant 0047)
- *'We had a bit of an issue with a couple of trustees who didn't want it to happen'* (participant 0044).

The literature tells us that shared leadership is unlikely to emerge in contexts with high power distance and individualistic views, as these do not echo the fundamental assumptions of power sharing, and emphasis on group goals (Hernandez et al, 2011). Accordingly shared leadership could reasonably be expected to flourish in the context of Scropton Board with its 'horizontal authority structure' (Vandewaerde et al, 2011, p.414) and in a UK context with a PDI of 35. Interestingly the case does not reveal the extent to which shared leadership is the result of mutual influence (Pearce and Sims, 2002; Carson et al, 2007) across the board context. Nor does it fully explicate the impact of sharing leadership on good governance.

However it does suggest a board structure with business experts occupying a leadership hierarchy within the board.

Chapter 6

Presentation of Findings

6.1 Introduction

In addressing the research question of how one nonprofit board constructs and makes sense of leadership and governance in practice, Scropton RDA provides rich data from which to advance our understanding. Following an inductive process of mapping sets of ideas, uncovering patterns in the data that surfaced themes, and linking these to concepts, data analysed in chapter 4 was subject to interpretation in chapter 5 about what knowledge can be gained from this study.

Chapter 6 does several things. Firstly it presents the overall findings; secondly it looks towards theory and comments on where data suggest theoretical links, or its absence. Thirdly it touches on methodological issues and how these impact the study. Finally it considers limitations of this study and ends with a short reflection. These findings are drawn from 55,221 spoken words by eight participants; observations of two board meetings together lasting one and a half hours and a review of 21 documents, including seven board minutes and eight reports.

6.2 Overall Findings

The final four themes inductively surfaced by the data suggest the following concepts.

Table 9 – Overall findings

Co-leadership between two individuals who inter-relate	Governance through compliance, accountability and transparency
Context as the locus of leadership through situational opportunities	Leadership modelled through consensus and decision-making practices

6.3 Data That Leads us Towards Theory (or not)

Against a backdrop of a contested definition of shared leadership (Carson et al, 2007), little qualitative research about shared leadership in practice, and a lack of research focus on the ‘consequences of shared leadership in a dynamic sense’ (Drescher et al, 2014, p.773) to what extent can we say that Scropton has adopted a shared leadership ethos? Notwithstanding these constraints findings from the Scropton board context, suggest a form of shared leadership is present in the following areas.

6.3.1 Co-Leadership

There is evidence of leadership being shared in practice between the treasurer and charity manager in consulting one another informally by email or phone, and reporting formally to the board. Therefore a form of shared leadership has emerged because of ‘situational factors such as team members’ knowledge, skills, abilities and environmental complexity’ (Pearce and Conger cited in Ramthun and Matkin, 2012, p.307). In other words, the practice suggests support for the concept of co-leadership (Sally cited in Kocolowski, 2010).

What was more opaque was how information sharing, and decision-making was influenced by individual directors across the board. So while the practice of sharing leadership

demonstrated by the treasurer and charity manager correlates with the ideas that ‘no board member is likely to possess all of the required knowledge’ and ‘directors are generally speaking highly dependent on each other in their work’ (Vandewaerde et al, 2011, p. 1167), what has not surfaced is how this co-leadership approach facilitated the sharing and emergence of leadership from other directors in the boardroom.

6.3.2 Context as the Locus of Leadership

In their comprehensive mapping of leadership theory, Hernandez et al. (2011) identify context as a loci of leadership that can operate at different levels by exerting and receiving influence from organizational members. Additionally that theories of context should not be viewed as a set of variables but as a ‘spring’ to generate leadership (Uhl-Bien et al, 2007, p. 1167). In Scropton Board context is the locus for leadership which is apparent in the restructure; the redundancy of one manager, and the move to incorporation and long term strategic focus.

The influence of changing context can be looked at through a governance lens. For example, Cornforth (2012) tackles the implications of changing context for third sector organisations, specifically the ‘internal processes and dynamics of nonprofit boards’ (Cornforth, 2012, p.1126). The current Scropton initiative to register members, while regulatory, also suggests a move towards a more inclusive context in pluralist theory (Coule, 2015). The board’s discussions about strategy and mission over several months, illustrate an internal process that is potentially opening up new contexts for Scropton.

6.3.3 Governance Through Compliance, Accountability and Transparency

At an ‘extraordinary meeting’ of the Board (Minute 16 September 2014) to discuss incorporation, the board considered a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats analysis (SWOT) submitted by the then chair. This undated report can be characterised as a ‘normative practice of context analysis of threats and opportunities in the environment’ (Liket and Maas, 2015, p.279). The minute records two important views. Firstly that the aim of incorporation is to ‘steer the group long term’ highlighting a long term plan and policy review. Secondly that ideas will be progressed through extra meetings. However it is silent in relation to goals arising from the SWOT analysis and the availability of a strategic plan, a practice that facilitates communication about the organisation to its stakeholders and a form of transparent accountability. (Likert and Maas, 2015).

In relation to mission statement, the minute of 01 February 2017 reflects the chair’s voice:

- *‘.....Said she had been unsuccessful in contacting the facilitator, but would try again’* (participant 0048)

In her critique of governance and accountability theory Coule (2015) contrasts the logic of unitarism and compliance based accountability with pluralist logic that contemplates a broader concept of accountability, including stakeholders. Certainly compliance can be seen at Scropton through the mechanism of reporting to the Charity Commission and Companies House. Broader accountability however is more opaque. What was not surfaced at Scropton was a sense of accountability to funders (Tacon et al, 2017) though Scropton seems to be moving towards a pluralist form of governance through a more strategic focus and implementation of RDA membership.

6.3.4 Leadership Modelled Through Consensus Building and Decision-making Practices

Consensus building and its impact on decision-making practices at Scropton requires further investigation given the central role of consensus in nonprofit boards, and in strategy development more generally (Bergman et al, 2012). Commitment to the idea of consensus is certainly present across the interview data from seven participants, but what it means is different for individuals. For example in some cases silence is treated as acquiescence. In others not having to vote on an issue is building consensus. To others it is not standing up and being thought stupid. What stands out from two interviews and relevant to the question about consensus and decision-making practices at the board, is that these participants demonstrated a sense of 'expressive caution' (several very long pauses and hesitation) (Silverman, 2001, p.121.) when talking about new regulatory practices that will impact on the presence of the charity manager during decision making, when she is no longer a director.

Additionally, in observation of the routine board meeting, five directors (out of seven) spoke a total of one minute and twenty nine seconds of a one hour meeting. This perhaps coincides with the idea that silence is consensus or alternatively a commitment to consensus but dissatisfied with particular decisions (Bergman et al, 2012).

Data suggests a sense that some participants gave different performances in interview and observation. So relating this to theory, Goffman (1959) offers an interpretation through the concept of the self as essentially plural, knowingly giving a collection of performances, depending upon whether activities are performed in the presence of others (front region) or without an audience (back region). Given the different performances between interview and

observation in the case of some directors, both places could be interpreted as performances in ‘front regions’.

6.4 Methodological Issues

This qualitative case study revealed a surprising amount of data from five days in the field, and was indisputably challenging for a novice researcher to handle. It relied on the methodological philosophy of interpretivism and understanding ‘the importance of the perspectives of the people involved’ (Hammersley, 2015, p.36).

While participants’ experiences are richly described and triangulated across three collection techniques, there is a methodological issue. This issue is related to specifically limited field time which did not facilitate an exploration of participants’ perspectives in relation to the concept of consensus, where ‘penetrating fronts’ - the assumption that people set up fronts ‘consciously or unconsciously to hide what they are doing’ (Hammersley, 2015, p.38) - were engaged, and illustrated through the difference between what participants said in interview and what was observed in meetings.

The research findings might have been improved by using an ethnographic methodology using on site observation for longer periods, a review of Scropton archived documents prior to 2014 and a deeper literature review centred on consensus in teams which could have improved conceptual analysis and tighter triangulation.

6.4.1 Trustworthiness of This Research

Trustworthiness for this study was established by using data from multiple collection approaches which increased valid findings, and triangulation (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

Triangulation worked in two ways to ensure that participants' voices were heard and not subject to the researcher's bias or interest, firstly across the data set drawn from eight individual interviews and secondly across the other two collection techniques.

Techniques for showing transferability and confirmability relied on Lincoln and Guba (1985). For example, in relation to transferability, a rich description gave access to eight participants' voices through direct quotes drawn from 55,221 words together with a sense of what was happening and who was involved. Confirmability was carried out through two techniques of triangulation and reflexivity. Finally, thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) helped to surface the themes from which concepts could be advanced.

6.5 Limitations

The present study offers a contribution to knowledge about sharing leadership in practice in one nonprofit board but is not without limitations. The research design here was about leadership practices and governance in the boardroom, but there was insufficient time allowed for observing the board in action.

An alternative approach might be to observe the board for longer, at staged intervals, when decision-making could be tracked to implementation, or not. Also the role of yard manager, an equestrian expert and important influence on whom the board relies (participants 0051 and 0046) was not included in the research design.

Lack of agreement on the conceptualisation of shared leadership and how it might be operationalised makes it difficult to research. Moreover theory drawn from predominantly positivist or cross-sectional designs is not helpful in exploring shared leadership in a

naturally occurring setting. However this presents a blank canvas for qualitative researchers studying shared leadership, and governance in practice.

6.6 Reflection

The aim of this research is to explore shared leadership and governance at Scropton RDA and to identify patterns in the data that lead to theory and concepts. It employs an inductive approach attempting to put the reader in the place of the researcher (Wetherell et al, 2001). The claims made here are tentative, shaped by a relativist perspective and a researcher who selected the topics, and is learning the processes of data collection and analysis throughout the dissertation project.

The natural setting of this study provided advantages for exploring shared leadership and governance in practice and the risk of reactivity (researcher influence on the data) was diminished by the researcher assuming a ‘complete observer’ role (Easterby-Smith, 2015, p.162). But the presence of the researcher may have influenced observation data at the board, and data surfaced in interview.

Several images symbolise the good work done by Scropton RDA. Firstly a group of disabled riders receiving rosettes and doing a victory lap under the watchful eyes of volunteers. Secondly, leadership practices modelled in the yard in the way health and safety is observed through published instructions on how to approach horses in their boxes through the ‘traffic light system’ (red code do not approach); clear labelling of saddles and bridles in the tack room and guidelines for use. Large notice boards publishing Stable Club volunteers’ achievements and Pony Club activities. These guidelines importantly allow horses to be horses at the end of the working day, when they are turned out to graze in paddocks

overnight. Finally, the image of Chester, a 35 year old chestnut, whose coat gleams with good health in the early morning sun, but who is now too old to compete in the race from the paddocks to the yard for breakfast – which is always waiting for him.

Chapter 7

Conclusion and Future Direction

7.1 Conclusion

This study about investigating participants' experiences is oriented towards finding out what actually happens in practice in one governing board through what participants say and do in interview and observation in a naturally occurring context, and contrasted with what is reflected in documentation. The research design documents features of Scropton RDA Board through description, an important principle of research as 'we cannot theorise about something without describing it' (Hammersley, 2015, p.87). However we are also reminded that 'descriptions are always selective: they never include all the information that could have been provided' (Hammersley, 2015, p.89).

The aim is to produce knowledge about what happens in practice in one governing Board, based on participants' views and how they actively interpret their world. Also to contribute to knowledge about shared leadership theory and accountable governance practice in NPO boards. This research demonstrates shared leadership in the following areas 1) the practice of co-leadership of two individuals 2) expert knowledge and information sharing 3) strong shared purpose. However a dynamic mutual influence process amongst all directors was not surfaced and while consensus had clear commitment from all participants, in practice consensus building is more problematic.

In relation to the locus of leadership, the changing context of the restructure, the redundancy and change in legal identity shaped decisions between 2014 and 2017. Finally board

governance in practice demonstrates a board moving from beyond legal compliance and agency theory towards a broader concept of governance shaped by pluralist theory and multi-level governance.

7.2 Future Direction

This research design and exploratory approach sought a rich description and there was no intention to seek generalisation. In keeping with a qualitative approach, limitations of this study could be addressed in several ways in future research: 1) a comparative case study that explores shared leadership and the intersection with governance, in two nonprofit boards in their natural settings over a more sustained period 2) as mentioned previously, to explore the epistemological view of the self and the link between the processes of self-leadership and shared leadership and 3) individuals' self-presentation in different contexts in everyday life (Goffman, 1959).

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Appendix 1

Case Study Interview Design and Outline

Research Topic: How do trustees to a nonprofit governing Board construct and make sense of leadership, and enact governance in the boardroom?

Interview definition: ‘to develop a shared perspective and understanding between two or more people...of the topic under discussion’ (Yates, 2004, pp.156).

Interview Outline

1. Background

1.1 Date and place of interview

1.2 Name of participant – assign confidential code

1.3 Role: Trustee/Chair/Treasurer

1.4 Length of time in role and other history relevant to the participant

2. Topics

- **Scropton RDA**

Tell me about Scropton RDA and your role in it?

- **Leadership**

How does Board leadership work around decision-making and information sharing?

- **Governance**

What is your sense of how governance works at Scropton?

Appendix 2

Phases of Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006)

	Phase	Description
1	Familiarizing yourself with your data	Transcribing data; reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas
2	Generating initial codes	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code
3	Searching for themes	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all relevant data to each potential theme
4	Reviewing themes	Checking if the themes work in relation to coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis
5	Defining and naming themes	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme
6	Producing the report	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Source: own elaboration from Braun and Clarke, 2006)

Appendix 3

Scropton RDA

Contact Form adapted from Miles and Huberman (1994)

Contact type – Visit and Board Observation

Contact Date – 14 June 2017

Written up – 8 July 2017

Researcher – LW-J

What were the main issues or themes that surfaced and made an impression?

How quickly the Board of Directors accepted the new chairman

The amount of time the chairman spoke – 26 minutes of 1 hour and 20 entries

The authoritative questions posed by the new chairman – ‘have you paid the bill’?

Lack of support for recruitment of fund raiser given approaching deficit

Lack of independent information from the HR committee around extending fixed term contract for senior staff. CM report motivates renewal of own position.

How did these relate to the research objectives?

Leadership style of new chairman – traditional?

The Board’s reliance on expert knowledge of a few people including times when decisions concern the same individuals

Summary of information gathered from observation contact?

Leadership happening in two places – at the level of the CM (arguably a CEO role although CM does not have a remit for financial control); and at the Board

How the charity goes about doing governance business

How the Board interacts with the Charity Manager

How the Board interfaces with the local community and RDA National

How it recruits and trains volunteers

What else jumped out as being important in this contact?

Co-constructed leadership between the Treasurer and Charity Manager (Sally, 2002)

In appropriateness of the Board discussing the renewal of a senior Fixed Term Contract in front of the incumbent

Existence of HR sub-committee yet not consulted before staff paper was brought before the Board

What questions remain for exploration?

How consensus is achieved when there appears to be little interaction amongst several of the directors – 5 directors spoke a total of 1 minute and 29 seconds of 1 hour meeting

Appendix 4

Table 10 - Final Themes and associated sub-themes (expanded Table 7)

Themes	Supporting themes
Compliance and commitment to the aims of the charity	Governance better split between Board and Executive New responsibilities and Articles Role of Chair Transparency / Accountability
Core Purpose	Different Priorities – Sports and Business Diverse views and purpose articulated differently Consensus * Communication Technology /social media
Expert knowledge	Information Sharing - monthly reports Strategy and Mission Decision-making on email between meetings.
Leadership	Restructure of Scropton centre and both able bodied and disabled riding Board change from an Association to Incorporated charity

Appendix 5

Table 11 - Examples of themes linked to participant voices (expanded Table 8)

Themes	Participants' Voices
Compliance	<p>‘we are trying to make sure that we are covering everything’ ...’ (participant 0048)</p> <p>‘we know that we need to do some work around health and safety’ (participant 0045)</p> <p>‘I think that the split between Board and executive now works better.....before the Board was getting into too much detail’ (participant 0045)</p> <p>‘we don’t have a rider representative’ (participant 0047)</p>
Strong core purpose	<p>‘we are all here for the good of the centre’ (participant 0045)</p> <p>‘my youngest son is disabled and that’s the reason that I’m here now’ (participant 0047)</p> <p>‘my priorities are the horses and riders because without the horses we don’t have any riders’ (Participant 0046)</p>
Board reliance on expert knowledge	<p>‘I produce a set of accounts and produce some nice graphs for them’ (participant 0043)</p> <p>‘I produce a monthly report for them about things that are happening or have been done – there’s quite a good communication’ (participant 0047)</p> <p>‘when we became directorsI pulled together a fact sheet to say this is what it means’ (participant 0045)</p>
Leadership in Practice	<p>‘a lot of it comes from the treasurer ‘ (participant 0044)</p> <p>‘it’s pretty much done by the CM and Treasurer’ (participant 0051)</p> <p>‘we try for consensus before challenging decisions (participant 0044)</p>

	<p>‘wellwe share information at the meetings.....I don’t think we get together often enough to discuss things’ (participant 0045)</p> <p>we had a bit of a restructure 2 years ago ... a manager who had lost interest... we tried to work with him unfortunately it didn’t work out and made him redundant’ (participant 0043)</p> <p>‘I felt strongly that we needed to change what we were doing as a centre – but it resulted in quite a significant restructure...there were no trustees who argued against that’ (participant 0047)</p> <p>’we had a bit of an issue with a couple of trustees who didn’t want it to happen’ (participant 0044)</p> <p>‘...our last manager was fabulous with horses but he wasn’t interested in the paperwork side at all’ (participant 0051).</p>
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Appendix 6

Working Note

Codes generated under Phase 2

Scropton RDA –Codes mapped in phase 2 (Braun and Clarke, 2006)

Governance

Code	Feature
GM1 (Governance Mechanism)	Documents – Minutes Agendas
GM2	RDA Constitution
GM3	Mechanisms – Strategic Plan
GM4	Restructure to split Board and Exec
GM5	Accountability
GM6	Compliance
GM7	Role of Board
GM8	Impact of Chairs
GT1	Unitary Logic – Theory
GT2	Pluralist Logic – Theory

Observation

O1	Time Speaking
O2	Questioning expert
O3	Procedures re staff contracts
O4	Engagement with Community
O5	Recruitment of volunteers
O6	Roles and dominant power of CM
O7	Lack of support for recruitment of fundraiser (Funding)
O8	Investment in coaching of directors
O9	Transparency
G01	Accountability to stakeholders
G02	Disclosure of financial rule

Context

C1	‘spring ’ that generates leadership
C2	Situational opportunities and constraints
C3	Where leadership acts are interpreted
C4	Restructure and redundancy of manager
C5	Change from trustees to legal Incorporation

C6	Boundaries of responsibilities - CM/Board
C7	Engaging with community

Leadership

L1	Information sharing
L2	Expert knowledge
L3	Shared purpose and voice
L4	Co-leadership – x2
L5	Consensus
L6	Monthly reports
L7	Power – dominant participants
L8	Power sharing – Board
L9	Horizontal authority structure
L10	Emphasis on group goals

Documentation

	Board Agenda
D1	14 June 2017
	Minutes
D2	Board Minute 16 September 2014
D3	Board Minute 01 February 2017
D4	Board Minute 16 November 2016
D5	Board Minute 14 September 2016
D6	Board Minute 20 July 2016
D6	Board Minute 06 July 2016
	AGM
D7	Agenda Annual General Meeting 14 June 2017
D8	AGM Minutes 20 June 2016
	Membership Proposal for 2017
	AGM Process and re-election under new Incorporated charity
	Reports
D9	SWOT Analysis 16 September 2014
D10	New Organisation Structure at Scropton RDA (v2 dated 28/6/2017). Original paper not provided
D11	Income and Expenditure Account – year ended 31 December 2016
D12	Treasurer’s monthly report February 2017
D13	Treasurer’s monthly report January 2017
D14	Review of Non Yard Roles June 2017
D15	Charity Manager’s Report May 2017
D16	Scropton RDA Membership Proposal 2017 AGM and Board

	Researcher's Notes
DR1	Researcher's notes of Board meetings on 14 June 2017
DR2	Contact Form of Observation – Appendix 3 (Researcher's production)
	Constitution
DC1	Constitution Scropton Riding for the Disabled Centre Registered charity – 240985 Amended by AGM on 14 June 1976 ; 12 June 1984; 11 June 2007
D00	Scropton Centre Layout