Exploring relational connections and the emergence of shared leadership in experiential agencies

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EXPLORING RELATIONAL CONNECTIONS AND THE EMERGENCE OF SHARED LEADERSHIP IN EXPERIENTIAL AGENCIES

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CANDIDATE DECLARATION

I hereby declare that:

1. I have not been enrolled for another award of the University, or other academic or professional organisation, whilst undertaking my research degree

2. None of the material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award

3. I am aware of and understand the University's policy on plagiarism and certify that this thesis is my own work. The use of all published or other sources of material consulted have been properly and fully acknowledged

4. The work undertaken towards the thesis has been conducted in accordance with the SHU Principles of Integrity in Research and the SHU Research Ethics Policy

5. The word count of the thesis is 87,033

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ABSTRACT

This exploratory and cross-sectional study focussed on the specific setting of experiential event agencies and explored leadership through the lens of the 'post-heroic' leadership theories, in particular the theory of shared leadership. Adopting a social constructionist perspective, the investigation took the form of a collective case study, using a constructionist grounded theory approach to guide the data collection, analysis and theory development. The research explores the way in which leadership is shared among team members within three experiential event agencies.

Despite the growing body of research which indicates that shared leadership has a positive effect on team performance and team effectiveness, there has yet to have been any research that explores the conditions which enable shared leadership to be practiced in the context of cross functional, interdependent, project based teams such as those found in experiential agencies. This, coupled with the lack of empirical research around the form and function of the leadership within the event industry, forms the background to this research. This thesis addresses these gaps in knowledge by identifying which conditions of work enable shared leadership to become a useful process in project based event organisations. The study therefore responds to the following overarching question: 'How is leadership shared in an experiential agency?'

The analysis of the data collected from the three case studies resulted in the emergence of a new theory of *relational connections and the emergence of shared leadership*. The theory suggests that shared leadership develops through relational connections within organisations, and demonstrates that the relationships between individuals within these organisations are the cornerstone of effective participation in shared leadership. This research is the first to closely examine the nature of workplace

relationships in the context of shared leadership and, in particular, it has illuminated how these connections are constructed through a sense of belonging in the workplace and trust between team members.

The developed theory therefore reveals the dynamics that underpin shared leadership and gives a clear understanding of how these relational connections are constructed. In doing so, it indicates that shared leadership is an influence process that emerges from interactions, and resides in the relationships that exist in work groups. This study has therefore engaged with the complex – and topical - problems of how shared leadership emerges and the processes of leadership within experiential agencies, and has provided new empirical material which is important from both theoretical and practical perspectives.

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1   INTRODUCTION

1.1   Chapter Introduction

In order to provide clarity for the reader from the start, this chapter presents an overview of the purpose and context of the thesis. This study makes theoretical and empirical contributions to the academic study of shared leadership and in the context of experiential event agencies. The setting of this research is described in this chapter, as is the overall research aim and research questions, in order to fully introduce this exploratory, cross-sectional study into leadership within this particular events context. While the intended contributions to knowledge started as the theoretical development of the body of knowledge that surrounds leadership in event management, the research has evolved specifically into a body of work that also contributes to the theoretical development of shared leadership.

This chapter introduces the study and explores how it occurs against a backdrop of an evolving event management industry, which has seen both rapid growth and change in recent years (Bladen, Kennell, Abson, & Wilde, 2018; Mair & Whitford, 2013). Whilst this acceleration in the industry has prompted a wealth of academic interest, not all areas of study have received scholarly attention. In particular, little research has been conducted into leadership that occurs in experiential event agencies. Specifically, there is a gap in our understanding of the form and function of leadership within the event industry, and it is this gap that forms the background to this research. This thesis is therefore also concerned with leadership studies, in which the prevailing view has been that leadership is a top down function, conducted only by those individual entities in formal leadership positions (Yammarino, 2013). Recently, however, leadership scholars have noted that viewing

leadership solely through the lens of the primary leader is problematic as it invariably

ignores both the context in which leadership takes place and the abilities of others to take

on leadership roles (Ensley, Hmieleski, & Pearce, 2006; Yukl, 2013).   This study

acknowledges this paradigm shift away from individualistic, vertical models of leadership

and focuses on this more recent understanding of leadership as an influence process that

emerges through social interactions and can be both a dyadic and a collective activity. This

thesis is therefore primarily concerned with the emerging theories of shared leadership, and

focuses on the specific context of experiential event management agencies, and this chapter

provides a brief justification for this position.

Once the context of both leadership and event management has been introduced and

established, this chapter explains how a pragmatic philosophical positioning has aligned

with social constructionism in order to inform the direction of the research. Lastly, this

chapter sets out the research aims and associated questions, and provides an overview of

the contribution to knowledge that this study makes. The chapter finishes with an outline of

the structure of the rest of the thesis and a brief summation of key words in order to

provide clarity for the reader.

1.2   Background to the thesis

1.2.1   Past, present and future of leadership studies

Research into leadership spans over 100 years, and is vast and varied (Klenke, Martin, &

Wallace, 2016). There have been a number of significant shifts in scholarly approaches to

leadership – these shifts in theoretical developments, as described in chapter 3, are

important as they form the setting for this study. They can be summarised as a move away

from focussing upon who the individual is (trait theories) towards looking at what the

individual does (behavioural theories) and the context they do it in (situational context theories). More recently, scholars have focused particularly on the influential aspects of leadership (transformative leadership and leader-member exchange theories) and the competencies needed to lead (the competency school of leadership). Despite these significant shifts in researching leadership, scholars have, for the most part, always focused on the individual (Dinh et al., 2014; Petrie, 2014; Yammarino, 2013) and researching leadership solely through the lens of one entity - the primary leader - using a vertical model perspective, has remained the dominant discourse (Gronn, 2002; Pearce, 2004; Turnbull, 2011; Yukl, 2010). This view of leadership from an entity perspective is problematic, because when leadership is viewed only through the lens of what one person does, it neglects both the specific organisational context in which leadership happens and the abilities and contributions of others to participate in leadership (Ensley et al., 2006; Yukl, 2013).

It is this criticism of the entity approaches to leadership that forms the background to this study, with the intention that this study will join a growing body of research that recognises that leadership can no longer be viewed as happening in a silo. This thesis therefore endorses the view that leadership is a social influence process (Fitzsimons, James, & Denyer, 2011; Uhl-Bien, 2006) and adopts Yukl's (2010, p. 8) definition of leadership as "the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives". The influencing relationship can be undertaken by those with the opportunity to do so, whether they are in formal positions of leadership or not (Seers, Keller, & Wilkerson, 2003). This position is the underpinning principle in this thesis, and is expanded upon throughout.

In rejecting the entity perspective of leadership, research has moved into a "post-heroic" phase (Badaracco, 2001:120), which recognises that the dominant paradigm of entity perspectives of leadership no longer provides answers for what is described as the new working landscape. Recent macro and micro influences in business, such as changes to economic forecasts, political unrest and improved technology, have resulted in emerging challenges to leadership in organisations (Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2018). Organisations are now being asked to be adaptive, creative and innovative, and employees are expected to work collaboratively, across a range of functions, with people from around the globe (Keister, 2014). With the digitalisation of the workplace, the growing ubiquity of mobile telephones and a culture of connectivity, a different set of leadership capabilities are now required. Leadership therefore takes place in a constantly changing and challenging environment, with a shifting workforce demographic which currently sees up to five generations working together at once (Meister & Willyerd, 2010). The changing conditions within workforces have therefore created a need to 'spread' key leadership practices, such as decision making and influence, to those within the organisation that are best equipped to deal with them at the right time (e.g. Spillane, 2006; Uhl-Bien, 2006). This has resulted in the elevation of both the collective and contextual dimensions of leadership (Mabey & Morrell, 2011).

This study can therefore be seen as a direct response to the research problem produced by both the changing workplace environment and the acknowledgement that a wider focus on leadership as a collective, contextualised process is required. Central to the study is therefore the theoretical development of shared leadership. Shared leadership is part of the post-heroic phase of leadership research – it rejects the idea that leadership is something that one person, in a formal leadership position, does and instead views

leadership as an influence process that emerges from social interaction, which can be

shared throughout a team or organisation and which is heavily dependent on the context

(Dinh et al., 2014; Pearce, Conger, & Locke, 2007; Pearce & Manz, 2005).

Shared leadership therefore suggests that leadership does not exclusively reside in those

in formal leadership positions, but can also be shared away from those at the top of the

organisation. Leadership is therefore evident in teamwork and can be shared by those

working collaboratively (Day, Gronn, & Salas, 2006; Pearce et al., 2007; Serban & Roberts,

2016; Turnbull, 2011). In shared leadership theory, leadership is a team property, which can

emerge from working relationships - leadership occurs as an influence process in which

members seek to motivate, share knowledge and support other group members in order to

achieve team goals (Petrie, 2014; Thorpe, Gold, & Lawler, 2011).

In particular, this study is focused on the need to understand shared leadership in a

contextually driven way, as suggested by D'Innocenzo, Mathieu, and Kukenberger (2016);

Fitzsimons et al. (2011); Hoch and Dulebohn (2013); Pearce (2007); Uhl-Bien, Marion, and

McKelvey (2007). Whilst there is a growing body of evidence that shared leadership is

applicable in a range of organisations, it is a relatively new perspective and much of the

research comes largely from the contextual domain of education. Researchers have begun

to apply the concept of shared leadership to a range of management and business focussed

organisations, but as discussed in chapter 4, this is still limited in focus – a recent systematic

literature review by Sweeney, Clarke, and Higgs (2019) identified only 39 empirical studies

that looked at shared leadership in commercial organisations. To date, no research has

been identified that considers shared leadership in the context of event management, or

more specifically, project led experiential event management agencies. Understanding why

this is a useful lens through which to study leadership is explored fully in chapter 5 but a brief outline is offered below for the benefit of the reader's understanding of the thesis.

1.2.2 The events industry

The events industry is the focus for this study due to several significant factors. The first of these is that the UK events industry is an important contributor to the economy. Recent reports suggest that the UK industry is worth £70billion in direct spend every year, and that there are at least 25,000 businesses involved in the events industry, employing over 700,000 people (BVEP, 2019, 2020; Eventbrite, 2019; MPI, 2013). Estimates are that business events (the focus of this study) contribute around £31 billion to the economy (BVEP, 2020; Rogers, 2019). It should of course be noted that these statistics were pre the Covid-19 pandemic, and the economic impact of the events industry will undoubtedly be different now, and for some time into the future.

However, whilst the economic situation is currently unclear, the contribution the sector makes from both a societal and cultural perspective will almost certainly matter in the post-pandemic climate. With 2.1 million events held in the UK every year, including corporate and business meetings and networking; conferences; exhibitions / trade fairs; sporting events; music and festivals; hospitality; incentives and cultural events, the social impact of events is also significant (Bladen et al., 2018; C&IT, 2018). Whilst the industry is clearly important in terms of economic, social and cultural impact, it is a complex one to define. The industry is both fragmented and diverse, delivering a wide range of services, and organised by a wide variety of stakeholder and ownership arrangements, with a variety of different structures and underpinned by a variety of different purposes (Bowdin, Allen, O'Toole, Harris, & McDonnell, 2011; Thomas & Thomas, 2013). In order to establish parameters for the research, and to bring clarity to what can sometimes be a difficult

industry to define, this study has focussed on one specific setting within the industry – that of experiential event agencies.

Experiential event agencies undertake a range of functions but typically deliver live experience-based campaigns on behalf of corporate clients – they are sometimes called experiential event management agencies, event agencies, experiential marketing agencies, and brand agencies, but for simplification purposes, in this study they are referred to as experiential agencies. These agencies find their roots in the experience economy movement which occurred at the turn of the century (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). As consumer demand evolved from a desire for passive event consumption to a demand for experiences, significant changes have occurred to the way in which events are delivered (Bladen et al., 2018). In recent years, and in response to this changing marketplace, brands have turned to live experiential campaigns to inspire, engage and provoke customers. This new demand for experiential marketing resulted in a proliferation of experiential agencies within the events industry. A full description of the context of this study, including both the nature of the industry and the functions of experiential agencies, can be found in chapter 5.

Despite the economic, societal and cultural impact of events, there are significant gaps in the extant research - in particular, little research has been conducted into the organisational management and, in relation to this thesis, leadership that occurs in experiential agencies. This is a problematic gap in our knowledge and understanding, especially given the service-led nature of the events industry, in which the human resource is the central element for success (Drummond & Andreson, 2004; Van der Wagen, 2006). Good leadership has been shown to have a significant effect on both the productivity and the profitability of organisations and there is a great deal of literature indicating the importance of leadership in organisations (Bass, 1985; Kouzes & Posner, 2007; Yukl, 2008).

Whilst there is a vast number of studies into leadership in all manner of settings, there is a notable lack of discussion on this subject within the event management literature. Instead, research has, until recently, been dominated by a focus on outcomes, impacts and the more tangible aspects of event management (Evans, 2014; Mair & Whitford, 2013), which seems incongruous given the intricacies and complexities of the teams encircling events. To date, leadership has been largely neglected in the empirical events research and, when it has been studied, it has taken an individualistic, entity lead, focus (Ensor, Robertson, & Ali-Knight, 2011; Megheirkouni, 2017a; Parent, Beaupre, & Seguin, 2009; Smith, Wang, & Leung, 1997). As such, leadership in events is still too often viewed through the lens of what the formal leader, at the top of the organisation, does – meaning that the extant literature also ignores the abilities of others within teams, organisations and networks to take on leadership roles (Ensley et al., 2006; Yukl, 1999, 2012). This is a narrow, and therefore problematic viewpoint, especially given the highly interdependent team work, the complex nature of the creating and delivering event experiences and the context of leadership processes, which are rich and varied in the events industry.

Experiential agencies are a useful and insightful context within which to explore shared leadership because of a number of contextual issues that establish that experiential agencies are distinct from other related fields. These can be summarised in two parts; those issues that are particular to the event industry and those issues that are particular to experiential agencies. Issues particular to the event industry result from the industry characteristics – namely the fast paced, episodic and rapidly changeable nature of the industry and the delivery of event projects that are temporary, but planned - they are unique, time-bound, projects that are never repeated in the exact format (Bladen, Kennell, Abson, & Wilde, 2012; Brown, 2014; Rutherford Silvers, Bowdin, O'Toole, & Beard Nelson,

2006). Issues that are particular to experiential agencies include the iterative and episodic

nature of their work, the highly pressurised, urgent, creative environments, in which the

business model centres around the production of intangible experiences for clients, and the

complex network of interdependent, cross-functional internal teams that work together to

deliver specific projects. Lastly, the output of the agencies is based on creativity and service

– creative responses to a client brief, creative decisions around strategy, creative

implementation of the experience and service delivery for both client and attendees of

experiences.

Further, experiential agencies are a useful setting because they typify the pre-existing

context established as being necessary for shared leadership – they work within creative,

uncertain and challenging environments (Ensor et al., 2011) and are required to undertake

high levels of spontaneous problem solving, doing tasks that are high pressured, risky and

involve the temporarily coalescing of multiple stakeholders (Clarke, 2012; Fransen et al.,

2015; Pearce, 2004; Wang, Han, Fisher, & Pan, 2017). In addition to the pressurised nature

of delivering real-time experiences, these agencies require a certain way of working, that

includes the need to be agile, to collaborate with a wide range of stakeholders and to share

working practices across a range of interdependent teams, who are both internal and

external to the organisation (Getz, 2016). This agile, collaborative way of working means

that experiential agencies are formed through networks of interdependent teams, the size

and make up of which change depending on the nature of the experiential project. In

particular, the core teams pulsate - they expand as the experience delivery date gets closer

and contract to a small number of core staff when the event is finished. This makes them an

interesting setting to study the concept of shared leadership, which to date has almost

exclusively been researched through the lens of single and static teams with clear

membership boundaries, with far too little attention paid to other organisational levels (such as the leadership team and the individual team members).

So, whilst leadership in organisations has received much scholarly attention, research into leadership within any form of event management organisation has not kept pace. This lack of literature that engages with the debates and discussions about event management leadership represents a significant gap in knowledge and this thesis aims to address that through the exploration of the conditions within experiential agencies that help, or hinder, the sharing of leadership throughout an organisation.

1.3 Philosophical lens

The initial exploration of leadership literature and philosophy came during my Master's by Research - this investigation provided a broad understanding of current leader and leadership research paradigms. It also resulted in a critical view of the dominant discourse in leadership studies, which seemed both narrow in focus and incompatible with much of what I had seen in my former role as head of an events department. In addition, my previous research into leadership and into the event industry in general have informed both my philosophical positioning and the way in which I have approached this thesis. I brought all of these a priori considerations into this research project (a more detailed discussion can be found in chapters 2 and 7).

In this study I followed Crotty's lead and took an agnostic approach to ontology. This position acknowledges the essential difficulties of understanding what leadership is - leadership is an attribution by followers and the observed (Fairhurst, 2008), and as such, it may be viewed as an empty signifier. Leadership therefore means something different to every person, and even their own interpretations will shift over time, or in different

contexts. Because of these issues around defining leadership, rather than examining what leadership is, the focus in this thesis was on how leadership happens, in order to gain an understanding of the social constructions that enable leadership to develop or emerge. The research questions for this thesis also sought to challenge the dominant discourse in leadership studies that leadership is something that one person 'does' – this then was internally consistent with adopting a pragmatic perspective, in which understanding of leadership is constructed, and exists only because of interactions with others (Dachler & Hosking, 1995; Fairhurst & Grant, 2010; Kempster & Parry, 2011).

    As Morgan (2014a, p. 1051) suggests, within pragmatism "knowledge is not about an abstract relationship between the knower and the known, instead there is an active process of inquiry that creates a continual back-and-forth movement between actions and beliefs". This then is consistent with the views of social constructionism, which suggests that our understanding of the world is of our own construction, and that our experiences and assumptions, and the reality which we interact with, shapes our beliefs and perceptions. Much like pragmatism, social constructionism that stems from the work of Berger and Luckman (1966) makes no ontological claims (Andrews, 2012) – there is no fixed, universally shared understanding of reality, because our sense of the world emerges as we interact with others (Cunliffe, 2008). The constructionist paradigm is a perspective that emphasises that knowledge is constructed by people (Crotty, 1998; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Jackson, 2015) - and that this knowledge is a product of both social processes and social interactions; (Burr, 2003). In this study, social constructionism proved useful in reframing the thinking around leadership, and how we make sense of what happens in organisations (this is explored further in chapter 2.4).

Social constructionism is also used in this study as a way to challenge the heroic view of leadership that perceives leadership as the preserve of the chosen few and instead uses a lens that sees leadership as co-constructed, a product of collective meaning making and renegotiated through a 'complex interplay' between formal and informal leaders and followers (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010).   This position echoes the previously described paradigm shift in leadership studies towards an understanding that leadership is a relational process of influence that can emerge from team members who might be sharing leadership responsibilities (Cullen-Lester & Yammarino, 2016; Hiller, Day, & Vance, 2006; Locke, 2003; Pearce et al., 2007).

As this study is concerned with how the perception, actions and meanings attached to interactions in experiential agencies impact on the process of leadership (Flick, 2014; Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2012), the research strategy starts with an inductive, exploratory approach, and consists of a collective case study as suggested by Stake (2005) and Lee and Saunders (2017) and qualitative methods that include semi-structured interviews and observation. For full details of the conceptual thinking, and methodological choices, please see chapter 7. The research lenses are shown in Figure 1.1 below.

Figure 1.1 Research lenses for this thesis
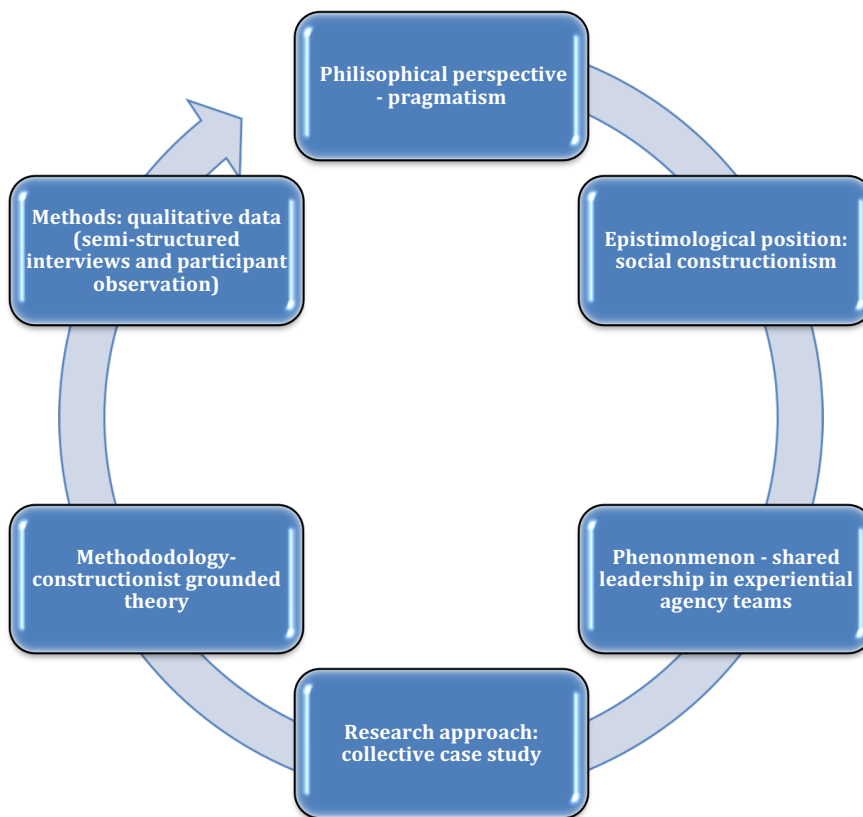
1.4 Research aim and research questions

Grounded theory is an inductive approach to theory building, in which the theory

development is grounded in and developed through the data. Unlike deductive research,

which has established hypotheses which are tested through research, a grounded theory

perspective requires the research to be open to exploring what the data reveals. Whilst the

'classic' proponents of grounded theory insisted that it was critical to avoid engaging with

the existing literature prior to data collection, so that the researcher would not gain undue

influence or pre-conceptualisation of the research area (Glaser & Holton, 2004), later

iterations of the methodology have accepted that undertaking a review of the pertinent

literature prior to data collection should not preclude the researcher from engaging with

grounded theory methodology (Charmaz, 2014; Timonen, Foley, & Conlon, 2018; Urquhart & Fernandez, 2013). Moreover, as Timonen et al. (2018) and Charmaz (2014) suggest, the researcher must start somewhere – in order to design a study that is methodologically and philosophically consistent with the phenomenon being investigated, some understanding of the topic is necessary (this is explored further in chapter 7.5). The starting point for this PhD therefore included a broad exploration of both the events and leadership literature and a subsequent focus on shared leadership in experiential agencies.

Thus a focus on leadership from a social constructionist epistemological position led me to start with the broad research question of: 'How is leadership constructed and shared in an event organisation?' This question was subsequently refined to the research aim: 'To explore how leadership is shared across cross functional teams in experiential agencies'. Using understanding developed through existing literature, this overarching research aim was further split into the following questions:

- What contextual factors impact and are impacted by the sharing of leadership?

- What can organisational leadership teams do to facilitate the sharing of leadership among cross-functional, interdependent teams

- What conditions do interdependent teams need in order for team members to participate in shared leadership?

- What workplace conditions do individual team members need in order to participate in shared leadership?

In order to investigate the research aim and associated questions, this research adopted a collective-case study approach, involving three organisations (after Stake, 2005). The research design included semi-structured interviews with team members from each organisation, observation of working practices and content analysis of supporting

documentation such as meeting notes and organisational vision statements. The case studies were purposively selected (see chapter 7.4.1), with key criteria including an established leadership team, a leadership team and staff members who recognise shared leadership as a concept, and who see it as both favourable and useful for teams to share leadership in their organisation.

1.5   Contribution to knowledge

The study contributes to existing knowledge in a number of ways. This section provides an overview of the contribution areas – these are expanded upon and discussed more specifically in the concluding chapter (chapter 11.3).   The first contribution is to the theoretical understanding of shared leadership, through the development of a theory of *relational connections and the emergence of shared leadership*. It identifies the antecedent conditions of shared leadership and demonstrates that shared leadership emerges through workplace relationships and the resulting connections. It is the first empirical study to recognise the importance of relational connections within shared leadership, and therefore offers a significant advancement in theoretical understanding. This study therefore supports the argument for a greater focus on the relational aspects of the leadership process as proposed by Cunliffe and Eriksen (2011); Uhl-Bien (2006); Clarke (2018) and Reitz (2017), and makes an important contribution to the emerging theory of shared leadership.

The originality of the study also stems from the identification of nine antecedent conditions for shared leadership, an area which is still in its infancy (Wu, Cormican, & Chen, 2020; Zhu et al., 2018) - previous studies have emphasised the outcomes of shared leadership as opposed to the antecedent inputs (as will be established in section 4.8). In addition, it is the first study to expand the focus of shared leadership beyond the immediate

team and to identify how leadership is shared across team boundaries. The resultant examination of shared leadership at macro, meso and micro levels builds on the discussions by Mathieu, Maynard, Rapp, and Gilson (2008); Yammarino, Dionne, Chun, and Dansereau (2005) and Sweeney et al. (2019).

Furthermore, this study is among the first to use a qualitative approach to investigate shared leadership. Both shared leadership studies and the wider field of leadership are still largely dominated by positivistic views of leadership (Binci, Cerruti, & Braganza, 2016; Sweeney et al., 2019). This study has departed from this with the use of qualitative methods which allow for the exploration of the feelings, emotions and relational dynamics of the participants and therein challenge the dominant discourse by highlighting the importance of qualitative studies within the field of shared leadership.

Additionally, this study has provided a valuable examination of the phenomenon of shared leadership within the specific context of experiential agencies, but also within the field of event management. In event studies, there is a lack of literature that focuses on leadership; therefore understanding is both limited and lagging behind other disciplines (see discussion in Chapter 5). As such, the study makes an important contribution to understanding leadership within the events industry. A final notable contribution of this study is the utility of the developed theory to inform the practice of organisations working in the events sphere. The findings will support practitioners to understand the importance of relationship connections in an experiential agency, and to consider how the sharing of leadership is encouraged, or limited, by the dynamics within an organisation and the various teams and the individuals themselves.

1.6   Thesis structure

This thesis does not follow the customary format of doctoral theses in management, leadership or organisational studies, which typically take the form of IMRAD (introduction & literature review, methodology, report findings, discuss) (Kamler & Thomson, 2014). This format works well for those investigations that are underpinned by a positivistic approach, with the literature review being undertaken at the start of the project and the researcher establishing what gaps exist and how their own research contributes to those gaps. However, after reading the work of Kamler and Thomson (2014), I was inspired to take a slightly different approach to the structure and style of this thesis, in which a personal account of the research process was presented throughout the manuscript. Kamler and Thomson (2014) suggest that providing this personal account ensures that a reflective approach is maintained throughout the writing up process, and also helps to persuade the reader of the researcher's particular point of view and its veracity and worth. It also reflects both the social constructionist positioning and the grounded theory methodology which underpins this work. Accordingly, and in order to reflect the actual process of research, the philosophical underpinnings of this research are presented before the review of the literature.

It is also important to note that much of the literature on dominant discourses of leadership was read and reviewed before my data collection – this literature is discussed in chapter 3 and 5. The literature within the theoretical foundations chapter (chapter 4), however, was developed iteratively and undertaken in tandem with the data and the emergent categories that were grounded in the data.

Please see table 1.1 for clarification of key terms used frequently in this thesis. Below is a brief description of the purpose and content of each chapter.

- *Chapter 2* outlines the underpinning philosophical foundations. The chapter

  articulates and defends my philosophical position, which is counter to the dominant

  discourse in leadership research. It also briefly describes my own background, and

  the influences which have informed this thesis. Lastly, it explores how some of my

  own views of the world and the approaches taken within this thesis are opposed to

  the dominant discourses in leadership research – and why this matters.

- *Chapter 3* presents the current, dominant paradigms in leadership studies – this is

  the technical a priori knowledge gathered before my data collection. The aim of this

  chapter is to give the reader an understanding of some of the dominant schools of

  thought in leadership studies, in order to explain why, with their focus on the entity

  that 'does' leadership, these are increasingly viewed as problematic.

- *Chapter 4* continues with the review of the literature, though it presents more

  literature that was read during the iterative process of data collection and analysis.

  The chapter provides the reader with an understanding of the theoretical

  foundations of the study as directed by the data collection. It presents current

  empirical and theoretical understanding of shared leadership and also briefly

  explores notions of empowering leadership and teams and team leadership. The aim

  of the chapter is to highlight both what is known about shared leadership and what

  is not known in order to establish the gaps in knowledge that this thesis aims to fill.

- *Chapter 5* introduces the background context of the study – it gives the reader an

  insight into how leadership has been discussed within the broader context of event

  management and identifies the significant gaps in knowledge that exist within this

  field of study.

- *Chapter 6* explains the specific context of the study. It begins by reiterating the importance shared leadership scholars place on context and then gives the reader an explanation of what is meant by experiential agencies. The aim of the chapter is to justify why experiential agencies are an important context to study, and to provide the reader with a full understanding of the setting within which this thesis took place.

- *Chapter 7* turns the reader to discussions around methodological choices. Following on from the previous chapter, I explain the case study method adopted in the thesis and demonstrate how this is consistent with the underpinning philosophy. This chapter also outlines the process of data collection, analysis and theory development which was undertaken over the course of a year-long period, and involved inductive theory building.

- *Chapter 8* is the first data analysis chapter. It begins by exploring the process of open coding and presents the nine antecedent conditions that were grounded in data. Consistent with traditional grounded theory approaches, this chapter describes the findings using both the participants' own voices and my interpretative analysis.

- *Chapter 9* continues the data analysis but also moves the discussion into theoretical development. In this chapter, I explain the axial coding process and present the development of the two final categories of trusting relationships and sense of belonging. The chapter explains how the two factors are related to the nine conditions from chapter 8. It also explores how the final categories were subjected to both further theoretical sensitivity with different bodies of literature and

theoretical sampling, during which further data was collected as a means of
validation.

- *Chapter 10* presents the theory of Relational connections and the emergence of
  shared leadership. In this theory, connections in the workplace are constructed
  through trust and a sense of belonging, as described in chapter 9. These relational
  connections are facilitated through a number of multi-level antecedent conditions,
  as described in chapter 8. This chapter explores the development of the theory from
  the data, and discusses it in relation to extant literature. In addition, this chapter
  reflects on the developed understanding of shared leadership theory that has
  resulted from this study. The aim of the chapter is to provide the reader with a clear
  understanding of the theory and how it links to existing understandings of leadership
  and experiential agencies.

- *Chapter 11* summarises the contribution to knowledge that this thesis makes. It also
  highlights the limitations of the study, identifies areas for future research and offers
  some concluding thoughts. Consistent with my philosophical positioning, this
  chapter is underpinned by reflective practice - I therefore offer some reflections on
  the research process and the findings that have been presented in this thesis.

Table 1.1: Defining the key terms in this thesis

Leadership	"Leadership is the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives" (Yukl, 2010, p. 8).
Shared leadership	"A dynamic, interactive process among individuals in work groups in which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group goals" (Pearce & Conger, 2003, p. 286).
Event industry	A term that covers the complex, diverse industry that is made up of a variety of organisational types, focused on different aspects of delivering live event experiences.
Experiential agencies	Experiential agencies run live experience-based campaigns on behalf of corporate clients – they are sometimes called event agencies, experiential marketing agencies, and brand agencies, but for simplification purposes, in this study they are referred to as experiential agencies.
Social constructionism	The constructionist paradigm is a perspective that emphasises that knowledge is constructed by people – either individually or socially - (Crotty, 1998; Easterby-Smith et al., 2015). Social constructionism is where the research focuses on the social dimensions of constructing meaning. The focus is on the dynamics of social interaction in the workplace, and the collective generation and transmission of what leadership means and how and why it emerges within organisational team settings.
Grounded theory	Grounded theory is a research methodology in which theory emerges from, and is grounded in, the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The purpose is to generate credible descriptions and sense-making of peoples' actions and words (Kempster & Parry, 2011, p. 106) and a grounded theory is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents (Parry, 1998).

2 PHILISOPHICAL POSITION

2.1 Chapter introduction

This chapter argues that, in order to understand both the choices made in terms of the research strategy and the outcomes of the research itself, it is first important to understand the philosophical considerations that underpin the research. Perspectives on the nature of reality and the study of knowledge shed important light on the approach taken within this study, to the interpretations made within the data analysis and findings and to the subsequent theoretical developments.

This chapter describes how my epistemological position has shaped both how I came to be studying leadership in the first place, and the research questions for this study. It has also shaped the perspective of leadership that this thesis focuses on and the methodological strategy. Taking an agnostic view of ontology, I have privileged my epistemological position – this is justified in section 2.2 below. As such, social constructionism perspectives have been used to explore how one person influences the other (Tourish & Barge, 2010) and how the perception, actions and meanings attached to interactions between people working in experiential agencies impact on the process of leadership (Flick, 2014; Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2012).

The discussions presented here give the reader an insight into how and why this research was undertaken, and how my own experiences and understanding of research philosophies and research paradigms have shaped this study. In addition, presentation of the philosophical underpinnings of the research prior to examination of literature is deliberate, given their fundamental importance in shaping the critical view of leadership literature. The methodological choices are elaborated in discussions in chapter 7, where I

explain both what I did, and how those choices influenced the data analysis and theoretical development.

2.2   What is real? Ontological thoughts

Ontology is concerned with the nature of reality – what we take to be real (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Until recently, there were two main ontological positions – a realist, or objectivist, ontology, which suggests that there is one reality and it exists independently of our mind and a relativist, or subjective, ontology, which suggests that reality is a construction from within our own thoughts (Levers, 2013). The review of the literature (chapters 3 & 4) will show that what scholars take to be real is central to the paradigm shift in leadership studies, which has seen a split between entity and collectivistic leadership.

As will be suggested in chapters 3 and 4, the dominant discourse in leadership studies has viewed leadership through the lens of what one person does (Uhl-Bien, 2006). This view of leadership focuses on leadership as something that one person does, and on how their attributes and behaviours impact influence others. The assumption is that leadership resides in the individual, and is based on factors that already exist both within the individual and within the relationship that individual has with any 'followers'. We could therefore argue – as scholars such as Uhl-Bien (2006) do – that scholars working within the entity perspective of leadership assume a realist ontology. This is supported by the overwhelming use of quantitative, positivistic studies in leadership (Sweeney et al., 2019). Those who take a realist position suggest that there is an external world, independent of people's minds (Pansiri, 2005) – as we will see in the literature review, this is the position taken by leadership scholars working from an entity perspective, who consider leaders as discrete entities working within organisational structures that they are distinct from.

Collectivistic scholars, on the other hand, have a very different conceptualisation of leadership (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2012; Fairhurst & Uhl-Bien, 2012; Hosking, 2011; Uhl-Bien, 2006). They call for an expansion of the entity perspective that looks beyond the dyad of leader and follower and acknowledges that leadership can flow in any direction and that a working team can be a source of leadership. By focusing research activity away from the behaviours and attributes of the individual, scholars can begin to focus on the social processes by which "…leadership is constructed and constantly in the making" (Dachler & Hosking, 1995, p. 15). A relational perspective thus privileges the relationships in which leadership resides, and views leadership as a co-constructed event by social actors - it therefore aligns itself ontologically with a relativist position.

Relativist scholars consider that the way we understand the external social world is in a constant state of revision as social actors interact to create their own reality (Bryman, 2004). If we contrast this with the position taking by realists, we can see how relativist scholars would view leadership as residing within the co-constructions developed through the relationships of these social actors, who are engaged in a specific contextual environment. So from this relativist perspective, the ontological position is that the social world cannot be understood from the perspective of the individual, and that there is no 'real' social world outside of the individual, other than the labels that are assigned to them for the purpose of sense making (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Morgan, 2007). Realities are multiple and complex and our research participants are located within an ever evolving environment that both impacts on them, and is impacted by them (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). So the difference between realist and relativism is that reality is out there and ready to be observed, or that reality is constructed through social interaction in a continuously evolving interplay between us, others and society (Bryman, 2008).

However, there is a third way to consider ontological questions about the nature of

reality in leadership studies and that is from a pragmatist perspective. For the pragmatist,

there is such a thing as reality, but it is a changeable matter and it changes with our actions

and their consequences (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). With a potentially ever-changing reality, it

becomes difficult to make distinctions between a reality that exists apart from our

understanding of it (realist) and a set of complex realities, constructed by our understanding

of them (relativist). For pragmatists, then, these conceptions of a 'real' world are abstract

and the nature of reality is essentially unknowable - they therefore chose to focus on human

experience – on actions, and their consequences (Morgan, 2014a). One of the early

proponents of pragmatism was Pierce, who formulated the key idea that underpins it –

"one's conceptions of the effects of an object (that one is mentally constructing) is the

whole of one's conception of the object" (cited in Drath, McCauley, Palus, O'Connor, &

McGuire, 2008, p. 636). In other words, the only thing that matters is the understanding you

have of the constructed object – for pragmatists such as Pierce, truth is a normative

concept, it cannot be established once and for all (Pansiri, 2005). This is close to the

influential work of Dewey, who sought to promote pragmatism throughout his career (see

the edited works by Boydston and colleagues e.g. Boydston & Axetell, 2008; Boydston &

Hook, 2008; Boydston & Murphy, 2008). Dewey suggested that the central question should

be 'what is the nature of human experience?' (Morgan, 2014a). For Dewey, the human

experience always involved a process of interpretation, and that interpretation can be

habitual (for example, when we make every day, normal, decisions) or it can be a self-

conscious process, which Dewey describes as inquiry (Morgan, 2014a). For Dewey then, the

emphasis should be placed on the nature of human experiences. Dewey also stressed that

these experiences cannot be separated from the context within which they take place – the

human experience is always social in nature (Boydston & Hook, 2008) and any process of inquiry is also social in nature (Morgan, 2014a).

So what thoughts do pragmatists such as Dewey give to ontology? The answer is little: if all knowledge is subjectively constructed, then how we know what we know - the true nature of the reality - doesn't matter, because we can never move beyond our socially based constructions of it (Andrews, 2012; Morgan, 2014a). For example, a leading proponent of pragmatism, Crotty (1998), suggests that ontological positioning doesn't matter so long as you have a clear epistemological position – there is little point worrying about the existence of a 'real world' because it is outside of the human experience. Dewey calls the attempt to find a reality outside of ourselves a 'spectator theory of knowledge' (cited by Morgan, 2014b no page number). For pragmatists then, epistemological perspectives become much more important, as they focus their research on the understanding of how we come to know what we know (Andrews, 2012; Crotty, 1998).

In this study, I follow Crotty's lead and take an agnostic approach to ontology – this study acknowledges the essential difficulties of understanding what leadership is and suggests it may be best described as an empty signifier. Leadership is an attribution by followers and the observed (Fairhurst, 2008) - it means something different to every person, and even their own interpretations will shift over time, or in different contexts. Due to the difficulties of understanding what leadership is, this study focuses instead on how leadership happens, in order to try to gain an understanding of the social constructions that allow leadership to develop or emerge. This research also seeks to challenge the dominant discourse in leadership studies that leadership is something that one person 'does' – this then is consistent with adopting a pragmatic perspective, in which our understanding of

leadership is constructed, and it exists only because of interactions with others (Dachler & Hosking, 1995; Fairhurst & Grant, 2010; Kempster & Parry, 2011).

Consistent then with a collectivistic approach, grounded in a social constructionist perspective, the position taken in this study is that leadership is an influence process that is accomplished through relationships and resides in interactions. This pragmatic emphasis on the relational and on the study of the construction of the relationships between the leaders and the people they interact with through the relationship they construct together leads us to a discussion of epistemology.

2.3   How do we come to know what we know? Epistemological position

As Morgan (2014a, p. 1051) suggests, within pragmatism, "knowledge is not about an abstract relationship between the knower and the known, instead there is an active process of inquiry that creates a continual back-and-forth movement between actions and beliefs". This then is consistent with the views of social constructionism, which suggest that our understanding of the world is of our own construction, and that our experiences and assumptions, and the reality which we interact with, shapes our beliefs and perceptions. Much like pragmatism, social constructionism therefore makes no ontological claims (Andrews, 2012) – there is no fixed, universally shared understanding of reality, because our sense of the world emerges as we interact with others (Cunliffe, 2008).

Social constructionism is a perspective that emphasises that meaning is created through the interaction of the interpreter and the interpreted – there is no 'I' without 'you' (Crotty, 1998; Easterby-Smith et al., 2015). Meaning is shared, creating a taken-for-granted reality (Andrews, 2012) and knowledge is therefore a product of both social processes and social interactions (Burr, 2003). The foundations of social constructionism, set by Berger and

Luckmann (1966), have since developed into two branches – constructivism and social constructionism – these terms are often used interchangeably, despite notable differences (Crotty, 1998; Gray, 2018) and the importance of the distinctions. Crotty (1998, p. 58) suggests that, for epistemological considerations, it is useful to use the following distinctions:

Constructivism – where the focus is on the meaning making activity of the individual mind.
Social constructionism – where the focus includes the collective generation [and transmission] of meaning.

Applying these distinctions specifically to this particular body of work, and emphasising it from an epistemological perspective, helps to indicate the positioning of this research:

Social constructivism – where the research focus is on how individuals construct leadership because of interactions with the team(s), and on the unique experience of leadership for each of the team members
Social constructionism – where the research focuses on the social dimensions of constructing meaning. The focus is on the dynamics of social interaction in the workplace, and the collective generation and transmission of what leadership means and how and why it emerges within organisational team settings

Ontologically, the constructivist stance is focused on the individual, whereas the constructionist holds that we are formed in and through our interactions with others. Social constructionist researchers therefore focus on the co-construction and maintenance of meaning that occurs through interactions and conversation (Cunliffe, 2008). Reviewing these distinctions, it becomes clear that this research is positioned within social constructionism (Kuhn, 1970), with the knowledge of the observed phenomenon being co-constructed through both the phenomenon and social influences.

Whilst a social constructionist approach to leadership is unusual, it is not unique – it has been supported by Tourish and Barge (2010), and adopted by a number of scholars over the last 15 years (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010). The central premise is that in order to study leadership, one must study the construction of social arrangements that result in leadership (Tourish & Barge, 2010). Scholars working in this perspective consider organisations to be socially constructed (Cunliffe, 2008) and they emphasise how people create meanings intersubjectively – we are always a self-in-relation-to-others (Hosking, 2011; Pearce & Conger, 2003). It is through our relationships - our interactions with others and the context in which these occur – that we make meaning for ourselves. As discussed earlier, leadership is a complex and contested construct and it is also something of an empty signifier – this is evident in the vast body of often conflicting literature that tries to pin it down. This leads to the understanding that 'leadership' is a process that is created and contested through socially driven interactions. As Barge and Fairhurst (2008, p. 228) suggest, leadership is a "lived and experienced social activity in which persons-in-conversation, action, meaning and context are dynamically interrelated".

A social constructionist embraces the complexity of the leadership phenomenon and seeks to understand it through the social process of relating and interaction (Dachler & Hosking, 1995). Social constructionism then is used in this study as a way to challenge the dominant discourse within leadership studies that views leadership as the preserve of the chosen few and instead uses a lens that sees leadership as co-constructed, a product of collective meaning making and renegotiated through a 'complex interplay' between formal and informal leaders and followers (Cunliffe, 2008; Fairhurst & Grant, 2010). Through the analysis of individuals' subjective accounts of leadership, organisational culture, and working environments, what enables or constrains the process of sharing it can be revealed.

I do not claim to be discovering a universal Truth (Levers, 2013) but instead focus on

understanding the social realities residing in relational interactions (Cunliffe, 2008). In this

way, this research follows in the footsteps of the prominent work of leadership scholars

such as Barge and Fairhurst (2008); Cunliffe (2008); Cunliffe and Eriksen (2011); Fairhurst

(2008); Fairhurst and Grant (2010); Tourish and Barge (2010); Fairhurst and Grant (2010).

2.4   Matching epistemology with methodological choices - social constructionism and grounded theory

Moving beyond epistemological questions leads to considerations of the study's

methodology. Here, I again align with the views of Crotty (1998), who suggested that, in

order to be held up to scrutiny, the social researcher is required to articulate

methodological decisions and explain how they influence the research process. The

methodological choices should provide consistency within the body of work, in order to

create research that is both valid and rigorous from its very roots. The methodological

choices are fully explored in chapter 7, but the next section provides the reader with a brief

overview here in order to clarify that internal consistency.

If we accept, as I do, that knowledge is constructed socially then it follows that

leadership can be interpreted as a social phenomenon that relies on the subjective

interpretations and subsequent constructions between social actors (Tourish & Barge,

2010). In order to understand the manifestation of leadership then, there must be an

emphasis on subjectivity, context and process - qualitative methods enable researchers to

follow interesting threads in order to examine interpretations, through which constructions

of leadership become clear (Klenke et al., 2016). They therefore not only offer a different

perspective but also one that might be more useful for research focused on the relational,

process led nature of leadership as this thesis is. Contextualised qualitative studies are also

important in order to gain an understanding of the leadership processes that occur in

organisational settings (Bryman, 2004) and to challenge the dominant discourse of

positivism that exists in leadership studies, as discussed in chapter 7.2 (Kempster & Parry,

2011; Klenke et al., 2016; Parry, 1998). This study therefore adopted a collective case study

approach and used constructionist grounded theory to guide both the data collection and

analysis process (Lee & Saunders, 2017; Stake, 2005).

Much like the use of qualitative data, grounded theory is still in its relative infancy

within the field of leadership, though there is a growing number of scholars who are calling

for its use, or who have used it themselves (Kempster & Parry, 2011; Parry, 1998). The

purpose of grounded theory is to make sense of people's actions and words, and to

generate credible explanations, through interpretation, that fit the area from which it has

been derived, and in which it will be used (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Kempster & Parry, 2011).

For grounded theorists, knowledge is understood as "..beliefs in which people can have

reasonable confidence; a common sense understanding and consensual notion as to what

constitutes knowledge" (Andrews, 2012, p. 39). Here then we can see that grounded theory

is very close to social constructionism – they both share a focus on the social practices

people engage in and the everyday interactions between people. Grounded theory in this

study is therefore used as a methodology to understand the research participants' social

constructions. By adopting grounded theory, I am following the way paved by Parry,

Kempster and colleagues in their substantial work that urges the use of grounded theory in

leadership studies (Kempster & Parry, 2011; Parry, 1998; Parry & Meindl, 2002) and the

scholars that have applied it empirically (Kan & Parry, 2004; Kempster, 2006; Rowland &

Parry, 2009).

As discussed in chapter 7.5, there are a number of divergence approaches to grounded theory, though I chose to follow Charmaz (2000, 2008) concept of social constructionist grounded theory, due to the consistency it offers to my epistemological position. As Bryant (2007) suggests, Charmaz's argument was a fairly simple one, in which she distinguishes between the objectivist and constructionist concepts of the grounded theory methodology. An objectivist take on the grounded theory methodology, as proposed by the likes of Glaser (1978) assumes the reality of an external world, the presence of a neutral observer and categories that are derived from data (Bryant, 2007). I argue, as Bryant (2007) and Charmaz (2014) do, that objectivist approaches to grounded theory are problematic because they often ignore the experience and knowledge already gained (i.e. they suggest that the researcher has a neutral stance, and is unaffected by prior knowledge) and because they suggest that theories will emerge solely from the data, that data is 'discovered' (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and ignore the interactions of both the researcher and the researched.

On the other hand, a constructionist approach to the grounded theory methodology recognises the mutual creation of knowledge by both the researcher and the participant and acknowledges that meaning comes from the interaction between them (Khan, 2014). In other words, theory does not just emerge from the data, but arises from the interpretations of the researcher (Bryant, 2007). As Khan (2014) suggests, Charmaz is indicating that the participant exists outside of the researcher's mind, and that meaning is dependent on, or relative to, the interaction of the viewer and the viewed. It is important to note that Charmaz initially used the term constructivism to describe her approach to grounded theory (Charmaz, 2000) and didn't distinguish between constructivism (a focus on the individuals constructions) and social constructionism (a focus on the collective constructions).

However, in 2008, she moved to the term constructionist grounded theory, in order to reflect her growing understanding of the differences between the two, and to clarify that she sees social constructionism as viewing action as the central focus, which arises "within socially created situations and social structures" (Charmaz, 2008, p. 398). In this way, a constructionist approach to grounded theory aligns with the social constructionist paradigm, which acknowledges that "truth or meaning comes into existence in and out of our engagement with the realities in our world" (Crotty, 1998, p. 8).

A fuller discussion of the constructionist grounded theory methodology can be found in chapter 7.5, but at this stage in the thesis, and given the order in which it is presented, it is important to discuss one of the most contested subjects in grounded theory – that of the literature review. Conducting a literature review before data collection and analysis is usually discouraged in grounded theory - the 'classic' proponents of grounded theory insisted that it was critical to avoid engaging with the existing literature prior to data collection, so that the researcher would not gain undue influence or pre-conceptualisation of the research area (Glaser & Holton, 2004). However, later iterations of the methodology - such as Charmaz's constructionist grounded theory - have accepted that being sensitive theoretically should not preclude the researcher from undertaking a grounded theory methodology (Charmaz, 2014; Timonen et al., 2018; Urquhart & Fernandez, 2013). Even 'classic' grounded theory scholars Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggest literature cannot necessarily hinder the emergence of the developed theory, and that, rather than ignoring the literature, researchers should engage with it throughout the entire research process (Ramalho, Adams, Huggard, & Hoare, 2015).

In Charmaz's constructionist grounded theory, theory should still be grounded in the data, and not in the literature - but it also recognises that the researcher cannot be

removed from data collection and analysis because the theory "depends on the researcher's view: it does not and cannot stand outside of it" (2014:239). The research cannot be easily removed, and there can be no 'objective' knowledge because knowledge is constructed through social interactions. How then does the researcher ensure that the developed theory is grounded in the data and not in the existing knowledge which, in this study was derived from the technical literature and professional experience?

The answer lies in reflexivity – engaging in self reflexive experiences enable the researcher to recognise their own voice in the research process, and to commit to prioritising the data during the research process. in this study, a number of reflective strategies have been employed - not to eliminate subjectivity, but instead to prioritise the data over my own assumptions and previously acquired literature (Charmaz, 1990). The first of these was to clearly establish the epistemological position (as described in this chapter) - this ensured the positioning of the research in relation to my own thoughts about how the world is viewed, and ensured that I gained a better understanding of the choices made throughout the research process. In addition, the constant comparative method (described in chapter 7.7) was used as an analytic tool that centres reflective thinking - during this process, the data is constantly compared with the codes and categories already developed and is therefore constantly prioritised over any existing knowledge. Another reflective strategy was the use of memo writing and the research diary (described in chapter 8), which involved keeping notes of thoughts and questions that arose during the data collection and analytical process. These become data to be analysed, and aid the researcher in the development of theory (Ramalho, Adams, Huggard, & Hoare, 2015). Lastly, the interviews themselves aided the reflexivity in this research, as they were conductively iteratively and allowed for sense-checking and validation from the respondents themselves. The use of a

literature review conducted partially before the start of data collection therefore reflects my epistemological position – it acknowledges that the researchers influence is unavoidable, and instead relies on a variety of reflective practise to ensure that I maintained "an active, ongoing and deliberate commitment to prioritise the data over any other input" (Ramalho et al., 2015, p. 24). A summary of the research lenses used for this thesis was presented in chapter 1, figure 1.1.

2.5   Critical subjectivity – the I's in this research

Both social constructionism and grounded theory privilege a focus on interactions and relationships, and both guide the researcher to acknowledge their own influences on the phenomenon of which they observe and on the process of data collection and analysis. This leads unavoidably to important questions around the nature of the involvement of the researcher; who I am, my previous lived experiences and the experiences that occurred during this research, all contribute to the interpretations and conclusions made in this thesis. There can be no such thing as a truly objective observer; any experience is shaped by our prior experiences and any view that we hold is held "…from some perspective and therefore is shaped by the prior assumptions and connections (social and theoretical) and "lens" of the observer" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 46).

As Maxwell (2013) suggests, students sometimes ignore what they know from their own experience about the settings or issues they study – and not only can this impair their ability to gain a better understanding of their own research, it can threaten the credibility of the work. This is not to say that researchers should uncritically impose their assumptions and values on the research (Maxwell, 2013). Rather, it means that they should explicitly incorporate both their identity and experience into their thesis because it is the basis of the

story that is being told. So, rather than the traditional attempts to artificially remove past knowledge and experience (often referred to as bias), it is considered appropriate to transparently and positively embrace subjectivity and to acknowledge that it is this that equips you with perspectives and insights, and shapes what you do as a researcher (Peshkin, 1991). This 'critical subjectivity' (Reason, 1988, 1994) provides the researcher with a quality of awareness which does not supress the primary experience, or let that experience overwhelm us. Instead, experiences and subjectivity should be acknowledged as part of the inquiry process.

In order to acknowledge the effect my own experiences have had on this research, I have used Peshkin (1991) suggestion (discussed extensively by Maxwell (2013)) of locating the various identities within the research project – referred to as the 3 I's. Each of these identities has informed and influenced the process of research and the philosophical position – in the spirt of the authors listed above, the next section briefly articulates each of these identities and explains how they have influenced this thesis.

2.5.1 The First I – Practitioner

This PhD is rooted in my background as an event management professional – before I began my academic career, I spent 10 years working in the event industry. My time as a practitioner, in senior roles such as Head of Events, is how I grew to understand the importance of events on our social, economic and cultural lives. It is also where I developed a clear understanding of the job roles, processes and relationships that exist in these organisations. Importantly in terms of my research interests, it was during my time in industry that I first noticed that leadership seemed to be different in event management-based organisations, compared to the leadership I experienced in other roles (such as when I worked in the financial sector). The leadership I encountered during my time in the event

industry was varied and certainly not all positive – but what really interested me was the way in which the job itself, and the conditions in which leadership occurred, seemed to result in different forms of leadership. My reflections of being a practitioner therefore underpin this research to some degree, as I inevitably possess prior knowledge of some of the key issues faced within the industry, and with an understanding of the complexities of the job of event manager. This prior understanding enabled me to clarify the research problem quickly, and to pinpoint how and where to look for answers to the research questions.

2.5.2   *The Second I – Academic*

When I changed careers to become a university academic in event management, my knowledge of the field of study increased significantly. I became aware that the scholarly literature focussed very much on the outcomes of events – how much money they made, the impact they had on audiences and the associated effects on tourism. Whilst there has been a more recent shift to considering inputs – the experience design, and the motivations to attend events for example – there is still little known about the human resource, or management aspects of the role. In particular, I noticed how little we know about leadership in my field of practice and it is this observation that has most influenced my academic practice and my scholarly focus. My identity as an academic has had several key influences on this project – the first is that I was able to start my PhD in a supportive environment and I was already well versed in the core processes of how to get a PhD before I started my own. Conversely, the second influence is that being a full time academic has left me with little time to study, and has resulted in a rather disjointed approach to my PhD, which saw me not always being able to consistently work on the project. In short, my

identity as an academic has provided the motivation and desire to do my PhD, and has

contributed to the length of time it has taken me to complete it!

2.5.3   The Third I – student

The third 'I' that needs to be acknowledged in this study is the student 'I'. My

research interests began with a Master's by Research in 2012 and it was during this process

that I became aware of research philosophy and was able to vocalise my ontological and

epistemological views for the first time.   As I moved from a Master's to this PhD, I became

aware that my ontological and epistemological positions were shifting. At first, I wondered

how that could be, but the more I developed an understanding of research philosophies, the

more aware I became that they don't need to be fixed – because our views in life aren't

fixed. In the same way, our understanding of reality isn't necessarily fixed, nor is our

understanding of how knowledge is created - things change, and as I consider different

things, I sometimes take different viewpoints and positions. This growing understanding of

the philosophical underpinnings that inform and shape all our research has influenced the

direction in which I have taken this research, and the way in which I have gathered and

analysed my data. Importantly for me, my identity as a student has provided me with the

freedom to reconnect with the industry and return to practice in a way that my life as an

academic precludes me from doing.

2.6   Concluding remarks

One of the key questions I find myself asking as I undertake this body of research is

how I reconcile these three I's and their inevitable influence on my research – the

practitioner, the academic and the student. In particular, I have been challenged by the

essentially socially constructed nature of these identities, and have reflected on whether

they are three separate aspects of me or whether they are interlinked, and all as important as each other. The answer for me has been found by delving into the complex world of philosophy and developing an understanding of ontological and epistemological considerations. By attempting to draw some consistency between how I view reality, how I think knowledge is created and what I have seen happening in practice, I have sought not only to acknowledge the links between these various 'identities', but also to use them positively to enhance my research. In this chapter, I have therefore sought to demonstrate the internal consistency that I have found through a pragmatic view of ontology and a belief that knowledge and meaning are co-constructed through interactions with others.

In an article that has influenced my approach to this research, Fendt, Kaminska-Labbe, and Sachs (2008) argue that much management research is not relevant to practitioners 'out there' in organisations. They suggest that there is a gap between the theory developed in academia and the practices undertaken within organisations because the research undertaken is done so in isolation to praxis. However, management research scholars often aim to provide theory that provides causation and generalisations, without the consideration of the complexity of organisations, composed as they are of a multitude of unique agents, all interacting together in the social systems within which the organisation resides. They also neglect the ever-changing nature of the problems that exist within the organisation and the unpredictability of what may happen. This means that the business world generally ignores research because it finds it difficult to utilise research that's not relevant, because it ignores the tangible or intangible factors that exist in their specific organisations.

Pragmatism, Fendt et al. (2008) suggests, dissolves the dilemma of the theory / praxis gap 'by focusing on asking the 'right' questions and providing empirical answers to

those questions' (p. 473). In this chapter, I have set out how the use of pragmatism as a mode of scientific inquiry in this study allows me to remove the dilemma of trying to solve practice-based issues (how to improve leadership in experiential agencies) with the demands of scholarship (how to produce a PhD that meets the rigorous standards of academia and advance theory). I believe that my three I's have had a positive effect here – as a practitioner, I was aware of some of the issues facing the industry, and, in particular, I knew how important leadership was for experiential agencies. As an academic, I knew why it was important to understand leadership in particular contexts, and how useful it is to shine a light on neglected areas of scholarly research. And as a student, I was able to explore these practice-based issues in a scholarly manner and undertake research that will be useful both in practice and to academia.

I have also shown the reader how my understanding of epistemological considerations has led me to understand leadership as a socially constructed phenomenon. Through the lens of leadership as a relational influence process, leadership is interpreted as a complex, social phenomenon that relies on the subjective interpretations and subsequent constructions between social actors (Tourish & Barge, 2010). In order to understand the manifestation of leadership then, there must be an emphasis on context and process and, through the analysis of individuals' subjective accounts of leadership, organisational culture, and working environments, I believe that I will be able to illustrate how leadership is constructed and what enables or constrains the process of sharing it. Social constructionism is used in this study as a way to challenge the dominant discourse within leadership studies that views leadership as the preserve of the chosen few. In the next chapter, literature that contributes to this dominant viewpoint and both the key aspects and the problems inherent within it are explored.

3   LITERATURE REVIEW – ENTITY LEADERSHIP

3.1   Chapter introduction

The study of leadership spans over 100 years and now consists of a vast body of literature that demonstrates a wide range of evolving views on the nature of human behaviour and how people acquire, develop and practice leadership (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009; Brownell, 2010; Gardner, Lowe, Moss, Mahoney, & Cogliser, 2010). There have been a number of seismic paradigm shifts within leadership studies, and each one brings a raft of new theories, models and frameworks and a range of criticisms of that which has gone before. This thesis does not have the capacity to cover all of the theoretical developments within leadership studies, so instead, this chapter will highlight the key paradigm shifts, with a particular focus on the dominant discourses that exist within leadership studies and the range of theoretical propositions about leadership that they consist of. The aim of this chapter is therefore to examine the well-trodden path of the history of leadership studies, and highlight some of the key theoretical approaches that have emerged over the last 100 years, in order to provide both background context and theoretical sources for the research.

So vast is the field of leadership studies that some scholars have begun to question if the proliferation of leadership theories is warranted, considering the lack of evidence that each theory is theoretically different from those that have gone before it (e.g. Banks, Gooty, Ross, Williams, & Harrington, 2018). This chapter attempts to demonstrate the theoretical differences in this vast body of literature, whilst also highlighting the similarities – namely that most leadership literature still views leadership as something a formal leader does. The overriding purpose of this chapter is therefore to articulate the background to the dominant

discourse existing in leadership literature, which suggest that leadership is reduced to a

dyadic, influential, one-way (top-down) relationship – leadership is what one person does.

This entity view of leadership is regarded as too narrow by many scholars, and has

prompted another paradigm shift in leadership studies. This shift involves a move towards

post heroic forms of leadership (Crevani, Lindgren, & Packendorff, 2007; Fletcher, 2004)

which view leadership as a collective, relational process that occurs not just because of

hierarchical patterns but also because of working relationships and situational contexts. This

shift towards notions of collectivistic leadership is central to this thesis and is explored in

detail in chapter 4.

3.2   Before we start – does leadership matter? Defining leadership for this thesis

A key criticism often aimed at leadership studies and inherent in the many layers of

literature, is the underlying assumption that leadership exists as distinct phenomenon and

that leadership matters. These assumptions have always run alongside the rhetoric of

leadership, with little critical questioning (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012; Alvesson & Sveningsson,

2003). Viewing leadership as distinct from other behaviours such as delegation or

management is problematic because "leadership actually refers to an unwieldy bundle of

apparently unrelated activities" (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012, p. 317) and this 'bundle' cannot

be measured as an isolated phenomenon. If we agree that leadership is complex, then any

research findings that fail to address this complexity are at best ambiguous and at worst

completely irrelevant (Yukl, 2010). In the extremity of these criticisms, scholars like Calder

(1977) have suggested that leadership exists only in the ideas of others and therefore

cannot be considered a scientific construct that is worthy of study.

Not many scholars agree with this view that leadership does not exist, but some stress that there is a "hegemonic ambiguity of leadership" (Blom, 2016, p. 107), i.e. that there is a vagueness and uncertainly because of the incoherent meanings which are attributed to the phenomena (Blom & Alvesson, 2015). This is perhaps the more problematic argument then - that the development of leadership began with "dubious foundations" upon which all other studies have been based (Grint, 2010). One of the key issues, this argument states, is that many of the texts do not offer any kind of definition of leadership at all (Blom & Alvesson, 2015), which makes an understanding of what the texts are discussing all but impossible. It also means that researchers may rely on different definitions – or pre-understandings – and therefore come up with completely different responses to what may be very similar situations. These problematic assumptions have led to ambiguity and to weak theoretical development and questionable results (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2003; Blom, 2016). The work by Blom and Alvesson (2015) gives a clear account of the ambiguity offered in definitions of leadership and the issues that can arise from it.

This criticism can be fairly easily overcome with the addition of a clear definition that provides the basis for the ontological foundations of the research. In this thesis, I therefore adopt Yukl's (2010, p. 8) definition of leadership – "Leadership is the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives". In organisations, there are often a number of sources from which leadership can emerge, but the primary two are the leadership team (or the formal leader at the top of the organisation) and the team. This definition is consistent with both my pragmatic view of reality and the social constructionist perspective taken in this work (see chapter 2), in that it

acknowledges that trying to answer the question 'what is leadership?' is an impossible endeavour, as the answer is constantly revised as people interact and experience change. Instead, it defines leadership in a broad sense, as an influence process that resides in relationships.

Gardner et al. (2010) note in their 20 year review of research in the Leadership Quarterly journal that leadership studies have grown both in numbers and in diversity of focus in the last decade. This diversity, however, has been a fairly recent phenomena – at the start of the 20th century, studies of leadership took a much narrower approach. In the next few sections, the pertinent literature of each of the main thematic categories of leadership studies that have emerged over the last 100 years is explored.

3.3   Trait or Great Man leadership

In the first half of the twentieth century, leadership research revolved around the notion that characteristics of leaders will remain the same no matter what circumstances - this approach is known as 'The Great Man Theory' or the trait approach (Bass & Bass, 2008; Cawthon, 1996; Yukl, 2010). The idea underpinning this approach is that there is a generic set of traits – a set of extraordinary abilities, such as foresight, persuasive powers and intuition – that leaders are born with and that make them great leaders (Bass, 1990; Cawthon, 1996). The assumption is that if these personal characteristics or traits of a leader can be identified, the concept of leadership can be understood.

Stodgill (1948) carried out a literature review of the first four decades of the 20th Century, attempting to identify and summarise the common themes and personality traits associated with leadership. This review demonstrated that whilst traits are an important part of the leadership picture, the hundreds of studies Stodgill (1948) reviewed were

inconclusive – a large number of traits emerged in different studies which were seen as descriptive of leaders but none of the research provided statistically significant differences in traits between the average person and a leader. Stodgill's work is largely agreed to have closed off the personality-based research and provoked a paradigm shift – if it isn't who people are that provides a universally insight into leadership, then perhaps it is what they do.

3.4   Behavioural Theories of leadership

Researchers began to investigate the behaviours associated with effective leadership (Bass & Bass, 2008; Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991; Yukl, 2010). The starting point for the theories that emerged from this approach can be seen as being the acknowledgement that just possessing the right combination of traits does not make a person a leader; it simply makes it more likely that people possessing these traits will take the right actions to be successful. Scholars working in this area usually agreed that traits did matter, and that there is a set of traits that provide an individual with the right skills to be an effective leader. "Key leader traits include: drive (a broad term which includes achievement, motivation, ambition, energy, tenacity, and imitative); leadership motivation (the desire to lead but not to seek power as an end in itself); honesty and integrity; self-confidence (which is associated with emotional stability); cognitive ability; and knowledge of the business. There is less clear evidence for traits such as charisma, creativity and flexibility" (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991, p. 48). Having these traits, however, is not enough – leaders must take actions to be successful, and these actions can include setting goals, role modelling or formulating a vision. A key point made by Kirkpatrick and Locke was that "Leaders are not like other

people" (1991, p. 59) – whilst leaders might not have to be great men, they need to have the "right stuff" to succeed (Cawthon, 1996)

Ultimately, the behavioural approach, like the trait approach, insists that the individual does matter. The issue, however, is that they place the individual as central to effective leadership, and fail to include the influence of others on the leader's own leadership, which is something many scholars now believe is an essential part of leadership (Yukl, 2010).

3.5   Competency based leadership

Similar to the behavioural theories, and sometimes included in the same construct (e.g. Dionne et al., 2014) is the school of thought that considers the competencies of leaders. The key difference here is that it is accepted that behaviours are innate, but competencies can be learnt (Athey & Orth, 1999). In addition, these theories acknowledge that people can learn different sorts of leadership competencies in order to lead in different styles and these competencies can be technical, intellectual or emotional in nature (Muller & Turner, 2010).

The earliest work on competencies was by McClelland (1973), who viewed competencies in a very broad way as a behavioural attribute that contributed to success. This view of what people actually do in order to be successful led to the development of competency profiling. Here competencies are defined as skills, motives, traits, abilities or personal characteristics that lead to effective job performance in leadership or managerial occupations (Boyatzis, 1982, 2009; Koenigsfeld, Perdue, Youn, & Woods, 2011; Sandwith, 1993).

Competency theories of leaderships often result in a list of competencies that detail

the knowledge that people need in order to successfully do their jobs (e.g. Chung-Herrera,

Enz, & Lankau, 2003; Dulewicz & Higgs, 2005; Jeou-Shyan, Hsuan, Chih-Hsing, Lin, & Chang-

Yen, 2011; Johanson, Ghiselli, Shea, & Roberts, 2011; Koenigsfeld et al., 2011; MBECS, 2011;

Muller & Turner, 2010; Müller & Turner, 2010; Sandwith, 1993). This reduction of a job role

to a list of skills may reflect the demand from industry for a list of competencies that define

and drive performance (Wheelahan, 2007; Wilson, Lenssen, & Hind, 2006) but it fails to take

into account the debates around the effectiveness of competency studies that have ensued

since McClelland (1973) first suggested that competency could support the assessment of

personnel (Grezda, 2005). These debates centre on the lack of conceptual clarity - the

ambiguity around the terms used (competency could be substituted for skills, knowledge,

attitudes, characteristics, behaviours….) and the treatment of competence as both an

independent and dependent variable in relation to managerial performance (Grezda, 2005;

Raelin & Cooledge, 1995). Other criticisms come from the issues posed by reducing a body

of knowledge to a list of skills that don't change with context or with the future of the

organisation (Turnbull, 2011; Wheelahan, 2007; Zaccaro & Horn, 2003) and that

competency models are often either overwhelming in number or incredibly generic and

they look very similar, even across different organisations and sectors (Turnbull, 2011).

Competency views of leadership can be seen as little more than an extension of the

trait theories of leadership (Clarke, 2012) – the bewildering number of competencies

required or lists of skills and personal qualities expected in order to be a leader in one

particular job role makes the practical use of these lists almost impossible. In addition, they

fail to take into account the way that people use these competencies or apply these skills, or

the context within which they use them. As Petrie (2014, p. 10) summarised, "For a long

time we thought leadership development was working out what competencies a leader should possess and then helping individual managers to develop them – much as a bodybuilder tries to develop different muscle groups". But the competency model began to seem out-dated when understanding of the variety of ways people can develop grew and as scholars began to move away from the notion that leadership is all about what one person does, knows or behaves.

3.6   Contingency leadership

Mischel (1968) challenged the prevailing assumption of that time - that traits and behaviours are the most important factor in predicting behaviour. He argued that situational context is at least as important in determining what a person does as their personality. He supported this claim by reviewing previous research to show that the relationship between personality and behaviour is not particularly strong. So, according to Mischel, a person who scores high on agreeableness does not necessarily react in an agreeable way in different circumstances. Behaviour began to be considered as a product of both personality and context – and this filtered through to research into leadership. As research into leadership behaviour advanced, and as the science of psychology became more prevalent, it became clear that simply considering personality traits and the way that a person behaves will not provide a clear picture of leadership (Clarke, 2012; Cullen-Lester, Maupin, & Carter, 2017; Dinh et al., 2014). The idea that people will change their leadership styles depending on the situation therefore grew and another shift in leadership research began – this became known as the contingency school (Dinh et al., 2014; Dionne et al., 2014). The basic premise of these theories is that it is not just who the leader is, or if they engage in the correct behaviours that matters. What is important is that leaders

exhibit the right behaviours at the right time - the best course of action is contingent on the situation (Brownell, 2010; Sashkin & Sashkin, 2003). This approach therefore emphasises the importance of contextual factors such as the nature of the work, the type of organisation and the nature of the external environment (Yukl, 2010).

The key work here was the contingency model developed by Fiedler (1978), although this model has been criticised as being too rigid and also because it assumes leadership is based on personality and it didn't take into account that leaders need to adjust their styles depending on the situation (Ashour, 1973; Graen, Orris, & Alvares, 1971; Vecchio, 1977). Later, research in this area did take into account the changing situation (Ayman, 1995) but much of the research remains concerned with comparing two situations, with the independent variables being things like managerial processes or the influence process (Sashkin & Sashkin, 2003; Yukl, 2010)

This contingency approach to leadership does recognise that leadership is not solely related to the individual and that other external influences should be considered. The criticism here, however, is that these theories relate these influences back to the individual leader, and focus on how he or she reacts to situational variables. They fail to acknowledge any other relationships that many researchers now feel are vital to effective leadership. In reviews of more recent trends in leadership research, Dinh et al. (2014) and Gardner et al. (2010) both note that interest in these approaches are on the decline, perhaps because they reached maturity and scholars' interests have gone in a new direction.

3.7   Entity-Relational approaches to leadership

Traditional approaches to understanding leadership all shared the view that leadership is a specialised role – they focused on the individual (Clarke, 2012; Petrie, 2014) and, whilst

some of these theories looked at what other influences there may be (i.e. situational context), they did so through the lens of the primary leader, carrying out leadership functions (Badaracco, 2001; Cullen-Lester & Yammarino, 2016; Yukl, 2010). This view of leadership has faced increasing criticism, with debates in the literature around individualism and the value attached to one 'heroic' leader stemming from disagreements about just how much influence one person can have; it makes no sense to assume that people will act in a certain way just because of how a leader is behaving. The theories discussed in the section above then share this one key limitation – they are leader-centric and don't tend to recognise followers characteristics or initiatives (Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe, & Carsten, 2014).

This focus on the hero has, over the last 50 years, become increasingly criticised and largely dismissed (Badaracco, 2001), as researchers began to look at leadership behaviours from a influence perspective, considering the dynamics of the leader-follower behaviours and leadership styles that might influence or change the behaviours of their followers or work subordinates. However, the notion that leaders lead people, and organisations need leaders still dominates most of the leadership literature (Alvesson & Blom, 2015; Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2003). In their review of the past 25 years of leadership research, Dinh et al. (2014) note that significant research is still occurring at the dyadic level - mainly through studies that focus on charismatic, transformational leadership or on the leader-member exchange relationship, or follower-centric leadership theories. So, the focus of leadership research is now often on the relational aspects of leadership, as scholars consider how interpersonal relationships inform leadership practice. This body of work shifts the focus towards relational aspects but the basic unit of analysis is still the individual (Uhl-Bien, 2006) – leadership is still studied through the lens of one individual with the focus on both what the individual does, and the individual's interpersonal relationships.

3.8   Transformational / transactional leadership

It was Bass's (1985, 1995) work in particular, that started a paradigm shift from viewing leadership as something someone is, or the things someone does, or the knowledge and skills someone has towards the notion that leadership is an influential, dyadic process (Yukl, 1999). This school of thought became known as transformational and transactional leadership (Bass, 1985, 1995). Bass, and other scholars using his foundational work, began to look beyond the individual and to view leadership as a process that can be seen in the relationship between leaders and followers (Bass, 2000; Bennis, 2002; Dionne et al., 2014; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014; Yukl, 2010).

In earlier research, this relationship was referred to as a transaction that involved direction and specific requirements from the leader, with personal rewards if the follower successfully completed a task and punishments if they did not. This exchange between leader and follower became known as transactional leadership (Bass & Bass, 2008; Rosenbach & Taylor, 2006). Transactional leaders are typically defined as those who ensure that their followers are able to clearly understand the role they need to play in achieving an organisation's outcomes and in order to be rewarded (Bass, 1995). They are reactionary, taking action when things aren't going to plan (Rosenbach & Taylor, 2006) and are therefore focussed on self-interest. As such, it is often considered as managerial leadership (Rosenbach & Taylor, 2006).

On the other hand, transformational leadership involves motivating and influencing followers to excel (Bass, 1985, 1995; Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993). Transformational leaders allow followers to see and understand the overall objectives of a task; they provide a shared vision that moves beyond self-interest and ensures that followers' self-esteem and self-actualisation needs are satisfied (Bass, 1995). Leaders are also role models, setting an

example and ensuring that followers understand the shared assumptions, beliefs and values (Rosenbach & Taylor, 2006). The effects of transformational leadership are "…follower motivation, commitment and trust, respect and loyalty to the leader" (Dionne et al., 2014, p. 12).

Whilst transformational leadership theory has enduring appeal for both researchers and practitioners, it is not without criticism. Yukl (1999, 2012) is one of the leading critical voices – in particular, he notes that much of the research into transformational leadership exists at the dyadic level, and fails to take into account the process of influence that is required at both the group level and the organisational level. He notes that "…[at group level] the core transformational behaviours should probably include facilitating agreement about objectives and strategies, facilitating mutual trust and cooperation and building group identification and collective efficacy" (Yukl, 1999, p. 290). He also notes that transformational leadership behaviours should be analysed at the organisational level, with scholars looking for articulations of a vision and strategy for the organisation, and leaders that guide and facilitate change and promote organisational learning. Yukl (1999) first noted this in 1999, and since then scholars have begun to develop theories that incorporate or build on transformational behaviours but also include wider behaviours and multi-level research that attempts to clarify the nature of the influence process. A leader-member exchange (LMX) perspective is one of these key theoretical developments, which has increased in popularity over the last 20 years.

3.9   Leader-Member Exchange (LMX)

In the late 1970s and 1980s, researchers began to find that leaders needed to influence more than just their followers; they also needed to influence their own managers, peers and

external stakeholders (Kaplan, 1984; Mintzberg, 1973). This viewpoint was, in effect, a criticism of the behavioural or transformational leadership theories; researchers in those areas were not sufficiently concerned with the influence process and the actions or interactions of other team members. One key response to emerge from this criticism is the leader-member exchange theory (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975) and its precursor, the vertical dyad linkage model (Kramer, 2006). Unlike transformational leadership, LMX theory suggests that leaders do not treat all subordinates the same – instead, they develop an exchange with their direct reports, and it is the quality of that exchange that influences performance and effectiveness (Dionne et al., 2014; Graen, 1976; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995a; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995b; Yukl, 2010). This body of work therefore shifts the focus from leadership behaviours towards the view that leadership is an influence process, in which relationships matter. It doesn't however stray far from the dominant discourse in leadership studies because the focus is still on what the leader does, and how the leader treats those following them.

In LMX, the domains of leadership therefore consist of leader, follower and relationship (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995a) and leadership is viewed "…as a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (Northouse, 2017, p. 7). The central proposition in LMX then is that leaders differentiate the way they treat their followers through the formation of different types of work-related exchanges (Avolio et al., 2009; Harris, Ning, & Kirkman, 2014; Le Blanc & Gonzalez-Roma, 2012). Leaders may not treat all members of the team the same, and it is the quality of this differentiation, known as the LMX differentiation (Liden, Erdogan, Wayne, & Sparrowe, 2006), that matters to LMX (Martin, Guillaume, Thomas, Lee, & Epitropaki, 2016; Sparrowe & Liden, 1997).

Higher quality, or strong, LMX relationships refer to social exchanges that go beyond the requirements of the formal employment contracts – followers who benefit from these high quality exchanges are sometimes referred to as the 'in group'. In these high quality exchange relationships, leaders and followers show levels of mutual loyalty, respect, trust, affection and obligation (Dansereau et al., 1975; Dulebohn, Bommer, Liden, Brouer, & Ferris, 2012; Graen, 1976, 2003; Kramer, 2006; Le Blanc & Gonzalez-Roma, 2012; Uhl-Bien & Maslyn, 2003). They may also offer mentoring and empowerment in exchange for increased commitment to completing non-contracted tasks and better quality task performance from their subordinates (Dulebohn et al., 2012; Henderson, Liden, Glibowski, & Chaudry, 2009; Liden et al., 2006). Research has demonstrated that when there is a high quality LMX between leader and follower, a number of valuable outcomes occur, including improved job performance, satisfaction, commitment, role clarity and decreased turnover intentions (Gertsner & Day, 1997).

Research has also demonstrated that when there is a high quality of LMX relationship, employees feel obliged to reciprocate through an equally valued exchange (see review by Ilies, Nahrgang, & Morgeson, 2007) – this common rule of reciprocity is based on social exchange theory (Dulebohn et al., 2012; Sparrowe & Liden, 1997) and suggests that the member must 'pay back' the leader through hard work. In addition, these positive exchanges ensure that the follower increasingly likes the leader which leads to motivation to complete the leader's work demands (Martin et al., 2016). Low quality LMX relations – or the 'out group' are characterised by contractual exchanges that do not progress beyond the realms of the agreed employment (Sparrowe & Liden, 1997)

Criticisms of the LMX theory centre around issues with the range of measures, many of which don't justify why changes have been made from previous measures already available

(Avolio et al., 2009; Erdogan & Liden, 2002). Other criticisms are that it focuses too much on the relationship and not enough on the leadership behaviours (Yukl, 2010). One persuasive criticism of LMX theory is that there is a failure to consider the social contexts in which the leaders and followers are necessarily embedded. To date, there has been little investigation into whether specific contexts account for significant variances in practice, or whether the organisational context might impact on the quality of the LMX relationships (Dulebohn et al., 2012). So, despite a move towards a more complex view of leadership, LMX theory provides little understanding about the lived experience of these exchanges. As scholars focussed on the social exchanges within organisational relationships, they began to question why research focussed solely on the relationship between leader and follower. Whilst LMX theory and some of the new wave of leadership perspectives have shifted the research focus away from what individual leaders do, the focus is still very much on the dyadic relationships and influence processes between leaders and followers.

3.10 The new wave

In their comprehensive review of leadership research, Dionne et al. (2014) identified 29 different thematic categories of leadership theories, developed over 100 years; 17 are 'classic' leadership categories, and 12 are classified as emerging. Dinh et al. (2014) noted seven emerging theories in their review and in their examination of recent theoretical and empirical developments, while Avolio et al. (2009) noted 13 significant areas of new inquiry into leadership. These studies indicate that there is a shift in leadership studies, which represents a diversification of thinking around how leadership occurs, and what leadership actually is.

For example a number of very public corporate scandals (such as Enron and Lehmann

Brothers) have created an interest on ethical and moral behaviours of leaders (Gardner,

Avolio, Luthans, May, & Walumbwa, 2005; Hoch, Bommer, Dulebohn, & Dongyuan, 2018).

This has resulted in three emerging forms of 'positive' leadership studies – authentic

leadership, ethical leadership and servant leadership, sometimes described as theories of

the "new hero" (Yammarino, 2013). These 'positive' forms of leadership focus on leader

behaviours that are ethical, moral, professional and socially responsible, and suggest that

the leader's interpersonal dynamics will increase the followers' confidence and motivate

them to perform better than is expected. Authentic, ethical and servant leadership

perspectives are conceptually closely related both to each other, and to the field of

transformational leadership (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Eva, Robin, Sendjaya, van

Dierendonck, & Liden, 2019; Hoch et al., 2018; van Dierendonck, Stam, Boersma, De Windt,

& Alkema, 2014) and a recent meta-analysis suggested that authentic and ethical

leadership, and to some degree servant leadership, were all in fact incremental variances of

transformational leadership (Hoch et al., 2018). However, these new theories have been

developed beyond transformational leadership in that they now acknowledge that

transformational leaders can be unethical, abusive or self-serving. While there is insufficient

space to cover all of these perspectives in detail here, they do form an important shift in

recent leadership studies, as for the first time they begin to incorporate discussions around

the contextual environment in which leadership takes place. As such, a very brief summary

of each is offered below.

Ethical leaders seek to do the right thing, and conduct both their lives and their

leadership roles in an ethical manner – they influence followers to engage in ethical

behaviours through behavioural modelling and transactional leadership behaviours such as

rewarding, communicating and punishing (Hoch et al., 2018). Ethical leaders are perceived to be moral people, setting ethical examples – they have desirable characteristics such as being fair and trustworthy. They are also moral managers – they encourage ethical behaviour within their subordinates (Mayer, Aquino, Greenbaum, & Kuenzi, 2012). Research has suggested that, as the importance of leadership continues to grow, organisations should try to utilise recruitment and training practices that increase the levels of ethical leadership (Mayer et al., 2012).

Authentic leadership acknowledges the importance of being authentic and truthful in interactions with others. The central premise is that authentic leaders will develop authenticity in followers, through increased self-awareness, self-regulation and positive modelling (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Scholars undertaking research into authentic leadership therefore attempt to acknowledge the importance of both leader and follower here, though the focus remains on the way in which authentic leaders can develop their subordinates.

Servant leadership has been positioned as a new field of research (Eva et al., 2019) – it argues that the leader is motivated by a desire to serve and empower followers and the influence necessary for leaders is inspired by the very act of service itself (Brownell, 2010). In a review of studies in this field, van Dierendonck (2011) suggested that servant leadership is demonstrated through empowering and developing people, expressing humility and authenticity and providing direction. It is also reliant on high-quality dyadic relationships – though the focus is on the followers' needs. Relationships must therefore be based on trust and fairness and exist in a working environment that encourages positive job attitudes and has a strong organisational focus on sustainability and corporate social responsibility.

This new wave of leadership studies attempts to build on previous scholarly understanding such as the importance of the interpersonal exchange, and leadership

behaviours and – in particular – on transformational leadership studies. However, whilst this perspective considers the follower first, and attempts to orientate research around the other not the leader (Eva et al., 2019), in reality the focus is still very much on the actions of the leader, and does not therefore move the discourse much beyond the realms of the entity approaches discussed in the literature.

3.11 Concluding remarks

This chapter has sought to establish that leadership research has, for the most part, taken an entity approach (Dinh et al., 2014; Petrie, 2014), with leadership viewed solely through the lens of the primary leader or, more recently, through the perspective of the relationships the leader has with subordinates (Friedrich et al., 2009; Gronn, 2002; Pearce, 2004; Turnbull, 2011; Yukl, 2010). This is problematic because when leadership is viewed only through the lens of what one formal leader does, it neglects both the context of leadership processes and the abilities of others within teams, organisations and networks to participate in leadership roles (Ensley et al., 2006; Yukl, 1999, 2012). Leadership is rarely the preserve of just a single individual, but rather tends to be undertaken by multiple individuals in a team, and responsibilities tend to lie with those individuals whose expertise most closely matches the needs of the task (Friedrich et al., 2009).

Recently however, there has been a move towards an expanded understanding of leadership with research moving into discussions around how and where leadership is constructed and who or what is contributing to that relationship (Gronn, 2002; Petrie, 2014; Turnbull, 2011). Badaracco (2001) describes this as a 'post-heroic' phase – and this represents a significant shift in theory, in which scholars now consider that the centre of leadership is not just found in the role of the formal leader, but is also found in the

interaction of team members to lead the team by sharing leadership responsibilities (Hiller

et al., 2006). There is, therefore, a growing body of research that convincingly argues that

leadership is relational and multi-level, which involves leaders, followers, and the social

influence processes of larger networks (e.g. Cullen-Lester et al., 2017; Derue & Ashford,

2010; Dionne et al., 2014; Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2001; Serban et al., 2015; Steffens et al.,

2014; Uhl-Bien, 2006). This body of research forms one of the key theoretical foundations

for this study, and is explored in detail in the next chapter.

4 THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

4.1 Chapter introduction

This chapter presents the key theoretical foundations that underpin this study – it starts by explaining the paradigm shift towards collectivistic theories, before focusing on the theoretical development of shared leadership and explaining what sets shared leadership apart from other conceptualisations of leadership. In order to provide the reader with the full theoretical foundations for this thesis, the chapter also includes consideration of social identity theory in leadership studies and looks at theories of teams and team leadership.

In presenting the literature in this way, I am mindful of the potential conflict of the use of grounded theory as a method, and the implied prior knowledge this chapter presents. As per the discussion in chapter 2.4, I argue, as others have, that the researcher needs to start from somewhere, and some prior knowledge of the theory is useful in order to be methodologically and philosophically consistent (Charmaz, 2014; Timonen et al., 2018). In addition, developing an understanding of high-level theory has provided a framework for making sense of what I am seeing within my work (Maxwell, 2013) – this is particularly useful in this thesis, where there is a large body of knowledge on leadership, a small but growing body of knowledge on shared leadership but no prior knowledge available regarding shared leadership in the context of experiential agencies. So, in this study, there is a need to use theory to illuminate what I see, as no prior research is available to tell me where to look – as Maxwell (2013, p. 49) suggests "[theory] draws your attention to particular events or phenomena, and sheds light on relationships that might otherwise go unnoticed or misunderstood".

It is also important to acknowledge that, whilst this chapter is presented in a logical order, and includes in-depth discussions of relevant theories, it was not all written prior to the data collection process. I gathered some of the contents of this chapter during my review of the literature, when I was moving towards an acceptance that collectivistic theories of leadership were more relevant to today's workplace. However, much of what the reader sees now was developed during the data analysis processes, which is similar to the 'classic' theoretical sensitivity proposed by Glaser (1978).

Before the chapter starts, I remind the reader of my acceptance of leadership as a relational influence process, and I adopt Yukl's (2010, p. 8) definition of leadership – "Leadership is the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives".

4.2   Collectivistic leadership

As we have seen in the previous chapter, by taking an entity led perspective, leadership studies are often still narrow in focus. Some scholars have begun to recognise the limitations of 'heroic' leadership studies and have turned their focus from leadership as something a leader does, towards conceptualising leadership as an influence process (Langley & Tsoukas, 2017; Northouse, 2017). Scholars working in this area developed an understanding that leadership did not necessarily reside in the nominated 'leader' but in fact may be enacted by multiple individuals in both informal and formal leadership positions. This resulted in a significant paradigm shift for leadership studies, which has seen the growth in studies that view leadership as a relational, influential process and views leadership as emanating from a group (Avolio et al., 2009; Badaracco, 2001; Dinh et al.,

2014; Gardner et al., 2010). Various terms have been used to describe these forms of leadership, including collectivistic, shared, distributed and dispersed (e.g. Friedrich, Griffith, & Mumford, 2016; Gronn, 2002; Pearce et al., 2007; Uhl-Bien, 2006; Yammarino, Salas, Serban, & Shirreffs, 2012). In this thesis, I use the term 'collectivistic' as an over-arching term, in order to acknowledge the link between the importance placed on relationships and the process of constructing leadership through the collective.

Within these collectivistic approaches, leadership is usually identified as a social or relational process that emerges from interactions with multiple individuals, and resides in the network of relationships that exist in work groups (Cullen-Lester et al., 2017; Cullen-Lester & Yammarino, 2016; Henderson et al., 2009; Yammarino et al., 2012). Collectivistic theories of leadership recognise leadership wherever it occurs – it is not restricted to a single or small set of leaders but is a dynamic process, in which multiple individuals can carry out leadership activities and functions through collective behaviours (Chrobot-Mason, Gerbasi, & Cullen-Lester, 2016; Hunt & Dodge, 2000). These leadership activities can be shared throughout work teams, organisations and wider networks, and they can change over time; they are also dependent on the larger context in which leadership is embedded (Cullen-Lester & Yammarino, 2016).

Whilst there is a convergence of understanding in these collectivistic perspectives on leadership, there is also a wide range of diversity and divergence within the conceptualisations – not least in the terms used to describe the range of theories gathered under this label. In the next section, I unpick some of the key issues with the lack of clarification of terms specifically relating to shared leadership, in order to provide the reader with a clear understanding of the similarities – and perhaps more importantly – the differences between the key concepts.

4.3   Shared, distributed, dispersed, collective…? A clarification of terms

The variety of terms used to discuss these types of leadership include shared (e.g.
Bergman, Rentsch, Small, Davenport, & Bergman, 2012; Carson, Tesluk, & Marrone, 2007;
Nicolaides et al., 2014; Pearce & Conger, 2003; Pearce et al., 2007), distributed (e.g. Gronn,
2002; Spillane, 2006), collective and collaborative (e.g. Cullen-Lester & Yammarino, 2016;
Friedrich et al., 2016; Friedrich et al., 2009) and team leadership (e.g. Day, Gronn, & Salas,
2004; Ensley et al., 2006; Fitzsimons et al., 2011; Harris, 2008; Mathieu et al., 2008). The
proliferation of terms used by scholars indicates that there are many strands of theoretical
developments related to collectivistic leadership (Leithwood, Mascall, & Strauss, 2009). This
variety has created uncertainty about whether these terms are all related to the same
phenomenon or are unrelated concepts. The key terms used in the area of collectivistic
leadership are set out in table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Key terms in collectivistic leadership

Team leadership	Team leadership is a broader construct than other forms of collectivistic leadership. It is orientated around enhancing team performance and the satisfaction of the team needs. As Morgeson, Derue, and Karam (2010a, p.7) suggest, "team leadership can thus be viewed as oriented around team need satisfaction (with the ultimate aim of fostering team effectiveness). Whoever (inside or outside the team) assumes responsibility for satisfying a team's needs can be viewed as taking on a team leadership role." Some view other conceptualisations, such as shared or collective leadership, as forms of team leadership (Zhu et al., 2018)
Collective leadership	Collective leadership is described by Friedrich et al. (2009, p/933) as "..a dynamic leadership process in which a defined leader, or set of leaders, selectively utilize skills and expertise within a network, effectively distributing elements of the leadership role as the situation or problem at hand requires". Scholars working within this approach suggest that it differentiates itself from other forms of collectivistic

	leadership by suggesting that the leadership process is dynamic and team members selectively choose their roles depending on the situation. Collective leadership shares many characteristics with shared leadership (Zhu et al., 2018)
Shared leadership	Shared leadership is described by Pearce (2004, p. 48) as a …"simultaneous, on-going, mutual influence process within a team that is characterized by serial emergence of official and unofficial leaders" . The term shared leadership was developed from 'team-based' leadership literature (Fitzsimons et al., 2011) and is widely used in the management/ organisational studies research fields.
Distributed leadership	Distributed leadership is leadership as spontaneous collaboration (Gronn, 2002). It involves multiple entities, not just the formal few in leadership roles and it is about leadership practices – interactions and not just the actions of those at the top (Spillane, 2006). The term distributed leadership was developed primarily in the education leadership literature and is rarely used in management and organisational studies research (Fitzsimons et al., 2011)

The table shows both conceptual agreement and divergence within these concepts. In order to avoid discussing concepts that are too narrowly associated with each other to provide meaningful difference, I accept, in line with the work by Fitzsimons et al., (2011) and D'Innocenzo et al., (2016) and the systematic literature review by Sweeney et al. (2019), that the terms shared and distributed are the most common descriptors applied in the area of collectivistic leadership, and I will focus on differentiating between these two concepts.

Shared or distributed leadership?

The terms shared and distributed leadership are often used interchangeably in scholarly research, which can lead to theoretical confusion (for an example of this, see the literature review by Kocolowski, 2010). The concept is not new – it was first mentioned in the literature in 1948 by Berne and Sheats and in 1954 by Gibb (Fitzsimons et al., 2011;

Leithwood et al., 2009) and leadership as a process was being discussed by Brown and

Hosking (1986). Whilst many agree that shared and distributed leadership share these same

foundations, since the 1990s the theoretical discussions have developed into two distinct

conversations, stemming from different areas of research. Edwards (2011) suggests that the

point of difference between shared leadership and distributed leadership is related to the

differing levels of distributed-ness. For him, shared leadership relates to a wider group

involvement than distributed leadership. Shared leadership is conceived as an emergent

phenomenon which focuses on collective leadership in teams (everyone in a team could be

a leader) (Hoch & Dulebohn, 2013). Distributed leadership is focused on moving leadership

from the top of the organisation to encourage leadership practices throughout the

organisation (leadership is spread around an organisation) (Fitzsimons et al., 2011). The

focus then is clearly different, and this is reflected in the units of analysis used in the two

concepts - Fitzsimons et al. (2011) traced the historical origins of shared leadership to

organisational management and the team-based literature and distributed leadership to

developments in education. Echoing this, in a recent systematic literature review, Sweeney

et al. (2019) found that shared leadership was the dominant term used by researchers

working within a commercial organisational context, with only one of the 40 studies

reviewed using the term distributed leadership. Distributed leadership, on the other hand,

is the dominant term used in both education and healthcare research (Bolden, 2011;

Sweeney et al., 2019).

When studying concepts that are similar in essence but applied to such vastly different

contexts as organisational teams and not-for-profit schools, theoretical differences are

bound to emerge. So, whilst it is clear that there is significant overlap between shared and

distributed leadership concepts, recognising the core differences between these two

conceptualisations of leadership will be crucial for successful analysis of shared leadership (Harris, 2008). My own research context therefore calls for me to focus on the literature that conceptually aligns with shared leadership, given the focus on commercial organisations and the phenomenon of leadership within experiential agency teams .

4.4   Defining shared leadership

There is an agreement among the conceptualisations of shared leadership that there is little support for single individuals having a dramatic impact on organisational performance (D'Innocenzo et al., 2016; Pearce & Conger, 2003; Thorpe et al., 2011). Scholars argue instead that leadership can be seen throughout an organisation, conducted by those both in informal and formal roles (Clarke, 2012; Currie & Lockett, 2011; Gronn, 2002; Hiller et al., 2006; Turnbull, 2011). The concept of shared leadership therefore focuses on the broad sharing of power and influence among multiple team members, who can apply influence over each other in order to engage in leadership that will enhance performance of teams and organisations (Small & Rentsch, 2010). Shared leadership differs from other forms of leadership in that it describes a set of cooperatively generated actions, thoughts and attitudes that, given the right organisational conditions, enable leadership to be emerge (Wang, Waldman, & Zhang, 2014).

The most significant contributions to the theoretical development of shared leadership within organisations come from the work of Pearce and colleagues (e.g. Ensley et al., 2006; Pearce & Conger, 2003; Pearce & Manz, 2005; Pearce, Yoo, & Alavi, 2004; Wassenaar & Pearce, 2012; Zhang, Wang, & Pearce, 2014). Their work stemmed from an acceptance that leadership does not solely reside in one single person, and that with an increase in teamwork in organisations, it is more likely that multiple team members will engage with

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leadership functions (Small & Rentsch, 2010). Theories around shared leadership therefore focus on whether and to what end team members share leadership of the team. Shared leadership can exist as both a horizontal form of leadership – for example in self-managing work teams with no formally nominated leaders (Scott-Young, Georgy, & Grisinger, 2019) or in teams where a vertical leader coexists with the sharing of leadership, and actively encourages team members to share leadership among themselves (Hoch & Dulebohn, 2013; Pearce & Manz, 2005). As Pearce et al. (2007, p. 286) suggest, "folding leadership from above into the measurement of shared leadership provides a more parsimonious model… It also reflects the reality of leadership in many workplaces".

Within the body of work that focuses on shared leadership, there is some variety in the conceptualisation – as both Zhu et al. (2018) and Scott-Young et al. (2019) suggest, there is no unified conceptualisation of what shared leadership is and no unified agreed theoretical framework that explains the emergence or consequences of shared leadership. Table 4.2 provides some representative examples of how shared leadership is conceptualised in the extant literature.

Table 4.2: Shared leadership definitions

Pearce and Sims (2001)	"Leadership that emanates from members of teams, and not simply from the appointed leader." (p.115)
Pearce and Conger (2003) – this is the most widely cited definition	"A dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals and groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organizational goals or both." They also added that "this influence process often involves peer, or lateral, influence and at other times involves upward or downward hierarchical influence"(p. 1)
Ensley et al. (2006)	"A team process where leadership is carried out by the team as a whole, rather than solely by a single designated individual" (p. 220)
Mehra, Smith, Dixon, and Robertson (2006)	"A shared, distributed phenomenon in which there can be several (formally appointed and / or emergent) leaders" (p. 233)

Carson et al. (2007)	"An emergent team property that results from the distribution of leadership influence across multiple team members. It represents a condition of mutual influence embedded in the interactions among team members" (p. 1218)
Mathieu et al. (2008)	"…team-level leadership emerges from members' collective knowledge, skills and abilities" (p. 410)
Avolio et al. (2009)	"Shared leadership: An emergent state where team members collectively lead each other)" (p. 431)
Pearce, Hoch, Jeppe Jeppesen, and Wegge (2010)	"Shared leadership occurs when group members actively and intentionally shift the role of leader to one another as necessitated by the environment or circumstances in which the group operates" (p. 151)
Small and Rentsch (2010)	"Shared leadership is an emergent team process defined by the distribution of leadership functions among multiple team members." (p. 203)
Bergman et al. (2012)	"Shared leadership occurs when two or more members engage in the leadership of the team in an effort to influence and direct fellow members to maximize team effectiveness."
Hoch and Dulebohn (2013)	"The spreading of leadership to multiple or all team members" (p. 4)
Drescher, Korsgaard, Welpe, Picot, and Wigand (2014)	"An emergent property of a group where leadership functions are distributed among group members" (p. 772)
D'Innocenzo et al. (2016)	"Shared leadership is an emergent and dynamic team phenomenon whereby leadership roles and influence are distributed among team members" (p. 1968)
Zhu et al. (2018)	"Shared leadership is an emergent phenomenon whereby leadership roles and influence are distributed among team members" (p. 837)

Whilst there are clearly some variants in the definitions of shared leadership presented in table 4.2 what is notable is that they articulate consistent themes. In an analysis of shared leadership research, Zhu et al. (2018, p. 837) noted that across the different conceptualisations, there are three key common characteristics – a brief summation of this key discussion is given below.

- Shared leadership is about horizontal, lateral influence among peers. In work teams, there are two sources of leadership – vertical, hierarchical leadership from the formal leader and leadership that stems from team members. Shared

leadership focuses on the later, but it should be noted that scholars do not suggest that the two sources of leadership are mutually exclusive. In fact, shared leadership scholars agree (and have empirically demonstrated) that both sources of leadership are important (Carson et al., 2007; Ensley et al., 2006).

- Shared leadership is a team phenomenon. In contrast to traditional views of leadership as a phenomenon that derives from a single individual, shared leadership highlights leadership as an emergent property of a collective. Leadership influence is shared among members at group level.

- Leadership roles and influence are dispersed across team members. Whereas entity led views of leadership view leadership as centralised around one leader, shared leadership suggests leadership is broadly distributed across team members.

Drawing on Zhu et al. (2018) analysis, and with social constructionism and grounded theory in mind, I use the definition of shared leadership as formulated by Pearce and Conger (2003) as a departure point for this study, with the acceptance that my understanding of the theory may evolve as my findings emerge from the data. Pearce and colleagues were among the first to advance shared leadership theory within team based research, and it is their conceptualisation that is most often cited in literature (e.g. Dinh et al., 2014; Ensley et al., 2006; Fausing, Joensson, Lewandowski, & Bligh, 2015a; Hoch, 2013, 2014; Hoch & Dulebohn, 2013; Kozlowski, 2016; Serban & Roberts, 2016; Sweeney et al., 2019; Wu & Cormican, 2016a). At this stage, therefore, shared leadership is defined as "A dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals and groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organizational goals or both" (Pearce and Conger, 2003, p.1). As such, shared leadership is a simultaneous, ongoing, mutual influence

process in which individual team members share in behaviours and roles of the traditional

leader in order to maximize the performance of the team (Pearce, 2004; Pearce & Conger,

2003). This study also recognises Pearce & Conger's (2003) proposition that the leadership

influence process can involve lateral (peer) influence or vertical (hierarchical) influence and

that leadership can move upwards or downwards.

I also draw distinctions between the misconception that shared leadership means that

everyone leads all the time and the real meaning of shared leadership, which is that

everyone has the opportunity to lead, if they are willing and the resources and freedom are

available to them (Harris, Leithwood, Day, Sammons, & Hopkins, 2007). Here, I agree with

Carson et al.'s (2007) conceptualisation, which recognises the temporal nature of shared

leadership, and suggests that it can be placed on a continuum based on the number of

leadership sources that exist within a team. The low end of the shared leadership

continuum occurs when team members follow the leadership of a single individual –

leadership is originating from a single source. But at the high end of the continuum, most, if

not all, of the team members are providing leadership influence on one another. Teams

with high levels of shared leadership rotate leadership over time, so different members

provide leadership at different points in the life cycle. Please see table 4.3 for a summary of

the shared leadership themes that form the foundation of this thesis.

Table 4.3: Summary of shared leadership themes forming the foundations of this thesis

Focus of empirical research	Teams and team performance (Fitzsimons et al., 2011)
Concept of shared leadership	Predominately informal, lateral influence among peers, but can also involve formal, vertical influence (Pearce & Conger, 2003) Dynamic, temporal process – levels of shared leadership can go from low to high (Carson et al., 2007)
Mechanisms	Lateral influence (Pearce & Sims, 2002), interaction (Wang et al., 2014) and relationships among team members (Cullen-Lester & Yammarino, 2016)

4.5   Why shared leadership?

Given the plethora of leadership studies and types of leadership available, the reader may well question why shared leadership is an interesting concept to study. The answer lies in the potential suitability of the sharing of leadership in order to support more effective working practices. At the core of shared leadership is the view organisational teams and individuals are seen as a potential source of leadership, and that leadership is undertaken by those who have the right skills to undertake the required tasks, rather than those specifically with formal leadership responsibilities (Ensley et al., 2006). Scholars studying shared leadership suggest that this democratisation of leadership is useful, given the changing workplace conditions. Shared leadership has therefore recently emerged as a way for team-based organisations to operate effectively (Clarke, 2018; Sweeney et al., 2019). The increased interest in shared leadership has been promoted by a number of factors, including the move towards team-based structures in organisations (Hoch, 2013), the increase in knowledge work (Pearce, 2004) and the increased complexity in the workplace (Avolio et al., 2009).

For example, Thorpe et al. (2011) suggest that the need to share leadership around an organisation comes from the rapid speed of external changes in technology, operations and strategy that we now see in the workplace. Given the increased complexity and interconnectedness of work, it has become apparent that individuals are unlikely to have all the skills and behaviours required to effectively perform all the required leadership functions, and shared leadership may therefore offer a useful solution (Northouse, 2017).

In addition, competition has driven organisations to consider new modes of organising and teams have become central to that perspective, creating the need for (Pearce, Manz, & Sims, 2009).Organisational structures have therefore evolved to cope with the ambiguity

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and challenges that change brings, with flatter or networked structures becoming more common (itself a response to the problems with the top-down structures that were common in the past). These flatter structures are useful to organisations because senior leaders may not always have the right information to make decisions (Carson et al., 2007; Pearce & Conger, 2003; Pearce et al., 2009) and, therefore need to rely on specialised workers who have the knowledge, skills or ability to share the leadership load (Wendt, Euwema, & Hetty van Emmerik, 2009). In particular, the speed of which responses are now required, because of the conditions of global integration and competing stakeholder environments (Fitzsimons et al., 2011), means that organisations cannot wait for leadership decisions to be made at the top of the organisation. Instead, the person in charge at any moment is the person with the key knowledge, skills and abilities required for the job in hand – this ensures a faster response to the challenging demands. And of course, the benefits of sharing leadership mean that when there is a change in the required knowledge, skills and abilities, a new expert should step forward to take the lead (Pearce et al., 2009).

However, whilst shared leadership has seen significant theoretical development, empirical research is still sparse. In the aforementioned systematic literature review conducted by Sweeney et al. (2019), they found only 131 articles that mentioned shared or distributed leadership in the title, abstract and / or keywords and of these, only 40 articles had used empirical research in commercial organisational settings. In comparison to other areas of leadership studies, there is therefore a significant lack of empirical research. In order to provide some clarity on this issue, as overview of some of the key studies relating specifically to shared leadership and team outcomes are in Appendix 1. The table includes the context of the research, with a brief description of findings and critical reflections on each study.

Another concern is that, of the 40 studies Sweeney et al. (2019) identified, 38% rely on data drawn from student samples; whilst this may not be unusual, it does create concerns about how relevant these findings are to authentic organisational settings. There is then, a need for further empirical research into shared leadership in order to locate the theoretical development within context driven organisational settings and therefore test the veracity and applicability of the theoretical ideas.

4.6   The perceived benefits of shared leadership

To date, much of the empirical research into shared leadership has concentrated on the outcomes of shared leadership (Wu et al., 2020), with scholars looking to establish that shared leadership is positively related to team effectiveness and performance (e.g.Carson et al., 2007; Drescher & Garbers, 2016; Hoch, 2013; Liu, Hu, Li, Wang, & Lin, 2014; Muethel, Gehrlein, & Hoegl, 2012; Pearce & Conger, 2003; Pearce & Sims, 2002). This focus can be interpreted as proving the value of the theory and stems from the need for scholars to move the conceptual development into empirical study and to establish that this fairly new theory is an important area of study.

Because most of the extant literature has focussed on team outcomes, there is now a growing body of evidence that indicates that there is a positive relationship between team effectiveness and performance and shared leadership (for meta-analyses, see Nicolaides et al., 2014; Wang et al., 2014; Wu et al., 2020). A short summation of the main findings related to the perceived benefits of shared leadership is included in table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Summary of research into shared leadership outcomes

Shared leadership outcomes
Improved team performance (Carson et al., 2007; D'Innocenzo et al., 2016; Day et al., 2004; Drescher & Garbers, 2016; Drescher et al., 2014; Ensley et al., 2006; Hoch, 2014; Liu et al., 2014; Mehra et al., 2006; Nicolaides et al., 2014; Pearce & Sims, 2002; Wang et al., 2014; Zhou & Vredenburgh, 2017)

Improved team effectiveness (Bergman et al., 2012; Carson et al., 2007; Choi, Kim, & Kang, 2017; Muethel & Hoegl, 2013; Pearce & Sims, 2002; Pearce et al., 2004; Wang et al., 2014)
Density of shared leadership network positively related to team creativity (Wu & Cormican, 2016a)
Innovative behaviour (Hoch, 2013)
Knowledge creation (Bligh, Pearce, & Kohles, 2006)
Improved team creativity (Lee, Lee, Seo, & Choi, 2015)
Task satisfaction (Serban & Roberts, 2016)
Improved team trust, less conflict and higher cohesion (Bergman et al., 2012)

In Sweeney et al.'s (2019) review, it was found that 23 of the 40 studies measured the impact of shared leadership on performance, and 19 of them (83%) concluded that shared leadership can contribute significantly to improved team performance. Findings from this body of work can be summarised thus: when team members commit to sharing their leadership with their team members in order to achieve the organisation's or team's missions and goals, they commit to using more of their personal resources, sharing more information and engaging with the complex tasks at a higher level (Avolio et al., 2009; Pearce & Sims, 2002). These commitments from team members allow the team effectiveness and performance to improve (Evaggelia & Vitta, 2012; Fitzsimons et al., 2011).

Other outcome related research found that shared leadership created an increase in innovative behaviour (D'Innocenzo et al., 2016; Ensley et al., 2006; Hoch, 2014; Nicolaides et al., 2014; Pearce & Sims, 2002; Serban & Roberts, 2016) and team satisfaction (Mehra et al., 2006). Researchers have also found that teams with shared leadership experience less conflict, greater consensus and higher trust and cohesion than teams without shared leadership (Bergman et al., 2012; Fransen et al., 2015). There is a significant amount of research that confirms that high levels of shared leadership can promote team effectiveness by providing teams with intangible, relational resources that facilitate sharing information, expressing diverse opinions and co-ordinating member actions in the face of uncertain and

ambiguous situations. In short, and given these underpinning factors, where multiple team members participate in the sharing of leadership, performance improves (Carson et al., 2007).

Whilst the research that highlights the positive outcomes of shared leadership is persuasive, it should of course be countered with discussions around the suitability of that shared leadership in different environments. Pearce (2004) has suggested that knowledge work requires a different set of conditions and tasks to that of, say, manufacturing workers, which is why it is a useful setting for shared leadership. This has led to researchers trying to understand which working conditions may (or may not) make shared leadership advantageous. It follows then that shared leadership may not always be an advantage in all work settings (Fausing, Jeppesen, Jønsson, Lewandowski, & Bligh, 2013), This has led to two approaches to studying the dimensions to shared leadership – the first of these attempts to identify the moderators and mediators that effect the sharing of leadership, and the second of these aims to identify the pre-conditions (or antecedents) that need to exist in order to allow shared leadership to emerge.

4.7 Moderators and mediators

In an attempt to explain why shared leadership has a positive impact on team performance, scholars have focused on organisation, work and task conditions that may have moderating or mediating effects (see table 4.5).

Table 4.5: Summary of research into moderators and mediators of shared leadership

Moderators
Work function - the diversity of the nature of tasks due to different work functions creates different conditions for the sharing of leadership – knowledge work teams benefit from shared leadership more than manufacturing teams (Fausing et al., 2013)

Autonomy level – teams with discretion, control and influence over tasks and conditions facilitate team member knowledge and thus increases team performance (Fausing et al., 2013)
Complexity - (Binci et al., 2016; D'Innocenzo et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2014; Zhou & Vredenburgh, 2017) — as Pearce and Manz (2005) suggest, the more complex the task is, the less likely that one person can have all the expertise required to complete it
Demographic diversity – shared leadership is more strongly associated with team performance in more diverse teams and less in less diverse teams (Hoch, 2014)
Mediators
Networking and citizenship (Pearce & Sims, 2002)
Information and knowledge sharing (Hoch, 2013; Huang, 2013)
Team confidence (Nicolaides et al., 2014)

Research by Fausing et al. (2013) found a moderating effect of the teamwork function on the relationship between shared leadership and team performance. They concluded that when the nature of the tasks varied and were sometimes unfamiliar, such as in the knowledge work teams they studied, the relationship between shared leadership and team performance was positive. Conversely, the effects of shared leadership were found to be detrimental to "…teams with somewhat routine, familiar, and predictable tasks that do not necessarily require knowledge and inputs from multiple individuals" (p. 256). Their findings also indicated that team autonomy significantly moderates the relationship between shared leadership and team performance. High levels of team autonomy (described as discretion, control and influence over tasks) help in sharing responsibilities, competencies and leadership in the team, and thus facilitate the sharing of leadership. When team members do not share leadership, team autonomy is less important, presumably because team members don't have an opportunity to participate in the influence that underlies the leadership process.

In work that examined both moderators and mediators of shared leadership and team performance in virtual teams, Hoch (2014) found that shared leadership correlates with

team performance when there are high levels of team demographic diversity. Her research

identified that teams with more diverse backgrounds benefited more from shared

leadership than homogenous teams, "…because teams that are more diverse in terms of

tenure or age will likely possess more diverse experience and knowledge background"

(2014: p. 545).   This diversity of background is likely to contribute to improved creative

problem solving, and innovation as well as better quality input to decision making. Hoch's

findings contrast with those of Cox, Pearce, and Perry (2003) who suggested that team

members who are more homogenous are more likely to more rapidly develop higher levels

of shared leadership. This, they suggest, is because team members who are similar to each

other are more likely to be willing to treat each other as equals and therefore share the

lead. The difference between the studies, however, is that Cox et al., were concentrating on

homogeneity as a requirement for shared leadership to develop and Hoch was investigating

the relationship between diversity, shared leadership and team performance.

Some scholars have noted that the complexity of the work or of specific tasks can be a

moderator of shared leadership and team performance or team effectiveness. In a

qualitative study that looked at the dynamics between shared and vertical leadership in

change management, Binci et al. (2016) found that shared leadership was more prevalent

when the work became more complex, but less goal orientated. Findings from a study by

Zhou and Vredenburgh (2017) indicated that it was complex tasks (not complex workplaces)

that had a moderating effect on shared leadership for entrepreneurial teams undertaking

new ventures - when tasks undertaken were more complex, the relationship between

shared leadership and team performance was stronger. This empirical research confirmed

the early conceptual propositions made by Cox et al. (2003) who suggested that there would

be a positive relationship between shared leadership and team outcomes when the tasks

were complex and interdependent, because shared leadership enabled the team to better negotiate the demands of the tasks. The moderating effect of complex tasks might well be explained by the higher interdependence and information sharing needed when tasks are complex.

In support of this, as Hoch (2014) has noted that information and knowledge sharing has a mediating effect between shared leadership and team performance. When there are higher levels of shared leadership, team members are more likely to contribute their own knowledge and ideas to the team, and encourage others to do the same (Carson et al., 2007; Hoch, 2014) – simply put, information is a mechanism through which shared leadership operates. Hoch's research found that, in virtual teams, the role of shared information explained the association between shared leadership and team performance, because shared leadership leads to the use of team members' diverse information and knowledge background.

In a recent meta-analysis, Wu et al. (2020) proposed that the relationship between shared leadership and team outcomes is more positive when it is moderated by intra-group trust and task interdependence. Lastly, Pearce and Sims (2001) have suggested that a mediating factor for shared leadership and team performance is the networked nature of the organisation. Meaning the extent to which organisations use self-directed work teams, or networks of people, rather than relying on hierarchical structures, will inform the relationship between leadership and team performance. In other words, the more networked the organisation, the more likely it is that shared leadership will improve team performance.

Whilst the studies discussed here further develop our understanding of the nature of the relationship between shared leadership and team performance / team effectiveness,

their limitations should be noted. The key weakness in this small and emerging body of work is that many of the studies indicate that they have failed to control for other variables which may affect the relationship between shared leadership and team performance. Key variables that have not been considered in many of the studies include experience, ability and motivation of team members – and with the exception of Hoch's work – team composition (Sweeney et al., 2019)

4.8   Antecedent conditions of shared leadership

Few existing empirical studies investigate the conditions within the team or the wider organisational environment that impact on shared leadership (Wu et al., 2020). Sweeney et al. (2019) identified that only 11 of the 40 studies explored antecedent conditions to any extent and, in their review, both Wu et al. (2020); Zhu et al. (2018) suggested that research into the antecedents of shared leadership is still in its infancy, with much space left for exploration. Of the few studies that have been undertaken into antecedent conditions that enable the sharing of leadership, the focus has largely been on team-based conditions and characteristics. This neglects organisational level or structure based factors that can promote or inhibit the sharing of leadership (Zhu et al., 2018). This gap in our understanding of antecedents of shared leadership is problematic for two reasons. Firstly, since shared leadership is defined as an emergent process, it follows that certain conditions must exist for the dynamic to emerge. Secondly, studies which exclusively focus on team-based antecedents ignore the likely impact of the wider contextual factors – such as the organisational culture, the leadership team's relationships with their teams, the inter-dependence of teams and the variety of teams involved in projects and the current context of the industry itself - in which shared leadership takes place. Therefore, in order to

understand shared leadership, researchers need to engage with the wider context and conditions in which it occurs, but as yet, few have done so. This gap justifies the examination, in this thesis, of the conditions needed for the emergence of shared leadership.

Carson et al. (2007) were among the first to propose that both the internal team environment and the external environment were important to the conditions that enable the sharing of leadership. This division of antecedent conditions between the internal and external environment was further expanded by scholars who also wanted to understand whether task characteristics impacted on the emergence of shared leadership. An example of this is the work by Binci et al. (2016), who asked when shared leadership is likely to appear and when is it required. Their empirical research focused on 71 change management teams in the automobile industry and concluded that there are several noteworthy antecedents of shared leadership – team characteristics, task characteristics and environmental characteristics. Like much of the research into the antecedents of shared leadership, it focused on only one type of team and neglected considerations of context such as organisational characteristics or autonomy of the working team, but it nevertheless offers a useful insight into the variety of conditions that exist. I have used the useful distinction of internal and external environment and the nature of the tasks in order to discuss the extant research into antecedents of shared leadership. In the sections below, I discuss the key conditions identified in the extant literature - a summation of the studies is also provided in table 4.6).

Table 4.6: Summary of research into antecedent conditions of shared leadership

Organisational (external) environment
Organisational support systems and rewards (Binci et al., 2016; Grille, Schulte, & Kauffeld, 2015; Pearce & Manz, 2005)

Vertical, transformational and empowering leadership is needed to encourage leadership to be shared – both internally (to the team) and externally, within the organisation (Fausing et al., 2015a; Friedrich et al., 2016; Hoch, 2013; Kramer, 2006; Pearce, Manz, & Sims, 2008; Pearce & Sims, 2002; Zhang et al., 2014)
External team coaching (Carson et al., 2007; Fausing et al., 2015a)
Creative environments (Binci et al., 2016; Pearce & Manz, 2005)
Internal team environment
High levels of team communication, collaboration, and cohesiveness (Friedrich et al., 2016; Friedrich et al., 2009). Also, social support (Carson et al., 2007)
Opportunity for participation and input (Carson et al., 2007)
Trust (Bergman et al., 2012; Small & Rentsch, 2010)
High interdependence (Binci et al., 2016; Fausing et al., 2015a; Nicolaides et al., 2014; Pearce & Manz, 2005). This is the close to the well-developed networks within teams Friedrich et al. (2016) identified as necessary.
Team size, team member ability, member maturity, familiarity (Binci et al., 2016; Pearce & Sims, 2002); Team confidence (Nicolaides et al., 2014)
Team member characteristics
Team member integrity (Hoch, 2013)
Conscientiousness and openness to experience (Zhou & Vredenburgh, 2017)
Employee commitment to the sharing of leadership (Pearce & Manz, 2005)
Well-developed networks within teams (Friedrich et al., 2016)
Task characteristics
Task cohesion (Serban & Roberts, 2016)
Shared leadership is more effective than vertical leadership at the start of a task's life cycle (Ensley et al., 2006; Nicolaides et al., 2014; Wang et al., 2017; Wu & Cormican, 2016a)
Urgency –Pearce and Manz (2005) and Binci et al. (2016)

4.8.1 Organisation (external) environment

When they first conceptualised shared leadership in teamwork, Pearce and colleagues noted that it is a complex and time consuming process and should be developed only for certain types of work systems, namely those that are interdependent, creative and complex (Pearce & Manz, 2005). Since then, researchers have taken these conceptualisations and tested them empirically, as well as identifying further conditional factors that enable participation in shared leadership.

Research has found evidence that a creative, uncertain environment is a pre-condition for shared leadership - findings suggest that the ability of teams to undertake problem

solving and be spontaneous and self-organising is a direct response to environments that need the most up to date products / services; enabling teams to share leadership is important so that creativity and innovation can be encouraged and applied (Binci et al., 2016; Pearce & Manz, 2005; Wang et al., 2017).

In addition, scholars have identified that organisational support systems and rewards must be in place to enable the sharing of leadership (Binci et al., 2016; Pearce & Manz, 2005). Intrinsically felt empowerment and the perception of being fairly rewarded and recognised for one's performance were found to be important antecedents to shared leadership (Grille et al., 2015). Related to this is that vertical, transformational and empowering leadership is needed to encourage leadership to be shared – both internally (within the team) (Fausing et al., 2015a; Friedrich et al., 2016; Hoch, 2013; Kramer, 2006; Pearce et al., 2008; Pearce & Sims, 2002; Zhang et al., 2014) and externally (within the organisation or wider network) (Carson et al., 2007; Fausing et al., 2015a).

4.8.2   Internal (team) environment

Carson et al. (2007) noted that the internal team environment, consisting of shared purpose, social support and voice, were predictors or precursors of shared leadership emergence. They found that the internal team environment works in unison with external coaching to drive performance. The first dimension - shared purpose - suggests that all team members have a similar understanding of their team's primary objectives and ensure that they are focused on collective goals – this common shared purpose will result in different team members co-ordinating their individual roles effectively. Consistent with this are the findings by Serban and Roberts (2016), which suggested that in the context of a creative task, internal team environment is a predictor of shared leadership.

Related to this is the second dimension - an enabling environment - that Carson et al. (2007) also identified as a precursor for shared leadership. They found that a positive, supportive internal team environment facilitates the emergence of shared leadership, alongside ensuring that team members have a 'voice' – the opportunity for participation and input. Lastly, they found that the efforts of team members to offer emotional and psychological support (social support) to one another was an important antecedent for the emergence of shared leadership (Wu et al., 2020). Later research by Daspit, Tillman, Boyd, and McKee (2013) and a meta-analysis by Wu et al. (2020) confirmed that when Carson et al's shared purpose, social support and voice existed within groups, members were more likely to engage in leadership, or accept it from others and therefore the presence of shared leadership is potentially increased.

Both Daspit et al., and Carson et al., utilised undergraduate student samples as their data source – however, other scholars have empirically explored these concepts in authentic organisational settings and have also found that supportive environments are important. For example, high levels of team communication, collaboration, and cohesiveness (Friedrich et al., 2016; Friedrich et al., 2009) and trusting relationships within the team (Bergman et al., 2012; Small & Rentsch, 2010) were also identified as antecedent conditions for the sharing of leadership. Relatedly, team member integrity (equated with responsibility and trustworthiness in the study) (Hoch, 2013) and conscientiousness and openness to experience of diversity (Zhou & Vredenburgh, 2017) have also been found to facilitate the sharing of leadership in small to medium sized organisations.

Interdependence has long been recognised as important for cooperative social processes – in shared leadership, Pearce (2004) suggested that team members are more likely to share leadership if the nature of their work is highly interdependent. Highly

interdependent work refers to work that needs input from more than one person, or one team, in order to complete it. The event industry is a good example of this type of highly interdependent context, given its reliance on a range of experts, teams and suppliers in order to deliver an event project. Scholars testing this have found that teams working such contexts are required to work closely together on tasks that are interconnected and integrated and thus must co-ordinate and integrate actions. This co-ordination and integration creates the conditions in which it becomes easier for team members to share in leadership (Binci et al., 2016; Fausing et al., 2015a; Nicolaides et al., 2014; Pearce & Manz, 2005). This concept of integration is close to the well-developed networks within teams which Friedrich et al. (2016) identified as being necessary.

Lastly, two studies have noted that team composition – consisting of team size, team member ability, member maturity, familiarity - contribute to shared leadership in teams (Binci et al., 2016; Pearce & Sims, 2002). Carson et al. (2007) also noted that team size had a strongly positive relationship with shared leadership – potentially indicating that more members have greater potential for resource sharing and, related to this, it has been noted that there must be employee commitment to the sharing of leadership (Pearce & Manz, 2005).

4.8.3   Nature of tasks

There has been little attention given to the nature of the tasks being undertaken by the team – though the review of the literature does suggest that many scholars conflate 'task' with 'work', with few indicating whether they mean the day to day tasks that work consists of, or the broad view of the nature of the work and work systems. Thus, some of the literature discussed in the organisational conditions section above may actually have been referring to tasks undertaken, but have not made this clear. A handful of studies have taken

a specifically task based view, following the call by Serban and Roberts (2016) who found that, under challenging conditions, task characteristics can be more meaningful to analyse than team characteristic as they can have a higher impact on team and organisational outcomes.

Following this, scholars have therefore found that creative tasks ((Hu, Chen, Gu, Huang, & Liu, 2017; Wu & Cormican, 2016a) and tasks that are temporary in nature (Wang et al., 2017; Wu & Cormican, 2016b) enable the sharing of leadership. This is because creative, urgent tasks require fast paced action, and speedy decision making and will benefit from a range of insights in completing the tasks (Binci et al., 2016; Pearce & Manz, 2005). This is related to the notion of task cohesion – the group commitment to a task goal that has also been identified as a condition for shared leadership (Serban & Roberts, 2016).

Another area that has been under-researched is whether the varied antecedents are differentially related to shared leadership at different stages of the working cycle (Grille et al., 2015; Small & Rentsch, 2010). From a conceptual standpoint, it has been suggested that shared leadership is more effective than vertical leadership at different points in a task's life cycle, however, supporting empirical research is lacking (Ensley et al., 2006; Wang et al., 2017; Wu & Cormican, 2016a). The meta-analysis by (Nicolaides et al., 2014) indicated that shared leadership is more effective at the start of the task, which prompts the question that perhaps team members cannot sustain shared leadership over time. This was supported by Wang et al. (2017) who found that shared leadership stimulated team learning behaviours at the early stages of teamwork but not at the middle or later stages of the task. So shared leadership was perceived as weaker at later stages of the task. Teams engaged in more learning behaviours early in the task were more likely to keep their leadership network

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structure stable. However, Wang et al. (2017) were using a student sample which may not offer the same insights as an authentic organisational study would.

Here the criticism noted by Sweeney et al. (2019) (and previously discussed in this chapter) is relevant, in that a number of the studies that investigate conditions for shared leadership used student samples. Also, as with the moderator's and mediator's discussion, the work on conditions that enable shared leadership shares a key limitation, in that the range of contexts within which it has been studied is limited in scope. This is problematic given that shared leadership is heavily context dependent (D'Innocenzo et al., 2016; Fitzsimons et al., 2011; Pearce et al., 2007) and is expected to be different in each of the contexts within which it is observed. In order to further our understanding of the conditions that underpin shared leadership, it therefore needs to be observed in a wider variety of situations – this need drives the central proposition of this thesis and explains why I have chosen to focus specifically on the conditions that enable the sharing of leadership in experiential agencies. This will be explored further in detail in the next chapter.

In order to summarise the antecedent conditions that have been identified as enabling shared leadership in a range of specific contexts, Figure 4.1 demonstrates the existing knowledge of workplace conditions that precede the sharing of leadership, drawn from the literature (shown in blue) and the gaps in knowledge identified (shown in grey). It should be noted that, to date, no research has found the presence of all of these conditions in one study, but rather, each condition has been identified as an antecedent in one or more pieces of research. The identification of the significant gaps in knowledge here, particularly in relation to the context of this study, have influenced the formation of the research questions for this thesis.

Figure 4.1: Existing knowledge of conditions for shared leadership, and identified gaps in that knowledge

Organisational conditions	Team conditions	Task conditions	Network
Organisational support systems and rewards	High interdependence	Task cohesion	External coaching
Vertical transformational and empowering leadership	Team size, team member ability, member maturirty, familiarilty	Start of task life cycle	The impact of a network of transient teams with flucating team membership
Complexity	Climates of trust	Urgent and time bound tasks	The impact of complex networks external to the team
Creative environments	Clearly understood direction, goal or sense of purpose	Time bound tasks	The relationship between team and client in the service sector
Urgency	Length of tenure		Stakeholder power / stakeholder relations
Service sector environments	Social identity in teams		
	Shared feelings, beliefs attitudes		
	Power distribution, power struggles and conflict		
	Fluctations in team size		
	Participation		

4.9   The challenges for shared leadership theory

As identified in the discussions of the theoretical and conceptual development of shared leadership, criticisms of research into this area are often related to a lack of clarification of the concept, and of the philosophical underpinnings of the studies which necessarily influence the researchers viewpoint and the subsequent output (Fitzsimons et al., 2011). I have also noted that there are issues with the measures of shared leadership, with many of the empirical research taking place with student samples rather than authentic

organisational settings (Sweeney et al., 2019). And in chapter 7, I will draw the attention to the lack of interpretivist epistemological positions taken by shared leadership researchers to date. However, in addition to the critical perspective of shared leadership offered so far in this section, there are a number of other key criticisms to the development of the theory that must be addressed.

4.9.1   *Willingness to engage in shared leadership*

One of the notable issues with shared leadership literature is the implied assumption that team members will be willing to be involved. Most empirical studies include the assumption that the team members are willing to participate in the sharing of leadership, but few have advanced any clarifications as to how they established this or the impact it is likely to have. One of the challenges for shared leadership is that team members can resist participating, if they do not wish to take on additional responsibilities or become accountable for areas outside of their usual role. This is especially true as accountability and additional responsibility are usually unrewarded (Bolden, 2011). As Locke (2003) suggests, a willingness to accept the additional responsibility that shared leadership requires needs to be pushed from the top down, as a core value. Of course, as we have seen, most scholars accept that shared leadership is an emergent property which occurs dynamically within teams and is not led – or pushed - by the organisation. So shared leadership demands that, at a team level, multiple team members are willing to act as a leader and embrace leadership roles (Zhou & Vredenburgh, 2017) without being coerced into doing so.

There are two pieces of research that take this perspective but suggest that engagement with shared leadership may create issues. In the first of these, Shondrick, Dinh, and Lord (2010) suggest that shared leadership will be rejected if individuals don't recognise shared leadership behaviours because of their own implicit leadership theories (i.e. that they are

usually expecting leadership to come from formal positions, in a vertical direction and don't

recognise it when it comes from team members). Chrobot-Mason et al. (2016) further this

by suggesting that, consequently, individuals may be less inclined to attribute leadership

identity to themselves or others and will therefore be less likely to be influenced by others,

or influence others. These studies are closely related to the notions of social identity

theory, which is discussed in the next section.

4.9.2   Issues of power

A key criticism of many leadership approaches is that they tend to focus on the positive

nature of leadership (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012) and ignore the issues of power, influence and

domination (Bolden, 2011). Leadership cannot be untangled from the dynamics that occur

within and around it – critics such as Alvesson and Spicer (2012) and Bolden (2011) argue

that these dynamics are always unequal, and it is impossible to overcome these inequalities,

because one person is always in a stronger position than the other. This is certainly a

concern for shared leadership theory, which relies on team members accepting leadership

from those who aren't in formal leadership positions. These concerns are echoed by Harris

and Muijs (2004) who discuss the problems of implementing shared leadership. They

outline three causes for concern: 1) that those in formal positions of power will be

threatened by the distribution of power, and the associated need for them to relinquish this

power to others, 2) that hierarchies already exist that prevent those lower down from

gaining access to power and 3) that if shared leadership is implemented from the

organisation's top levels downwards, responsibility can be mis-delegated. In addition,

Bolden (2011) questions whether power and influence can be shared among a team in a

truly effective or fair way – and whether, at its core, shared leadership is actually all about

sharing the power and influence.

Scholarly research into shared leadership has yet to fully engage with these criticisms and instead has retained a clear focus on the positive aspects of shared leadership. One reason that issues of power have largely been ignored in the extant literature might be that scholars focus on leadership solely as an influence process. The concept of leadership as power, and the power relationships that maybe be at work in these influence processes is only brought to the fore by shared leadership scholars when they tackle discussions around the role of the formal leader.

4.9.3   Role of formal leader

Scholars disagree about how much high-level leader behaviours should be considered within the theoretical development of shared leadership. Research has largely focussed on the collectivistic action of emerging leadership in teams, without acknowledging the influence the formal leader may, or may not, have (Friedrich et al., 2016). This focus on the exchange of lateral influence among peers in non-hierarchical relationships (Sweeney et al., 2019) is problematic as it means that questions around how vertical, hierarchical and formal leadership fits within shared leadership have been largely ignored in much of the literature. And, as Locke (2003) suggests, it is risky to ignore the role of a formal leader when – in nearly every type of organisation – they are still an essential part of the structure.

Some scholars have sought, therefore, to establish the importance of the focal or formal leader in the process of sharing leadership, in order to ensure there is a fuller view of leadership processes (Day et al., 2004; Ensley et al., 2006; Friedrich et al., 2016). The suggestion here is that, in order to understand leadership processes, we need to consider an integrated model of both vertical (top-down leadership) and shared (or lateral) leadership (Day et al., 2004; Ensley et al., 2006; Pearce, 2004). A proponent for this integrated model of vertical and shared leadership is that of the collective leadership framework proposed by

Friedrich et al. (2009). Their model is defined as the selective utilisation of expertise within a network but emphasise the continued need for the focal leader to maintain a role. The role described is either as a leader who is explicitly willing to share aspects of their own leadership role with others, or in creating the conditions in which individuals emerge as an informal leader.

These conceptual discussions have therefore largely agreed that there is some role for vertical leadership within shared leadership theory and, within empirical literature, there are indications that integrating both hierarchal and shared leadership into teamwork will improve overall performance (Ensley et al., 2006; Hsu, Yuzhu, & Hua, 2017). This integrated view of vertical and shared leadership forms one of the foundational principles for this thesis, which aims to explore the role of those in both formal and informal leadership positions (multi-level) in developing shared leadership in cross-organisational teams.

The approach to the study acknowledges that vertical leadership remains an important driver of shared leadership (Ensley et al., 2006; Friedrich et al., 2009; Locke, 2003; Pearce et al., 2007) and that formal leaders represent a significant contribution to team success (Ensley et al., 2006; Friedrich et al., 2016). This inclusion of the vertical leader as contributing to, and being responsible for, shared leadership also reflects the prominent structures of an experiential agency, the empirical focus of this thesis, in which team structures typically operate with a cross-organisational structure, and often include input from members of the organisation's leadership team.

4.10 Summation of identified gaps in shared leadership research

From this summation of the shared leadership literature, we can see that there is a clear focus on team effectiveness and team performance, as well as a more recent shift to look at

team creativity, yet there still exists significant gaps in the literature and therefore considerable opportunity to contribute to the development of shared leadership theory. Consistent with the analysis conducted and discussed above, Fitzsimons et al. (2011) conducted a review of the literature and noted that a) the existing literature is fragmented and b) that there are many areas of potential research that signify large gaps in the development of theory. They list some of these research areas, including "…the moderating influence of cultural values, task complexity, task interdependences and competence, the influence of the team size, team diversity, maturity and life cycle" (2011, p.324). In more recent reviews, Zhu et al. (2018) and Sweeney et al. (2019) suggest that, whilst there has been progress, the knowledge of shared leadership still remains fragmented. My own review of the extant research suggests that whilst some of these gaps have begun to be addressed, there are still a number of gaps in the development of theory. These relate largely to the identification of the wider contextual conditions that might inhibit or give rise to shared leadership in teams (Clarke, 2012), such as conditions set by the organisation and its type of work, or the formal leadership team or the structures and processes in place within the organisation.

In addition, most research into the conditions of shared leadership concentrate on the setting of a single, static team – the extant literature on shared leadership has almost exclusively researched the concept through the lens of teams with clear membership boundaries. However, in many commercial organisations, membership of teams can be fluid, depending on business needs. Mathieu et al. (2008) suggest there is the risk within shared leadership theory that team level inputs are assumed as static within teams whereas in fact most teams experience levels of variance. Some team members may, for example, work together regularly, and other team members may be fulfilling a role that is undertaken

more independently or transiently. Some team leadership functions may also need to be completed by the appointed 'leader' and others could be distributed among the team – this is certainly the case with teams responsible for event management within experiential agencies, that 'pulsate' during the event life-cycle, starting with a small team of key strategic decisions makers and growing into a large, and often networked, team as the event delivery gets closer. In addition, as Sweeney et al. (2019) point out, even in organisations with team based structures, team membership can be transient – again, this would be true of the experiential agencies, in which teams form from across departments in order to deliver projects, but members of the team still remain part of their formal departmental team throughout the process (i.e. a creative team member might join with an event manager, a strategist and a production expert to design and deliver the experience, but remain part of the creative department at the same time). Whilst this type of organisational team is increasingly common, to date no research has been undertaken that explores how leadership might be shared across team boundaries.

4.11 Teamwork and team leadership

Shared leadership is a team construct, so a brief discussion on teams is needed to provide clarification of the theoretical foundations of this thesis. The focus on teams is particularly relevant in organisational or management theory, as work groups or teams are the primary unit for organisational structures – most organisations use some form of teamwork to deliver outcomes (Hills, 2007; Morgeson, Derue, et al., 2010a) and increasingly workplaces are reliant on individual teamwork models to deliver required outcomes. Pearce and Conger (2003) articulated the importance of shared leadership in teams:

> *"People who are effective in the follower role have the vision to see both the forest and the trees, the social capacity to work well with others, the strength of character to*

flourish without heroic status, the moral and psychological balance to pursue personal and corporate goals at no cost to either, and, above all, the desire to participate in a team effort for the accomplishment of some greater common purpose" (p. 12)

As organisations attempt to meet the challenges of a changing workplace already described in this chapter, teamwork has become ubiquitous (Morgeson, Lindoerfer, & Loring, 2010). Whilst people working together to achieve outcomes is not a new phenomenon, the context of people working in teams in order to achieve organisational outcomes creates questions around what successful teamwork looks like. In order to provide clarification for the reader, I follow Morgeson, DeRue, and Karam (2010b) who adopted the definition of teams proposed by Kozlowski and Bell (2003, p. 334). They suggest that teams are composed of two or more individuals who:

- exist to perform organizationally relevant tasks,
- share one or more common goals,
- interact socially,
- exhibit task interdependencies (i.e., work flow, goals, outcomes),
- maintain and manage boundaries, and
- are embedded in an organizational context that sets boundaries, constrains the team, and influences exchanges with other units in the broader entity.

4.12 Team leadership

Many teams still have individuals who are primarily responsible for achieving team goals (Zaccaro, Rittman, & Marks, 2001) and these formal leadership positions and their effect on team performance is the area that much of the extant research on leadership in teams focuses on (Day et al., 2006), with research indicating that leaders are one of the critical factors in team performance (see the meta-analysis by Burke et al., 2006 for a review of these studies). Some scholars go further - suggesting that leaders are the key factor for success in teams (Nicolaides et al., 2014) and others suggest that team leaders are the reason for failures in organisational teams (Nielsen, 2004). So, much of the extant research into team leadership has concentrated on how leaders create and manage effective teams –

leadership is viewed as an input to team processes and performance (Day et al., 2004).

Team leadership theories therefore take a functional approach, in which they consider that the leaders effectiveness is based on their ability to ensure that all functions that are critical to the task and team are completed (Burke et al., 2006).

As we have seen in chapter 3, scholars from all areas tend to study leadership from the perspective of the formal leaders, and with the preconception that leadership stems from a single source. It is, however, likely that in any given team there are multiple sources of leadership, and that these sources will change over time. Here I agree with Day et al. (2006) who state that it is important to distinguish between leaders of teams and their impact on team processes and outcomes, and leadership that develops within a team and the effects that has. Further, in studying the shared aspects of leadership, it is important for scholars to distinguish the level at which leadership is conceptualised. This, of course, echoes the criticisms of conceptualising leadership at the individual or dyadic level.

A broad view of leadership, which includes a multi-level approach to the locus of leadership and a focus on both formal and informal leadership, is therefore necessary in order to explain how the multiple sources of leadership interact and change depending on the circumstances.   In chapters 7, I explain how this broad view guides my methodological choices and enables my research to provide a more complete account of how leadership works within a team.

4.13 Social identity theories of leadership

As we have seen, shared leadership is conceptualised as a team-based phenomenon. Some theorists have noted that, in order for teams to function, they must share an identity, which is created through the exchanges that take place within the group (Reicher, Haslam,

& Platow, 2018). Here, scholars are drawing from concepts of social identity in social

psychology applied to teamwork – these theories suggest that individuals build their

concept of their self through the social groups that exist at work (Hogg, 2001; Hogg, Van

Knippenberg, & Rast, 2012; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014) and these identities influence our ability to

work with others. When people share a common sense of social identity, their behaviour is

underpinned by a sense of connection which is drawn from common norms, values, beliefs

and goals (Reicher et al., 2018) and this aids them to agree on issues impacting on the

group, via consensus. Further, shared identity creates feelings of unification as team

members share an investment in the work that they do, which results in an enhanced sense

of trust. These feelings of connectivity, unification and trust are some of the ways in which a

shared social identity helps to improve the way teams perform in an organisation. Social

identity in teams can therefore be simplified to defining 'who we are' and 'what we do'

(Reicher et al., 2018) and it follows that if individuals are able to shape the shared social

identity of a team, then they are in a position to influence the actions of the team members

(Hogg et al., 2012).

Whilst some social identity theorists have focused on those in formal leadership

positions, others have focused on whether leaders are emerging from, or being selected by,

the team because of their prototypicality to the rest of the team (Reicher et al., 2018).

Here, the emergence of a leader is based on a group member's resemblance to a

prototypical leader as determined by other group members (Dionne et al., 2014; Hogg,

2001; Hogg, Martin, & Weeden, 2004; Hogg et al., 2012; Steffens et al., 2014). The most

prototypical member of the group becomes the leader through social categorisation and,

because of this, has the appearance of having the most influence – this influence becomes

reality through "…social attraction processes that make followers agree and comply with

leader's ideas and suggestions" (Hogg, 2001, p. 184). Social identity theory of leadership

then centres on the need for people to identify strongly with a group, and as that group

becomes more influenced by prototypicality, the member that most represents the typical

qualities begins to emerge as leader. Leaders are considered effective because they embody

and influence the relationships that form part of the shared identity and leaders who don't

pay attention to the social identity within the team are less likely to be accepted than those

that do.

These identity-based approaches to leadership have been examined in a number of

studies (e.g. Fielding & Hogg, 1997; Hogg, 2001, 2010; Hogg, Hains, & Mason, 1998; Hogg et

al., 2012; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014; van Knippenberg, 2012; Van Vugt & De Cremer, 1999) –

these studies suggest that group prototypicality and social attraction are at least as

important as leadership characteristics. The prototypicality of the leader therefore has a key

influencing factor on the effectiveness of leadership (Hogg, 2001; Hogg et al., 2012). The

leader's role is therefore about shaping social identities so that the leader's proposals are

seen as a manifestation of the team's beliefs and values (Haslam, Reicher, & Platow, 2011).

The leader's role is related to the team they lead thus:

- Being one of us – enacting 'us;'
- Doing it for us – acting and modelling fairness and group interest;
- Crafting a sense of us – being entrepreneurs of identity;
- Making us matter – identity management, purpose and power in the wider context (Nestor, 2013).

More recently, research has noted that whilst the notion of prototypicality (being 'one

of us' and understanding the team's social identity) is an important element in leadership, it

is not the only factor that matters. Reicher et al. (2018) note two further things are needed

– the first is that leaders need to prioritise working for the ingroup above their own

personal interests, or the interests of the outgroup. And the second is that the leader's

actions must contribute to achievement of the team goals and must be aligned with the

values and priorities that have been defined by the shared team identity. These two further

considerations are significant to social identity theories of leadership as they help to solve

the inherent tensions that happen because shared identity increases followership and

enhances the position of the leader. It is easy then for the leader to get the credit and

reward for the team's success – and if the leader isn't perceived to be working hard to

understand and meet the needs of the team, then the perception of the leader 'being one

of us' is undermined and the social identity among the team reduces (Nestor, 2013).

According to the theory of social identity then, the leader or leadership team will expect

to be prototypical and individuals may well emerge as leaders because of this

prototypicality. It is therefore suggested that social identity theory is a useful lens through

which to explore the emergence of shared leadership, which is conceptualised as an

emergent phenomenon though little is known about why it emerges. Here, I agree with

Edwards and Jepson (2008) who suggest that:

> "If we believe that identity shapes behaviour, and social context shapes identity then
> it could further be assumed that social interaction and therefore behaviour shapes
> identity. If this was true, we could use displayed behaviour in organisations – and
> more specifically in immediate social groups such as departments – to try and
> understand underlying social identities. This process would then enable us to
> understand what behaviour is deemed prototypical and consequently essential for
> successful leadership at group level" (p. 148).

I expect, therefore, that the nature of social identity in teams, and how it interacts with

emergent leadership may well be a useful lens through which to advance the theoretical

development of shared leadership. By using an interpretivist approach to explore

interactions and behaviours within teams, this research will explore whether there is a

shared team identity, and whether that identity is shaped by the conditions that exist in the

unique context of experiential event agencies. It is expected that the research will also

reveal if there is a link between a shared identity and the affected team members being

more willing to participate in the sharing of leadership – both through enacting leadership

roles and by accepting leadership from others.

4.14 Concluding remarks

This chapter has sought to clarify the workplace conditions that have resulted in

organisations moving towards different types of leadership. It has drawn the reader's

attention to the development of collectivistic theories of leadership which have emerged as

potential solutions to the current challenges in the workplace. This departure from viewing

leadership as something an individual does – seen by some as radical in terms of leadership

studies (Hiller et al., 2006) - defines this thesis. This view of leadership requires a change in

mindset from the leadership described in chapter 3 - researching shared leadership takes

more than identifying formal leaders and looking at how they lead and what effects they

have. In these collectivistic forms of leadership, where leadership is thought of as emerging

from team relationships, it is more important to understand the nature of both the network

and the relationships within it.

The chapter has therefore provided a broad discussion of the emergence of shared

leadership as one of the key theoretical developments in collectivistic leadership and has

explained why shared leadership is a useful lens through which to study leadership in teams,

and how social identity may also be a useful focus through which to consider the sharing of

leadership. Throughout the chapter, I have identified a number of gaps in research that

have shaped this thesis. These can be summarised as a lack of understanding of the wider

contextual conditions that may hinder or support the sharing of leadership, such as the

conditions set by the organisation and its type of work, or the formal leadership team or the structures and processes in place within the organisation. The other issue identified in the extant research that has influenced the research question for this study is the tendency to consider teams as static, with clear membership boundaries - this ignores the more fluid or transient membership of teams found in organisations such as experiential agencies.

In recognition of these gaps, this study seeks to establish how the specific conditions that exist within an experiential agency, such as the temporality, intensity and urgency of task, a complex network of interdependent teams and the wider organisational context, each impact on shared leadership. These factors link to both the existing knowledge of shared leadership as presented in this chapter, and the contextual knowledge of the event industry presented in the next chapter.

Thus, in this chapter, I have aimed to give the reader a clear understanding of the theoretical foundations that underpin this study and I have highlighted the significance of context within the study of shared leadership. These discussions are central to theoretical positioning of this research as this thesis progresses to explore leadership from a multi-level perspective (leaders, teams, individuals) using a case study approach. In the next chapter, I explore the extant literature on leadership within the event industry, to further clarify both the importance of understanding more about this phenomenon, and to highlight the significant gaps in knowledge.

5   LEADERSHIP IN EVENTS

5.1   Introduction

This chapter will explore the limited conceptual and empirical studies that focus on leadership within the event field in order to establish what is known about leadership within this particular context. As will be shown, there is a distinct lack of research into leadership in events management, and this review of literature has been unable to identify any research that looks specifically at leadership within experiential agencies. This means that there is very little understanding of the contribution leadership makes to the management of experiences in an experiential agency context and the research that does exist in the wider field has missed the paradigm shift in leadership noted in the previous chapter and instead still concentrates on traits, characteristics and a list of skills needed to manage events. This thesis aims to address the gaps in knowledge identified in this chapter through the exploration of shared leadership theory within the particular conditions of experiential agencies.

Event management is still an emerging and evolving discipline and there are areas of research which are still under-developed. One such area that we still know relatively little about is the dynamics of leadership within the particular context of the event industry (Abson, 2017; Megheirkouni, 2018a) – in this chapter, I highlight this gap in knowledge through the summation of key conceptual and empirical work on leadership within event management. This overview of the literature related to leadership in event studies is necessarily brief, as little empirically informed work exists – the lack of studies into this area can be traced to the relative newness of events as a distinct area of academic study.

Event studies grew out of an interest in the impact of event tourism from tourism academics, led by Professor Donald Getz. Getz turned the lens of the impact and importance of the event industry for tourism, and since his seminal works into event studies in the early 2000s (Getz, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2002), interest in event management has grown and event studies have become a distinct discipline. In the early days, academic literature largely reflected this interest in tourism in relation to events – they therefore focussed on areas such as the economic impacts of events and the motivations and perceptions of visitors, attendees or residents (Formica, 1998; Getz, 2000; Harris, Jago, Allen, & Huyskens, 2001; Mair & Whitford, 2013; Wood, Robinson, & Thomas, 2004). More recently however, there has been an expansion of research approaches (Bladen et al., 2012; Dredge & Whitford, 2010; Mair & Whitford, 2013) which has included a move towards event research that focuses on issues such as the environmental impact of events, positive and negative event impacts, technical aspects of operations and management, social capital and political involvement (e.g. Ali-Knight & Robertson, 2004; Arcodia & Whitford, 2007; Chalip, 2006; Dwyer, Jago, & Forsyth, 2015; Fairley, 2016; Filo, 2016; Finkel, McGillivray, McPherson, & Robinson, 2013; Mair & Jago, 2010; Monga, 2006). There is also a small, but growing body of research that explores the negative impacts of event management and the "overwhelmingly uncritical and self-congratulatory" nature of the events industry (Rojek, 2014, p. 32). However, whilst research into events is evolving and expanding quickly, the majority of published research still concentrates largely on either the tangible aspects of the event delivery or on the outcomes of the event itself (Mair & Whitford, 2013; Park & Park, 2017; Pernecky, 2015).

There are still, then, areas of focus which scholars have yet to turn to - a pressing example of this is that there is very little empirical research that focuses specifically on the

working processes of event organisations, and in particular, the nature and dynamics of leadership within this context (Megheirkouni, 2018a). A recent analysis of published literature by Park and Park (2017) found that only 4.2% of research papers published in event management journals focussed on aspects of HR and, similarly, the review of the literature for this thesis was only able to identify a handful of studies that focused on leadership; with no studies focussing on leadership in the specific context of experiential agencies. As we will see, there is however an implicit agreement in much of the leading literature (e.g. Bladen et al., 2012; Getz, 2016; Goldblatt, 2014; Van der Wagen, 2006) that there are a set of soft management and leadership skills that are essential to the role.

The following sections focus on the theoretical and empirical work of scholars focussing upon leadership within events. As appropriate, studies from the inter-related disciplines of tourism and hospitality are included in the hope that these will shed further light on the under-researched context of events.

5.2   Conceptual discussions of leadership in events – an annotated literature review

At this stage, it is important to note that during the review of the literature, I was unable to identify any empirical research that focused on leadership in experiential agencies. Even when the search terms were widened to include experiential marketing, design and brand agencies, no research was evident. In general, research specifically into experiential agencies, given their relatively embryonic nature, is very limited, and is seemingly non-existent regarding leadership. In completing this review of the literature on leadership below, I have therefore used the wider and more overarching term of event management in order to offer any insight into leadership in this industry. It should be noted, also, that most of the research on leadership in events to date has not offered a

context-rich approach and therefore does not specify the event sector in which it is focussed. This is problematic given the sheer size and scale of the industry. However, authors of the leading text books in the field do suggest that leadership is important to events and event managers (e.g. Bladen et al., 2012; Goldblatt, 2008; Van der Wagen, 2006) and, whilst these texts are not based on primary research, the assumptions that they make are important in establishing the context within which this thesis is written. As such, below is an annotated literature review of the key textbooks coverage of leadership within events and the event management industry.

Getz & Page

In the fourth series of this seminal text, Getz and Page discuss the importance of leadership in the management of planned events. They draw attention to the management functions of event planning, and focus briefly on leadership (see page 344). The text gives a brief summary of the six schools of leadership theory identified by Dulewicz and Higgs (2003) and then delve into a variety of leadership roles and styles, offering useful insight into a range of current thinking on leadership. What is particularly useful is their discussion on organisational culture and leadership and the dynamics of planned events that make event leadership complex. However, leadership has not been a focus for Getz either in his own work, or his later writings with Stephen Page.

Van Der Wagen

Van der Wagen (2006) outlines the need to understand and develop human capital effectively and explains why leadership matters in events, discussing how events managers are leading projects that are "creative, complex, problematic, dynamic or stakeholder reliant" (p. 216) and that in order to do this successfully, they must possess vision and leadership. Van der Wagen suggests these skills should be based around the ability to

transform situations, to hold a creative vision and, crucially, to have strong decision-making skills. In her text, she includes a chapter on leadership which implies that leadership is an integral part of event management –describing the context of leadership in events and the relevance of leadership theories, but stops short of indicating which school of leadership is most relevant to event management, or which leadership skills and styles are required for the day to day management of event projects. This work is now over 10 years old and therefore the theoretical foundations she draws on are out-dated; yet her text is included here because it is still relied upon by teaching academics as a seminal piece of work on HR in events.

Bladen, Kennell, Abson and Wilde

Bladen et al. (2018) discuss the link between the type of leadership in events, the culture of the team and the style of the event delivery. They suggest that, in the early studies of event management, leading authors in the field concentrated on goal-orientated leadership. However Bladen et al. (2018) argue that this leadership style is not workable in the events industry, as the industry does not operate within stable environments. Instead, events are described as transitory – core project variables such as plans and resources are often in a state of flux and the projects are fluid and event managers therefore need to be involving and engaging leaders in order to deliver successful projects.

Goldblatt

Professor Goldblatt (2008, 2014) publishes a very well respected textbook which is now on its 7th edition. Goldblatt refers to event leadership throughout this book, but does so with a more holistic view of the term leadership – his book focuses on all event management as the leading of events. For him, the profession of event management has evolved from managing resources and securing logistics to the need to have a body of

knowledge that incorporates strategic planning but also includes leadership skills that "are

needed for long-term career success" (Goldblatt, 2008, p. xiv). Goldblatt (2014) offers three

leadership styles relevant to the industry – laissez-faire, autocratic and democratic and gives

a brief description of each. These are the same styles of leadership that are discussed in

Bladen et al. (2018) but, as we have seen in chapter 3.5, there is much debate around the

ambiguity of leadership being able to be paired back to a discussion of stylistic behaviour.

Bowdin, Allen, O'Toole, Harris and McDonnell

The Bowdin et al. (2011) text is similar in content and readership as the Bladen et al.,

text. It is similar too, in that it focuses on how to manage the human resource at events,

but does not give specific space to the consideration of leadership theory other than to

include a view of leadership as a set of skills or competencies – from a leadership

perspective, this viewpoint is outdated.

Pernecky

In a conceptual article, Pernecky (2015) attempts to move the discussion of

leadership in events beyond the basic discussion of leadership contained in many of the key

texts, by offering an analysis of the Rhineland/Honeybee model (Avery & Bergsteiner, 2011).

He explores the unique nature of the industry and then seeks to map the challenges in the

event industry against the leadership elements and Honeybee Philosophy in order to see if it

is a relevant approach for sustainable leadership practices in events. Pernecky (2015)

concludes that, due to the character of the events industry, it is difficult to adopt the

Honeybee Philosophy as it stands because events businesses are project-orientated, with a

beginning, middle and end, and are reliant on volunteers and short-term contractors. The

paper adds to the formative discussions around the challenges of leadership within events

but, as a conceptual paper, does little for advancing understanding about leadership practices in events management.

These handful of texts represent some of the key conceptual discussions – and they have resulted in widespread assumptions about the nature of leadership within events, which is, as I discussed in my 2017 work, (Abson, 2017) are unsupported by empirical research. They also clearly indicate the insufficiencies of related discussions about leadership, drawing on assumptions that have largely been dismissed in the more progressive leadership studies, such as the reliance on traits and behaviours as a lens through which leadership 'is done'. So, whilst leadership is seen as important aspect of event management, the current texts add little in the way of theoretical development and no empirical support. It is clear then that the current discourse around leadership in events has not kept pace with the scholarly discussions and research in the field of leadership itself The next section seeks to demonstrate the key themes that emerge from the empirical research in order to highlight not only the paucity in research but to demonstrate the gap in knowledge regarding leadership and the event industry.

5.3   Empirical research into event leadership

5.3.1   Competencies and skills

Whilst there have been a handful of empirical studies into the required competencies, skills and personal attributes of those working in the event industry (e.g. Chung-Herrera et al., 2003; Johanson et al., 2011; MBECS, 2011), few have focused specifically on the competencies or skills needed to lead event projects. An exception to this was a study of the 2005 FINA World Aquatics Championship, which identified the importance of having networking skills for leadership of a major sporting event. Other

identified leadership qualities include access to resources, HR skills, communication credibility, financial skills and legacy management skills (Parent, Beaupre, et al., 2009). Despite being over 15 years old, this remains one of the few studies into leadership skills in the events field. To address this gap, in 2017 I published my own empirical research into leadership competencies in event management. The findings demonstrated that event managers used six key leadership practices – engaging communication, strategic perspectives, critical analysis and judgement, resource management, emotional resilience and interpersonal sensitivity (Abson, 2017). This work was loosely based on the competency school of leadership, though it was more concerned with identifying the leadership practices which were useful in overcoming the unique challenges of event management. It still therefore suffers from the weaknesses associated with the limitations of reducing a job to a list of skills and competencies, to the exclusion of all other tacit and intangible knowledge and behaviours (Grezda, 2005; Wheelahan, 2007; Wilson et al., 2006) – see chapter 3.5 for details of this argument.

5.3.2   Leadership style and transformational leadership in events

Transformational leadership has received some attention in studies of major sporting events. Parent, Beaupre, et al. (2009); Parent, Olver, and Seguin (2009) used data collected from the World Aquatics Championships and the LPC scale to identify which of leadership style is the most appropriate for a sporting event. They conclude that transformational leadership is difficult in sporting events because of the reliance on volunteers and the associated lack of time to give them the attention transformational leadership required. They argue, therefore, that transactional leadership is more effective because, whilst there is no monetary reward for volunteers, transactional leaders can reward with other incentives.

Conversely, Megheirkouni (2017a, 2018b) identified that both transformational and transactional leadership were needed in order to develop organisational learning in for-profit and non-profit sporting stadiums (Megheirkouni, 2017a). Using a quantitative approach, the researcher found significant differences between for-profit and non-profit sports organisations in leadership styles and organisational learning. In a second study, Megheirkouni (2018b) again focused on transformational and transactional leadership styles, this time in large scale sporting events (the 2016 Olympic Games and 2014 FIFA World Cup). Findings indicated that there is a relationship between transformational behaviour and the rational decision-making style. Lastly, Megheirkouni (2017b) also undertook a study into the mediating impacts of leader-member exchange theory on the relationship between job satisfaction, organisational commitment and performance of staff in stadia and arenas hosting events. Findings indicated that, when employees experienced high quality LMX, they are more likely to show a high-level of commitment and a high level of performance. Whilst all three studies are limited in scope and replication, they are among the few that focus specifically on leadership in events and therefore contribute to the foundations of literature that attempt to bridge the gap between leadership and events.

Wahab, Shahibi, Ali, Abu Bakar, and Amrin (2014) presented a paper at the World Conference on Business Economics and Management, and published a brief summation of their research that examined the influence of leadership style on event success. Their convenience sampling was based on 112 event crews running events in Malaysia and their results suggested that people orientated, and decision-making orientated leadership has a positive relationship with event success. The research is based on three leadership styles – autocratic, delegate and participative, and also discusses transformational and transactional leadership. This position echoes the conceptual discussions of leadership styles seen in the

event textbooks and discussed earlier. However, the methodological details are lacking in this article, and the reliability and validity are therefore impossible to judge. These issues make it difficult to evaluate the contribution of the article to the knowledge of event management leadership.

5.3.3   Servant leadership

Two studies have been identified that focus on servant leadership in events – though more can be identified in the hospitality literature (e.g. Huang, Li, Qiu, Yim, & Wan, 2016; Ling, Liu, & Wu, 2016; Wu, Tse, Fu, Kwan, & Lui, 2013). In the first study, Parris and Peachey (2013) used a longitudinal, qualitative case study to reveal that a cause-related sporting event (a charity event) encouraged servant leadership. The findings indicated that, through structural mechanisms and social processes such as building a community and creating a culture of storytelling, participants were helped to practice servant leadership. The authors argued that non-profit sporting events can therefore create sustainable communities of servant leaders.

Megheirkouni (2018a) used a quantitative approach to identify the degree to which leaders in sports events, cultural events and personal events are perceived to be servant leaders. This extent of the servant leadership behaviours were then linked to employee job satisfaction. The findings indicated that servant leadership behaviours were adopted by managers in the context of both sporting events and personal events, but not cultural events. Findings also indicated that job satisfaction varied greatly across the sport, cultural and persona events sector. The researcher makes some bold claims in terms of the findings (e.g. "the results showed that servant leadership behaviours were not seen as being essential to the cultural events" p.146). These sweeping statements are problematic, given each sample was drawn from different middle eastern countries, with the cultural events

organisations being situated in Syria – we could therefore expect that leadership would be affected by the instability in the area. It is interesting, however, to note the potential differences and in particular, to note the findings that suggest that there is a positive interaction between employee job satisfaction and the servant leader's emotional behaviours.

5.3.4   Shared leadership in events

To date, there have been no published studies that focus on shared, or distributed, leadership in any area of event management - indicating a noteworthy gap in the literature. In research that touches on something similar to shared leadership in cultural events, Ensor et al. (2011) conducted research with five festival leaders, using the repertory grid system with the aim of identifying the critical factors that festival leaders associate with sustainable events. Here again, they identified that festival leaders felt that having leadership that had 'expert standing in the sector' was important in delivering sustainable events. Despite the limitations of an exploratory study, this research highlights "the esteem and significance that is attributed to the individual…festival leader and his or her knowledge, and the far lower significance attributed to shared or group leadership" (Ensor et al., 2011, p. 324). As the authors point out, this perception of the leadership of the festival manager, in the delivery of sustainable events, as being vitally important is problematic in an environment that requires the construction of networks.

5.3.5   Shared leadership in project management

Given the lack of attention to shared leadership in the events literature, it is necessary to look to bodies of work in similar, related industries. A review of the literature found no studies specifically related to shared leadership in the hospitality, tourism or leisure industries, with the exception of Benson and Blackman (2011) and Hristov and

Zehrer (2019) who focused on whether the related concept of distributed leadership was beneficial to introduce to destination management organisations. Both studies concluded that tourism organisations might find the adoption of distributed leadership advantageous in order to increase organisational performance.

In order to attempt to gain further insights into the potential for shared leadership in the events sector, I turned to literature on project management - event managers are, after all, responsible for the efficient delivery of large scale, complex projects and it is often argued that event managers are project orientated (e.g. Bladen et al., 2018; Bowdin et al., 2011). The similarities between event management and project management can be seen in the need for business cases, strategic planning, risk assessment, resource / time and workload planning and the monitoring and implementation of the plan. There are, of course, key differences between event management and project management – namely that event projects have a definitive end with outcomes that are either immediately delivered during the event (e.g. increased sales, good experience, networking) or that strive to achieve event legacy (e.g. increased business, longer term behavioural changes, lasting awareness of a subject), (Brown, 2014). Conversely projects tend to have benefits and outcomes that accrue only after the project has finished. However, given the overarching similarities, a review of the project management literature on shared leadership should prove insightful.

In his conceptual research paper into leadership in project management, Clarke (2012) suggests that research into leadership within projects has primarily focussed on leadership as the sole domain of the project manager – as we have seen this can also be said to be the problem with the research conducted in events. Whilst his work is conceptual in nature, it draws on reliable literature from both shared leadership and project

management. As such, the paper has been useful to underpin the exploratory nature of this thesis, given its focus on projects which contain some similarities to events. Clark aimed to extend the theoretical understanding of shared leadership within the context of projects, and in doing so, proposed that the problems with examining leadership within the fast changing and dynamic field of projects is that there needs to be an enhanced capacity for high levels of knowledge sharing, and "a greater potential for more rapid and effective responses to escalating events through emergent leadership capabilities" (Clarke, 2012, p. 205). That project managers tend to be highly skilled and frequently undertake major problem-solving means shared leadership could potentially be a very effective way to deliver successful projects.

Since then, a number of studies into shared leadership have been conducted with project teams as their data sources – in a very recent systematic literature review Scott-Young et al. (2019) identified eight such papers. These studies include project teams such as dispersed new product development teams (Hu et al., 2017; Muethel & Hoegl, 2013), engineering design teams (Wu & Cormican, 2016a), student project teams (Wang et al., 2017), change management project teams (Binci et al., 2016), information systems project teams (Hsu et al., 2017; Jeou-Shyan et al., 2011)and consulting project teams (Hoch, Pearce, & Welzel, 2010). Each of these studies demonstrated that shared leadership lead to improved performances, either from a team or organisational perspective but none specifically explored, or reflected upon, how the project aspect of the team were impacting on the outcomes of the sharing of leadership.

In the article, Scott-Young et al. (2019) offer a very detailed and comprehensive review of the extant literature, from which the authors developed a multi-level conceptual model of shared leadership in project management teams. The model draws on systems

theory, and is an integrative model that uses an input-mediator-output-input perspective to

provide a holistic understanding of how shared leadership develops and how it might

impact individual, team, project and wider organisational performance. The model is

presented in figure 5.1 below

Figure 5.1: Scott-Young et al's. 2019 conceptual multi-level systems model of shared
leadership in project teams
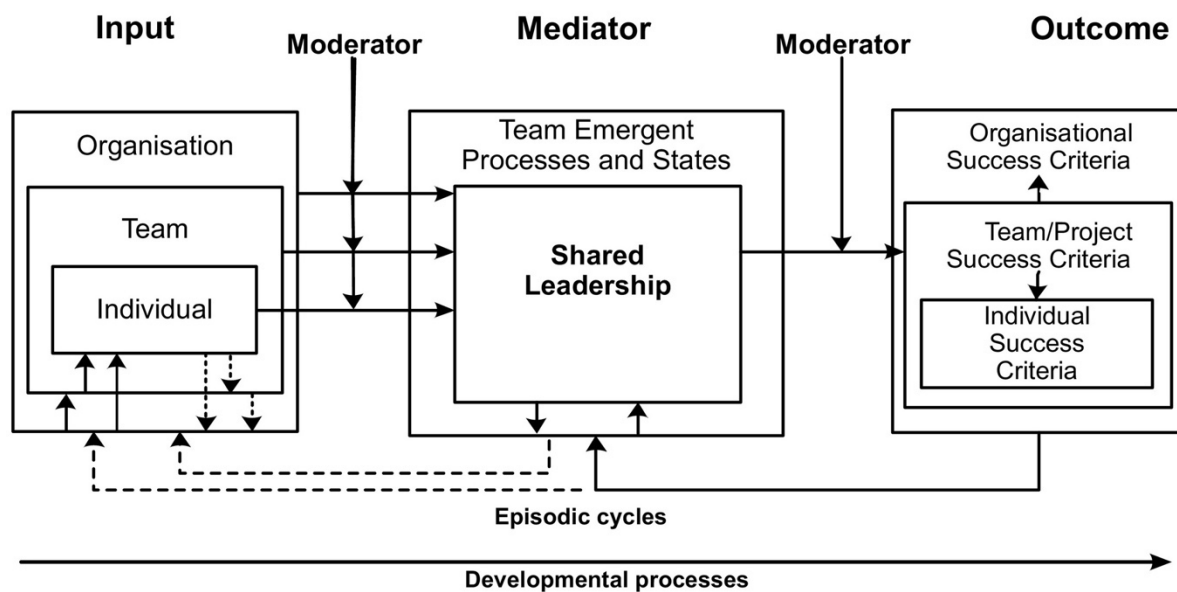
The authors' systematic review of literature suggests that shared leadership is

"...a construct that may add value to project management practice. Shared leadership has

the potential to enhance both project team functioning and project performance, as well as

to contribute positively to both individual and wider organisational outcomes." (Scott-Young

et al., 2019, p. 578)

    The model itself is evidence based, and useful in terms of consolidating the extant

literature into one model that can be viewed specifically through a project-based lens.

However, it is still conceptual and does need to be empirically tested in a project context -

as the authors themselves suggest, project management is both heterogenic, changeable

and complex so the model needs testing in a variety of project contexts. They also

encourage other researchers to consider a variety of research alternatives including qualitative research such as case studies, interviews and observations in order to advance our understandings of shared leadership in project teams.

The authors conclude that "The practice of shared leadership broadens the options for leading project teams, especially in complex, innovative, or knowledge-intensive projects, beyond the traditional practice of a single project manager exercising formal vertical power over team followers." (Scott-Young et al., 2019, p. 578). Here then, we can see a clear argument forming for the relevance of shared leadership to an experiential agency context, given the interdependent nature of teams within experiential agencies, the timebound and pressurised nature of delivering experiences and the creative output of organisations themselves. These issues are outlined further in the next chapter. This paper then, whilst being published towards the end of the production of this thesis, adds weight to the argument presented within this thesis that shared leadership is a useful concept for project-based organisations and that it is interesting, and useful, to study it from a qualitative perspective in order to gain new understandings.

5.4   Concluding remarks

Historically, research into events lacked variety and has, until fairly recently, been dominated by the focus on outcomes, impacts and more tangible aspects of event management (Evans, 2014; Mair & Whitford, 2013). Whilst research into events is evolving quickly, the majority of published research still continues to focus primarily on impacts and outcomes of event delivery (Park & Park, 2017). There are still, then, areas of focus which scholars have yet to turn to and a pressing example of this is that there is very little empirical research that focuses specifically on the working processes of event organisations,

and in particular, the nature and dynamics of leadership within this context. Whilst, as demonstrated in the brief annotated literature review, existing books and empirical research papers do sometimes examine leadership in event organisations, they appear to have largely missed the latest paradigm shift in leadership studies, and still therefore view leadership within an archetypical vertical model of leadership (Gronn, 2002; Pearce, 2004).

The problem with research into leadership in events is therefore threefold – firstly there is a limited quantity, lacking in variety; secondly it fails to sufficiently consider how interactions with co-workers, subordinates, others within the organisation and the wider network effects leadership processes (Yukl, 1999) and thirdly, there is not enough empirically informed work. We therefore know relatively little about who leads within event organisations and about how the situational context of planning events impacts on the leadership process. We know even less about how leadership manifests itself in the specific area of experiential agencies, despite the distinct context of these organisations creating an interesting lens through which shared leadership can be studied.

This lack of understanding about leadership in events – a key aspect of event management - is problematic, given the importance of events from a societal and economic perspective and the continued growth of consumer demand for experiences (BVEP, 2020; Dwyer et al., 2015; Yeoman, 2013). In order to further clarify the contextual choices made in this thesis, the next chapter will describe the specific context for this research (experiential agencies) – emphasis is placed on this as per the suggestions of D'Innocenzo et al. (2016); Fitzsimons et al. (2011); Hoch and Dulebohn (2013); Pearce (2007); Uhl-Bien et al. (2007), all of whom place context as central to the study of shared leadership and suggest that a context rich approach could develop theoretical understanding. As Day (2012) asserts "Context matters, especially with leadership" (p. 698).

6 EXPERIENTIAL AGENCIES - THE INDUSTRY CONTEXT

6.1 Chapter introduction

This chapter starts with a brief justification of why a detailed analysis of the research context is necessary for this thesis. This can be summarised as a problem with the extant event management / experiential agency literature, which fails to address the latest understandings of leadership and therefore offers only outdated viewpoints. As described in chapter 4, the context within which leadership processes occur are central to shared leadership theories, but there has been little application of this theory within organisational contexts and, in particular, in event settings. This thesis therefore seeks to add to the continued theoretical development of shared leadership in organisational teams by exploring it through the lens of a new context – that of event management and, specifically, experiential agencies.

In order to establish parameters for the research, and bring clarity to what can sometimes be a difficult industry to define, this section will provide definitions for the event industry and also outline and also establish the scope of both the event industry and subdivision of experiential agencies, within it. In doing so, a number of key issues crucial in the management of experiences are identified and these establish the industry's relevance and importance as an area of study. Many of these key issues derive from my own previous publications into the event management literature (Abson, 2017; Bladen et al., 2018) and also wider debates within the literature, which are summarised in the section below.

6.2 Shared leadership and the importance of context

This thesis responds to the numerous calls for a 'context rich' approach in order to develop our theoretical understanding of shared leadership (D'Innocenzo et al., 2016;

Fitzsimons et al., 2011; Hoch & Dulebohn, 2013; Pearce, 2007; Sweeney et al., 2019; Uhl-Bien et al., 2007). To date, the variety of organisational contexts in which shared leadership has been studied has been limited, with the majority of empirical contributions into shared leadership having taken place in University settings (for a discussion of the problems with this, please see chapter 4.5). Aside from that, scholars have focused on change management teams, and the fast-paced industries of finance and technology (see table 6.1 for a detailed analysis of the context of studies to date). The contexts chosen are clearly in response to the conceptual development of Pearce (2004); Pearce and Conger (2003), who suggest that environments in which teams are interdependent and face complex, creative and urgent tasks are better placed for successful shared leadership. However, researching shared leadership within such a narrow range of contexts is problematic because this overreliance on only a few sectors has resulted in conceptually limited findings. Therefore, Muethel and Hoegl (2013) echo the call by Porter and McLaughlin (2006) to provide a context specific approach, reminding readers that leadership does not take place in a vacuum, and that the context must significantly influence the dynamics of leadership.

This is supported by a meta-analysis of shared leadership studies, by D'Innocenzo et al. (2016), in which they suggest that there is still a need to look at more contextual influences of shared leadership. They point to examples such as Carson et al. (2007) who found that a high-quality internal team environment and external factors were a critical antecedent of shared leadership and suggest that work like this indicates the merit of contextualized shared leadership to further develop the theory.

Table 6.1: Previous research, indicating contexts of empirical research into shared leadership

Contexts	Reference
Student groups	
Students (MBA consulting teams)	Carson et al. (2007)
Students (Undergraduate teams)	Bergman et al. (2012)
Students (E-learning teams at University)	Lee et al. (2015)
Students (UG / PG teams)	Serban and Roberts (2016)
Students (UG)	Drescher and Garbers (2016)
Students (UG)	Friedrich et al. (2016)
Students (MBA)	Wang et al. (2017)
Finance	
Financial services (Field-based sales teams)	Mehra et al. (2006)
Financial / insurance (Work teams)	Choi et al. (2017)
Technology	
Software / IT (Dispersed project teams)	Muethel et al. (2012)
High tech large companies (variety of team roles)	Liu et al. (2014)
Technology firms (new venture teams)	Zhou and Vredenburgh (2017)
Change management / venture / entrepreneurs	
Start-up businesses (New venture teams)	Ensley et al. (2006)
Automobile industry (Change management teams)	Pearce and Sims (2002)
Public Utility (change management teams)	Binci et al. (2016)
Not for profit	
Not for profit (Virtual teams)	Pearce et al. (2004)
Theatre (Directors)	Kramer (2006)
Inter-organisational teams	
Product development (inter-organisational teams)	Hu et al. (2017)
Range of contexts (inter-organisational teams	Gu, Chen, Huang, Liu, and Huang (2018)
Other	
Training and admin service organisations (work teams)	Hoch (2013) Hoch (2014)
Manufacturing (work teams)	Fausing et al. (2013)
Independent professional teams	Muethel and Hoegl (2013)
Sports teams	Fransen et al. (2015)
Engineering (design teams)	Wu and Cormican (2016a)
Computer simulation (online groups)	Drescher et al. (2014)

To further make this argument, if we consider that leadership is socially constructed, as I do, then it is problematic to ignore the context – as Osborn, Hunt, and Jauch (2002) suggest, "Change the context and leadership changes" (p. 797). Indeed, shared leadership

places context as integral to understanding leadership as a social phenomenon - in shared leadership theory, leadership is more than just acknowledging the involvement of multiple individuals in leadership practice – it also involves the interactions between individuals and the situation in which it takes place (Carson et al., 2007; Fitzsimons et al., 2011). When shared leadership is conceptualised as a relational influence process, it follows that it will differ in every situation – this is because of the uniqueness of relationships in the workplace, and the way these relationships can develop in different ways and in different places and also because different situations result in different and unique leadership challenges (Thorpe et al., 2011).

So, there is still relatively little empirical research that explores whether shared leadership is an appropriate model in other work contexts (Thorpe et al., 2011). There is, then, an opportunity for the concept of shared leadership to have both practice and theory potential when applied to a new context (Thorpe et al., 2011). This thesis therefore studied the dynamics of shared leadership in an experiential agency context, thereby making a defensible contribution to knowledge, which not only maximises the extent to which shared leadership can be generalised but also demonstrates that shared leadership is a relevant and useful approach to leadership within this distinct part of the industry.

The next section explores the applied context of event management, and more specifically experiential agencies, in order to highlight to the reader why this context is a particularly useful lens through which to examine shared leadership.

6.3   Definition of 'Events'

In this thesis, events are defined as unique experiences, because of the interactions between the setting, the people and the management systems such as the design and

planning (Getz, 2008). They are also, normally, outside of the realms of the attendee's usual

encounters. Further, events are planned and purposefully designed in order to provide both

a collective and an individual experience. Planned events are a spatial-temporal

phenomenon, which involve designed and managed experiences, created for a specific

purpose (Getz, 2008) - the lived experience and the meaning attached to these experiences

is therefore the core phenomenon (Bladen et al., 2018; Getz, 2016).

Given the emphasis on the planned, designed and managed nature of event

experiences, the external and internal context within which an event takes place also

matters. Events are complex, interconnected processes that reach beyond the core of the

experience offered (Ziakas & Boukas, 2014) and an understanding of the process of

planning, organising and delivering an event are therefore central to an understanding of

the event experience. In order to understand the process of creating an experience, one

must therefore understand event management. Event management is the professional

practice devoted to the creation, design, production and management of the planned

experiences (Getz, 2008). As Crowther (2014) suggests, "event creators are at the heart of

the action, recognising the strategic context of the event and through intuitive design, they

facilitate required and desired outcomes for involved and impacted groups" (p.10). It

follows, therefore, that developing an understanding of both how events are created,

planned and delivered and of the people who create, plan and manage them is vital to

furthering our knowledge around events. This thesis aims to significantly contribute to

these discussions, through a focus on the leadership aspects of the event management

process.

6.4   The event industry

The growth of the event industry over the last 20 years has been widely

acknowledged (Devine & Devine, 2012; Getz, 2008; Mair & Whitford, 2013; Page & Connell,

2012). A surge in interest and participation in events across the globe demonstrates its

ability to contribute to culture, arts, education and tourism development and to bring

positive impacts to both local and national communities (Mair & Whitford, 2013). With this

sudden expansion, there has been a growing recognition of the substantial economic

contribution made by the event industry (BVEP, 2020; MPI, 2013) and the importance of

events from social, cultural and economic perspectives. This can be evidenced in the push

from various industry bodies and representative associations, such as the Association of

Event Organisers (AEO) and the Business Visits and Events Partnership (BVEP) to ensure

event management is on government agendas and part of policy discussions (BVEP, 2020;

Rogers, 2013; Thomas & Thomas, 2013).

One of the challenges of researching in the event discipline is the difficulties faced in

defining what encompasses the industry and what lies outside of it. Scholars have struggled

to agree on key issues such as definitions of typologies, the scope of the term 'event

management', the content of academic programmes and even on a definition of the term

'events' itself (Baum, Lockstone-Binney, & Robertson, 2013; Bladen & Kennell, 2014; Getz,

2012; Rojek, 2014). Many of these issues can be traced to the fragmented and diverse

nature of the industry, and they inevitably lead to issues with the focus of scholarly

research. In order to establish boundaries for this study, it is therefore important to

acknowledge the depth and variety of organisations that contribute to the event industry

and to briefly explore the difficulties with defining what organisations the event industry

consists of.

The event industry is made up of a range of different types of events, including (but not limited to) brand activations, festivals and other celebrations, sporting events, music events, political and state events, cultural events, community and local events, business events (including conferences, exhibitions, meetings, corporate hospitality and incentive travel events), hospitality events, experiential events and those in the private domain such as weddings and parties (Bladen et al., 2012; Getz, 2008). These events are characteristically organised by a wide variety of stakeholder and ownership arrangements, with a variety of different structures, underpinned by a variety of different purposes (Bowdin et al., 2011; Thomas & Thomas, 2013). Organisations operating within the events industry do not always do so as independent event organisations but more characteristically overlap with a number of industries - events are often co-produced and event companies typically use third party suppliers. Examples of this include organisations operating in professional settings – such as banks and legal services, who often have event management departments to deliver in-house and client facing events, or audio-visual suppliers who may also offer event logistics support. To add to this, only some parts of the industry are covered by the official government Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) code (People, 2010; Pernecky, 2015). This diversity within the industry makes a description of who and what make up the 'events' industry very difficult. Similarly, it makes the identification of the number of companies and workers within the industry almost impossible to define.

Added to the complexities of defining the industry are issues around the fast paced and diverse and constantly evolving nature of the industry itself. Aspiration towards leisure activities have increased as the global environment experiences greater affluence and commercial event experiences have therefore become key in the display of social capital (Lockstone-Binney, Robertson, & Junek, 2013).   Event organisations are therefore faced

with a continual challenge to keep pace with consumer behaviour and expectations and

there is also an increasing need for exceptional experience in day-to-day life, and a drive

towards authentic experiences that exceed our expectations (Crowther, 2014). The impact

of the internet and social media on consumer awareness is also evident – tourists travel

more frequently, spend more of their money on leisure activities and strive towards a

diversification of experiences, which they gain knowledge of through a new wealth of

methods. This drive towards an increased focus on leisure has also led to an increasingly

competitive marketplace (Weber & Chon, 2002; Weber & Ladkin, 2003) which is now facing

increasing competition on a global scale (Bladen et al., 2012; Bowdin et al., 2011; Rutherford

Silvers et al., 2006). As Crowther (2014) suggests, this experience economy has become

very big business indeed.

All of the issues listed here inevitably lead to problems with the focus and

parameters of scholarly research. Therefore, in order to establish boundaries for this study,

and after careful consideration of the extant literature on shared leadership, I have chosen

to focus specifically on one aspect of the industry, and type of organisation, that being

experiential agencies. The next section explores why experiential agencies are a useful lens

for shared leadership.

6.5   Experiential agencies

Pine and Gilmore (1999) developed thinking around the 'experience economy' around

the turn of the century, when people were willing to pay a premium for brands that offered

an experience alongside the product or service they purchased. This change in consumer

behaviour is often attributed to the increased connectivity brought about by technology,

which resulted in greater access to information and better ways to share experiences

(Crowther, 2014). Soon, the seeking of an experience became not just a motivating factor for purchases but a preference of consumers (Vaught, 2014), and, as consumer demand evolved from more passive event consumption to a demand for experiences, significant changes occurred to the way in which events are conceived and delivered (Bladen et al., 2018; Pine & Gilmore, 1999). In particular, brands have increasingly turned to live event led campaigns to inspire, engage and provoke customers (Campaign, 2018; Ledger, 2015). These live events, and the associated integrated marketing campaigns, aim to help consumers to experience a brand and can be critical in terms of establishing and maintaining ongoing relationships between brands and consumer stakeholders (Crowther, 2010). Event experiences therefore now play a crucial strategic role in enhancing and positioning the brand within competitive market places (Crowther, 2010, 2011) and experiential marketing has become a key tactic in a brand's marketing and communication strategies (Crowther, 2011).

These experiential marketing campaigns set off a growth in experiential agencies that delivered them, and it is these agencies that this study focuses on. When these agencies first appeared, the typical organisational model was an agency pitching live event concepts (and wider campaigns) to a client from a specific corporate sector (e.g. finance / automobiles etc). These agencies would invariably account manage specific events, usually with the support of other agencies who contributed creative design or marketing or production functions. However, as the industry continued to grow, so did the sophistication of the related agencies - they broadened their scope and incorporated a wider range of functions internally, and thus began delivering brand experiences in-house. Experiential agencies now typically design and deliver live experience-based campaigns on behalf of corporate clients, with the nature of the experiences they create varying enormously –

ranging from internal facing events for corporate employees, through to consumer facing

brand activations such as, but by no means limited to, pop-up shops or large-scale festival

marketing. Today's agencies often, therefore, have a number of integrating in-house teams,

that include the account or client services team (this team deal directly with the client, and

the overall management of event experiences); the creative / studio team (the team that

deals with the design aspects of the experiences, whether in 2D or 3D); the production team

(the team responsible for the physical activation / building of the experiences) and the

strategy team (the team who set and guide strategy). Agencies also, and interestingly for

this study, usually feature a leadership team, who oversee all aspects of the business.

The latest industry report that specifically looks at experiential agencies was

released in 2018 and indicated that the industry is still experiencing growth, despite

challenges (Campaign, 2018). For an idea of potential size and scale, in 2017, the largest

experiential client budget identified by a report by Campaign magazine was for £8 million

(Campaign, 2017). For the last few years, experiential has been described as being at the

teenage stage, with experts suggesting that engagement and experiential need to become

more scientific and data-focussed (Ledger, 2015). In the 2017 report, 80% of agencies

increased their headcount and 84% of agencies saw an increase in the number of pitches

(Campaign, 2017). Consumer behaviour continues to evolve, as connectivity and

globalisation continues to grow – the combination of mobile, social and digital will continue

to bring changes to the way agencies pitch and deliver experiential campaigns.

So experiential agencies exist in a changing and challenging external environment.

The next sections will look at the internal contextual factors that indicate that the nature of

planning and delivering experiential campaigns adds a range of different considerations that

affect the way in which work is conducted and that may therefore impact on the process of leadership.

6.6   The complexity of the workplace environment in experiential agencies

Experiential agencies are iterative organisations – they are episodic in nature and characterised by unevenness of activity. This means that there is discontinuity between activities and, whilst each event might be connected to the one before it, it is fundamentally unique and different. This iterative, episodic nature suggests that there is a lack of a continuum of activity in these agencies, because their work expands and contracts on a cyclical basis (Foreman & Parent, 2008; Mair, 2009) and they are therefore forced to rebuild their organisational identity on a recurring basis. This creates challenges in the way organisational identity is constructed - these episodic organisations struggle, for example, to ensure that internal and external stakeholders understand who and what they are (Bladen et al., 2018; Foreman & Parent, 2008). Having a clearly expressed and understood identity is seen as essential to the overall success of the organisation (Balmer, 2008; Foreman & Parent, 2008; Pratt & Foreman, 2000) and without a clear organisational identity, experiential agencies are exposed to a number of repercussions, including limited competitiveness, confused strategy and reduced legitimacy (Foreman & Parent, 2008).

Largely because of the iterative, episodic nature of experiential agencies, they also rely on organisational networks that 'pulsate' during the planning and delivery stages. At the early onset of an experiential campaign, networks may consist only of the experiential agency and the client, but as they get closer to the live experience delivery, these networks expand to include other stakeholders, such as; organisers, sponsors, participants, audiences, service suppliers, other marketing agencies and interrelated intermediaries such as travel

and tourism organisations (Tiew, Holmes, & De Bussy, 2015). These networks purposefully come together for a specific amount of time and then break up and these short-term working relationships can result in competing priorities and changing dynamics.

Pulsating and temporary organisational networks can – if managed well – form positive relationships that impact on the success of the resultant experience, and overall effectiveness of the event-led campaign (Hede & Stokes, 2009; Izzo, Bonetti, & Masiello, 2012; Larson, 2009). These networks can also help to share vital knowledge and information which contributes towards sustained support and meets the collective needs of networked stakeholders (Ensor et al., 2011). But, such networks of organisations can also result in dynamics which can be negative – for example, existing hierarchies, or those that form during the networking process, can prove problematic in terms of consensus, collaboration, planning and decision making (Hede & Stokes, 2009).

6.7   The temporary, but planned nature of experiential agency work

Unlike other industries such as banking, manufacturing or even hospitality, the output of experiential agencies is based on the consumption of an experience (Pine & Gilmore, 1999) – what people pay for, or sign up to, isn't a tangible product and nothing can be taken away (Pernecky, 2015). This intangibility means that perceived consumer experiences are central to a successful campaign – but it also creates significant challenges in shaping experiences that create a lasting legacy, or changes to consumer thinking and behaviour, which are integral to successful outcomes. Similarly, experiences are also temporary in nature - they are planned for, staged and then they disappear - this is true even of recurring event experiences (Bladen et al., 2018). This temporality results in inevitable and ever-growing pressures to deliver - there is only one chance to get things right, and mistakes in

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planning or delivery are very difficult to rectify once the experience is underway (Bowdin et al., 2011; Van der Wagen, 2006). And, because the work is often geared towards one particular point in time – that of the experience delivery – there is an associated, and increased, risk of job insecurity and poor working conditions, for example very long and unsocial hours (Evans, 2015).

In addition, competing and sometimes conflicting, organisational objectives from the various stakeholders can result in issues with resolution and, of course, with power (Tiew et al., 2015). This is particularly true of experiential agencies that are reliant on external clients as key stakeholders and whom are therefore necessarily holding power in the relationship. Clients are an experiential agency's primary customer, and their business is essential – their ability to influence the organisation's output is therefore high (Tiew et al., 2015). Put simply, client stakeholders hold the majority of the power in the relationship with experiential agencies, and as the working climate changes and pressures / priorities increase, clients relay these pressures to the agency - sometimes incoherently and inconveniently. An example of this is that, over the last few years, budgets have been reduced and expectations for premium experiences delivered quickly and professionally have increased (Eventbrite, 2019) - clearly this creates significantly different pressures on the agency and the teams that work within them.

6.8   The importance of teamwork in experiential agencies

The planning and delivery of event-led campaigns require experiential agencies' teams to work in a cross-functional way. This includes working with internal teams (usually the account management team, the studio team, the production team and the strategy team) and with external teams including those of event production, entertainment, operational

planning, venue management and audio-visual teams. As Lockstone-Binney et al. (2013) suggest, these core functions constantly need to be adjusted to include the rapidly changing business environments and the increasing number of strategic functions experiential agencies work within.

As Drummond and Andreson (2004, p.88) suggest, "The quality in the operational environment of events and festivals is directly related to the people delivering the service"– those that work on the delivery of the experience campaign are crucial to its success. There are a number of areas in which the experiential agencies need to excel – the design of the experience, the delivery of the event service and the management of volunteers and key stakeholders and contractors. Put simply, this is not the job of one person. Instead, experiential agencies rely on a variety of pulsating teams to successful deliver live experiences – this reliance is particularly important when considering the nature of leadership within agencies, given the recent shifts in leadership research towards an emphasis on work-based relations (as discussed in chapter 3.7).

Because experiences are temporal in nature and the organisations that run them 'pulsate' in order to facilitate the ebb and flow of requirements (Hanlon & Cuskelly, 2002), agencies often operate with a smaller number of core personnel, and then expand substantially in the lead up to the live delivery - contracting again when the experiential campaign has finished (Ferdinand & Kitchin, 2016). The expanded team includes additional staff, including temporary staff and volunteers and the various stakeholders' experiential agencies rely on in order to deliver their campaigns (e.g. audio-visual teams, venues, entertainment and staffing agencies). Necessarily, many of the 'pulsating' team are therefore employed on short-term contracts throughout the campaign's life cycle or are, sometimes, even working voluntarily to deliver the experience. Managing, motivation,

recruiting and controlling a temporary workforce is challenging when the "…normal authority engendered by the employee-employer relationship underpinned by payments and contracts does not exist" (Evans, 2014, p. 111).

In this environment, it is essential that knowledge is shared quickly and efficiently – without this, efficiency and innovation in the organisation can be compromised (Stadler, Fullager, & Reid, 2014), so agencies are therefore required to coordinate and integrate the roles of all staff, including seasonal or temporary staff (Van der Wagen, 2006). They are also required to plan and manage across a wide range of functions, including finance, legal, risk, work force planning, technology, transport, catering, marketing, ticketing, and sponsorship. This then requires the experiential agencies to adopt a matrix organisational structure (Van der Wagen, 2006) which draws the members of the project team from a variety of discipline groups.

Whilst there is little empirical research that investigates the nature of teamwork within events, it is an integral aspect of connected, networked experiential agencies, with successful teamwork, and associated leadership, an essential aspect of the successful delivery of events. That teams are central to the successful outcome of live experience campaigns is important to this thesis, which focuses on a multi-level exploration of leadership within experiential agencies.

6.9   Concluding remarks

As explained in chapter 4.6, the review of leadership literature has established that there have been a number of studies that give support to the conditions suggested by Pearce (2004) that enable successful shared leadership; interdependent, urgent, creative conditions and tackle complex, knowledge based tasks (e.g. Carson et al., 2007; D'Innocenzo

et al., 2016; Drescher & Garbers, 2016; Hoch, 2013; Lee et al., 2015; Liu et al., 2014; Muethel & Hoegl, 2013; Pearce & Conger, 2003; Wang et al., 2017). As yet, however, there has been no research that seeks to identify the conditional work-related factors that might support or enable shared leadership in agency-based organisations. The complexity of the organisational culture discussed in this chapter demonstrates the impact and importance of the distinct situational context on the successful delivery of events and this in turn supports the research aim of identifying key contextual factors that impact, and are impacted by, the sharing of leadership

This chapter has established a number of specific and influential contextual issues that define experiential agencies – these can be summarised in two parts; those issues that are particular to the event industry and those issues that are particular to experiential agencies. Issues particular to the event industry result from the industry characteristics: particularly fast paced, creative and concerned with evolving technological advancements. In addition, the management of live experience campaigns is a unique industrial context because the experiences are temporary, but planned – they are unique projects that are never repeated in the exact format. Also, whilst perceived consumer experiences are central to a successful campaign, they also creates significant challenges in shaping experiences that create a lasting legacy, or changes to consumer thinking and behaviour, all of which are integral to successful outcomes. Further, experiential agencies are iterative and episodic in their nature – the work they do is project based and they are reliant on a range of stakeholders that exist as a network. In addition, the core teams pulsate - they expand as the experience delivery date gets closer and contract to a small number of core staff when the event is finished.

These contextual issues matter for two reasons. Firstly, they establish that the field of experiential management is distinct from other fields, and secondly, they establish that the business of experiential agencies share many of the conditions, as established in chapter 6.6-6.8, as necessary for shared leadership to prosper. I have argued therefore that experiential agencies are a useful lens through which to further enhance our knowledge of shared leadership for four reasons:

- Experiential agencies operate within highly pressurised, urgent, creative environments, in which the business model centres around the production of intangible experiences for clients.

- Experiential agencies are comprised of a network of interdependent, cross-functional internal teams that work together to deliver specific projects – internal teams may have clear membership boundaries, but they also expand to include other teams and individuals from throughout the organisation at different points throughout the life cycle.

- The projects are time bound, and increased pressure from clients has resulted in less time and budget to deliver experiences. This results in a majority of the tasks in agency working being considered very urgent, complex and time pressured.

- The output of the agencies is based on creativity and service – creative responses to a client brief, creative decisions around strategy, creative implementation of the experience and service delivery for both client and attendees of experiences.

This thesis therefore seeks to contribute to the growing body of knowledge around both shared leadership and event management, and to build the theoretical development of shared leadership in project-based agencies, with a particular focus on experiential agencies. It addresses the call made by Clarke (2012), but not yet answered by scholars, to

identify which contextual variables and conditions of work enable shared leadership to become a useful process in experiential agency teams. The next chapter sets out the methodological approaches and methods used in order to answer the research problems that have been set out in the previous chapters.

7 METHODOLOGY

7.1 Chapter introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology used in the primary research and articulates the decisions made regarding the consistency of the methods in relation to both the research question and the approach to collecting and analysing the data. This is consistent with the views of Crotty (1998), who suggested that, in order to be held up to scrutiny, the social researcher is required to articulate methodological decisions and explain how they influence the research process. The intention here is to extend the discussions in chapter 2 in order to highlight how the methods of inquiry have reflected the standpoint of the inquirer (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). In this way, this chapter is intended to enable the reader to engage in Crotty's suggested scrutiny.

This chapter will start with a statement of the research problem for this study – this follows the advice of Maxwell (2013) who notes that an explicit expression of the research problem is necessary in order to summarise the writing so far and highlight why the study is necessary. From there, the research strategy adopted is presented, and offers justification for the emergent, collective-case study and the grounded theory methodology. This leads into discussions on the mechanics of the data collection and data analysis process, in which qualitative and grounded theory methods were used. The chapter also includes consideration of ethical issues and the subjective nature of this research and sets out the details of the cases used in the study, describing the organisations and why they were selected. In this way, the chapter explains the methodological positioning and sets the reader up for the data analysis discussion in the next three chapters. A summary of the research lenses used for this thesis is presented in figure 7.1

Figure 7.1: Research lenses
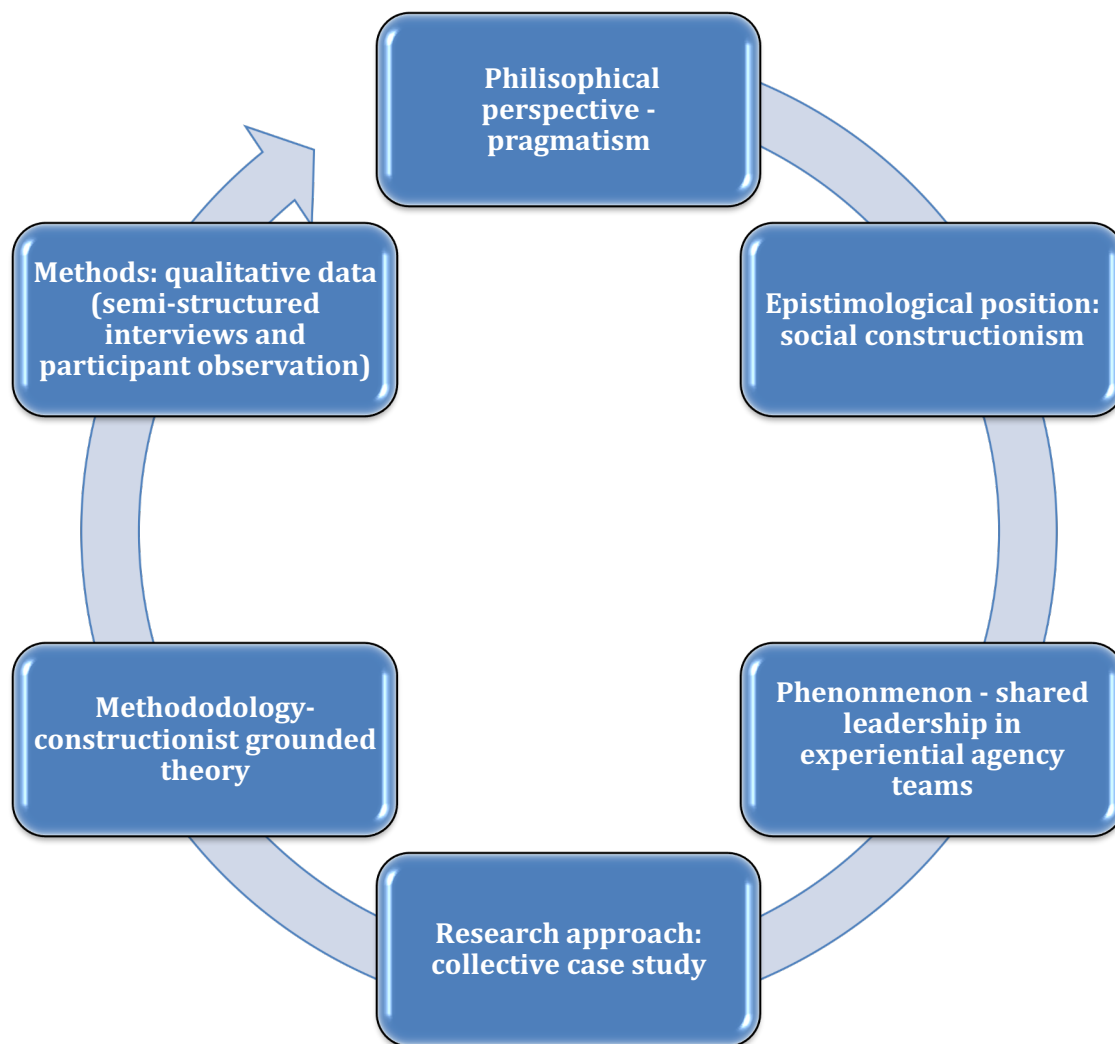
7.2   The research problem

The research problem for this study has arisen from significant changes in the

understanding of leadership. As already established, there has been a paradigm shift away

from entity-led, vertical models of leadership and this thesis acknowledges this, focusing

instead on the more recent understanding of leadership as an influence process that

emerges through social interaction and can be shared among teams. Specifically, this

research draws on the theoretical development of shared leadership as seen in Pearce and

Conger (2003) Hoch (2014); Hoch and Dulebohn (2013); Carson et al. (2007); Fausing,

Joensson, Lewandowski, and Bligh (2015), in order to examine how leadership is shared

throughout experiential agency teams. However, the theoretical development of shared

leadership is still in the early stages, and is an evolving view. Three meta analyses of shared

leadership all agreed that little is known about how shared leadership emerges and this is

further corroborated by more recent publications which call for further research into

antecedents of shared leadership (Kukenberger & D'Innocenzo, 2019; Zhou & Vredenburgh,

2017).

Additionally, as established in chapter 4.4, shared leadership is inherently a relational

perspective of leadership which suggests that leadership resides in interactions between

people – and yet little has been done to examine the nature of those relationships, or to

examine how those relationships might support or hinder shared leadership. There is a

need, then, for more context driven empirical studies to contribute to a richer and more

generalisable development of shared leadership theory. In particular, there is still a lack of

research that explores the conditions that enable the sharing of leadership in project teams

(Clarke, 2012) and my own more recent review of the extant research, reported in chapter 5

and 6 and in Abson (2017), supports this view in the context of events and event agencies.

Further, the review of the literature in chapter 4 shows that empirically derived

theoretical development has been limited to a small selection of contexts and has been

undertaken largely from a positivistic epistemological perspective using quantitative

methods. Given the pragmatist positioning that underpins this research, the reader might

be presuming a mixed method approach to data collection in this study (Onwuegbuzle &

Leech, 2005). However, following the arguments made by Morgan (2014a), I argue that

pragmatism is not uniquely related to mixed methods research, and that there is no

deterministic link between pragmatism and a particular method. In fact, pragmatism places

primary importance on why the researchers do the things they do. Morgan (2014) suggests

that, as pragmatists, we need to ask, "What difference does it make to do our research one

way rather than another?" (pg. 1046). So, instead of just focusing on what I have done, I am

also keen to explore why I have made the choices I have made. In particular, I agree with

Morgan that research does not occur in a vacuum and it is hugely influenced by the context

in which it happens. Pragmatism goes beyond a problem solving activity for researchers,

and instead allows the researcher to focus "…on the consequences and meanings of an

action in a social situation" (Denzin, 2012, p. 81). As such, I have spent some time reflecting

on why I made the choices that I have and the impact they may have on my research

findings, and I have presented these thoughts throughout this chapter. In this way, I hope

to persuade the reader that my research choices are internally consistent with the

philosophical positions that underpin this research.

The investigation used a constructionist grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2014)

– as such, it began with a fairly open and flexible research question (Charmaz, 1996). My

theoretical sensitivity was developed from both my background as an events practitioner

and from the broad exploration of the leadership literature and a subsequent focus on

shared leadership in this thesis. Thus a focus of leadership from a social constructionist

epistemological position and the identified gaps in knowledge resulted in the following

research aim:

- To explore how leadership is shared across cross functional teams throughout

  experiential agencies

and subsequent research questions:

- What conditions do the leadership teams set that enable the sharing of leadership?

- What qualities do interdependent teams need in order to share leadership between teams?

- What contextual factors impact and are impacted by the sharing of leadership?

This study - combining event management and agencies – provides an empirical case to expand the literature around shared leadership and also leadership in agencies and events. In addition, it adds to the limited body of work that focuses specifically on antecedent conditions that promote or inhibit the sharing of leadership. The research strategy is summarised in the table 7.1 below.

Table 7.1: Summary of research strategy

Research topic	Shared leadership in event agencies
Specific research aim	To explore how leadership is shared across cross functional teams throughout experiential agencies
Leadership literature	Paradigm shift to collectivistic leadership Leadership can be shared around a team or organisation, and with those not in formal leadership positions
Event management literature	Sparse attention to leadership in the general literature, with very few empirical studies and no identified studies focusing on leadership and experiential agencies
A social constructionist view of leadership	Perceptions, actions and meaning attached to social interactions contribute to leadership processes and practices
Research approach	Collective-case study research
Selection of cases	SMEs running live experiential campaigns for primarily corporate clients
Methodology	Constructionist grounded theory
Methods	Qualitative research in the form of semi-structured interviews, observation and documentation analysis

7.3   Research design

The following sections describe the research design choices made in this study. The key choices are summarised in table 7.2. Viewing leadership as a socially constructed influence process called for a research design that allowed for the capture and understanding of meanings and processes attached to leadership from a variety of perspectives. Case study research was therefore an appropriate choice, as it allowed the

gathering of data from multiple entities and offered the chance to focus on specific

contexts, therefore answering some of the identified issues with shared leadership theory.

Multiple cases allowed for replication and a variety of perspectives from within three

organisations – and, in turn, a grounded theory approach allowed for the engagement with

cross-case comparisons and to build theory grounded in the data.

Table 7.2: Research choices

Choices adopted in study	Purpose and Rationale	Internal consistency
Social constructionist perspective of leadership	Captured the different meanings and processes attached to leadership from a variety of perspectives (Yin, 2018)	Following Tourish & Barge (2010) view of leadership as a socially constructed influence process, consistent with both the epistemological positioning and case study research
Qualitative collective-case study research	Illuminated the way in which team members constructed shared social meanings through the interactions that take place in the work environment, as well as providing individual understanding (Chen & Barnett Pearce, 1995). Multiple cases allowed for more robust evidence via literal replication. Challenges the dominant methodologies in leadership research	Following a pragmatic perspective, consistent with social constructionist epistemology and grounded theory
Constructionist grounded theory	The grounded theory method, combined with qualitative data, provided an in-depth collection and analysis of the data; allowed for cross-case comparisons and building theory grounded in the data	Consistent with social constructionism and case study research and qualitative data

Qualitative methods	Challenged the dominant discourse in leadership studies. Provided a rich, thick set of data that allowed participants' voices to be heard.	Consistent with social constructionism, case study approach, and grounded theory methodology

7.4   Research approach – case study research

There are a number of different ideas as to what a case study is, though the common denominator is that the case should be a contemporary, complex functioning unit that is investigated in its natural context, via a range of methods (Lee & Saunders, 2017; Maxwell, 2013). Lee and Saunders (2017) suggest that there are two alternative approaches to case study research – the orthodox approach and the emergent approach. These are similar to Maxwell (2013) variance-orientated and process-orientated approaches. The orthodox approach (variance orientated), best typified in the work of Yin (1984, 2003, 2009, 2018), defines case studies as a research method (Jankowicz, 2005; Yin, 2018) or a research strategy (Hartley, 2004). Within this approach, scholars take an implicitly positivistic view of case study research, working with variables and the correlations between them, often using quantitative methods (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017; Maxwell, 2013). This epistemological position usually involves asking a question, developing hypotheses, identifying variables and then developing observable constructs that can be measured using statistical means (see the Eisenhardt (1989) method for an example of this). The orthodox approach therefore relies heavily on a linear process of research – largely thanks to the work of Yin – and it is currently the dominant approach taken in case studies research (Lee & Saunders, 2017). However, when discussing human phenomenon, following strictly linear processes can be restrictive for researchers, who feel they have to complete the initial stages, as dictated by

Yin, before they can move beyond them (Lee & Saunders, 2017). There is also a tendency, in the work of Yin especially, to ignore the underlying epistemological positions of researchers who take a social constructionist point of view.

The emergent, or process-orientated, approach, on the other hand, takes an interpretivist perspective in order to understand participants' sense-making of events or phenomena, and often employs qualitative methods (Lee & Saunders, 2017). This approach is most frequently related to the work of Stake (1995, 2005, 2006) and has been discussed in depth by Lee and Saunders (2017). These interpretivist approaches to case studies are rooted in a social constructed view, in that scholars using them hold that knowledge is constructed rather than discovered (Stake, 1995). The focus is therefore on asking how and why people act in certain ways and the meanings they generate (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017) and it is the perceived relationship of concepts to empirical reality that matters – participants will have different understandings and researchers using the emergent approach will view what they can see as what people have helped to construct (Lee & Saunders, 2017). This is akin to my own philosophical positioning, as set out in chapter 2. Stake suggests that the crucial element of case study research is not the methods of investigation, but the interest in individual cases, drawn from naturalistic, holistic, ethnographic, phenomenological and biographic research methods (Stake, 1995). Researchers working in the emergent approach simply see the case study as a series of strategic choices, made through the selection of institutions or instances of a phenomenon that are the best way of answering a research question (Lee & Saunders, 2017). This view of case studies as choices results in a flexible research design, which enables the researcher to engage with the research problem in the most appropriate way.

The central premise of this research is an understanding that, in order to study leadership, one must study the construction of social and relational arrangements that result in leadership (Tourish & Barge, 2010). Following the arguments above, this perspective called for a case study approach that was consistent with the philosophical positioning of this study. This study therefore takes an emergent approach, utilising the strategic choice of an instrumental, collective-case study, and collecting qualitative data (Stake, 1995, 2005). It focused on the phenomenon of shared leadership in experiential agency teams and extended the instrumental study to three cases. In doing so, it challenges the dominant discourse in both case study and leadership research. As Flyvbjerg (2006) noted, in social science research, the balanced between positivistic, quantitative, large sample studies and qualitative, in-depth, rich data case studies is biased in favour of the former. As Kuhn (1987) suggested, a discipline without a large number of thoroughly executed, qualitative case studies is ineffective as it lacks the systematic production of exemplars (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 242). This is certainly true in the field of leadership, in which according to Sweeney et al. (2019) in their review of shared leadership studies until 2019, the majority of studies (73%) relied on quantitative research designs (see 6.5 for a further discussion on this).

Using Stake (1995) and Lee and Saunders (2017) emergent approach to case study research, I argue that it was the most appropriate and viable choice for this research for three reasons:

1. Case study research enables the researcher to explore complex issues, when a holistic in-depth investigation is required. In particular, case studies answer the 'how' and 'why' questions (Stake, 2005), which are fundamental to a social constructionist perspective of research (Tourish & Barge, 2010) . As the research aim

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and research questions for this study were exploratory in nature, it required a research design that allowed for exploration of the phenomenon, to facilitate understanding in order to propose a leadership approach that will be useful for practitioners and academics;

2. Case study research allows the researcher to examine the data within a specific context (Merriam, 1998) – this is particularly relevant for this study, which used the theoretical developments of shared leadership as its departure point. Shared leadership, as noted in chapter 6.2, places the leadership context at the centre of leadership processes (Spillane, 2006; Thorpe et al., 2011). This centralisation of context in the conceptual area also reflects the social constructionist perspective of the research, which focuses on the 'integrated complexity of the situation' – in other words, the connections made among people, action, meaning and context (Tourish & Barge, 2010, p. 334). The case of shared leadership in teams this cannot be considered without the consideration of the context of experiential agencies, because it is within this setting that leadership is developed and utilised (Baxter & Jack, 2008);

3. The case study is the only viable approach to elicit implicit and explicit data from the multiple entities within an events organisation – this reflects calls in the leadership literature to undertake multi-level research (Burke et al., 2006; Dansereau, Alutto, & Yammarino, 1984; Dionne et al., 2014; Yammarino & Dansereau, 2011; Yammarino et al., 2005; Yukl, 2010). The units of analysis within the case study were therefore drawn from across the organisation, from upper management and leadership teams, through to account executives and creative team members.

7.5   Case selection – purposive sampling

Stake (2005) describes three types of case studies – intrinsic, instrumental and collective. Scholars with an intrinsic interest in their case studies are looking to learn about a particular case, and are not interested in how that case may relate to other cases. Alternatively, scholars might start with a research problem and try to gain insight into their research questions through the study of a particular case – this case then becomes instrumental in understanding something other than just the particular case. The third type of case study – collective - involves studying a range of cases – this is comparable to that of the multiple-case study used by Yin (2018). Scholars undertaking collective case studies normally have an instrumental interest in their subject matter. This research used a collective-case study approach (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017; Dul & Hak, 2008; Flick, 2015; Stake, 2005) involving three separate cases, where each one was taken as a distinct expression of the phenomenon being studied (Stake, 2005; Yin, 2018) i.e. the sharing of leadership in experiential agency teams.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) point out that qualitative research is based on the view that social phenomena and the nature of cases are situational and, as Stake (2006) suggests, qualitative case studies call for the examination of experience in the specific context within which they take place. This study contends that shared leadership theory needs examining for its applicability in the particular context of the event management profession and agency work. It is for this reason that the selection of cases was made on a critical case basis, as suggested by Patton (2015), in order to achieve information that permitted logical deductions about the type (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Following the advice of Flyvbjerg (2006), this research focused on cases most likely to demonstrate exemplifying examples of shared leadership in order to provide verification. Prior to selection, initial conversations therefore

took place with each organisation in order to elicit information on whether and how leadership was shared. The organisations were therefore purposively selected with the following key criteria: there was an established leadership team; that the leadership team and staff members recognise shared leadership as a concept and that they saw it as both favourable and useful for teams to share leadership in their organisation. All three cases confirmed initiatives which encourage the sharing of leadership. Selection was not based on confirmation that leadership was always shared in their teams, but that it is sometimes shared, because instances when shared leadership doesn't work or isn't practiced were considered as insightful as examples of when shared leadership does occur.

The selection strategy included consideration of the requirements for the research design, and exemplifying cases and the cases were therefore chosen because of the similarities across a number of factors (see Table 7.3 for further details). In this way, the selection of cases was instrumental because they provided insight into the particular issue (Stake, 2005) - the assumption was made that similar cases would illuminate the previously unexplored conditions that enable, or hinder the sharing of leadership in these organisations. The number of cases was not pre-determined but established due to grounded theory saturation – this is explored in detail in section 7.9.

Importantly, cases were approached in the first instance due to the presence of the three conditions necessary for shared leadership identified by Pearce (2004), and corroborated empirically by multiple scholars (see chapter 4). These conditions are interdependence of task and team, and a creative and complex context; initial discussions with personnel in each case confirmed that these conditions were satisfied (see chapter 6 for an exploration of why experiential agencies conform to these conditions).

7.6   Access

Each of the cases were reached via a gatekeeper – defined as someone "who has the authority to grant or deny permission to access potential participants, and / or the ability to facilitate such access" (King, Horrocks, & Brooks, 2019, p. 59). In all three cases, the initial access approach was made through an existing and established industry contact, who referred me to the CEOs of each organisation. Early commitments to research ethics were provided relating to anonymity and confidentiality. This was followed with a word document that summarised the project, the aims of the research, the methods used and the time commitment required, and discussing in more detail via phone conversations. After this, these contacts granted access to their organisation. All three CEOs then passed my details on to a key contact within their organisation, with the express direction to give me all the support needed.   These key contacts then became the gatekeeper to their organisations, and it is with them that access was negotiated for observation time and arrangements regarding who the interviewees would be and when they would happen. These contacts also acted as insider assistants (King et al., 2019), and helped in the identification of organisational members who would be willing to participate in the study – this is discussed further below.

Table 7.3: Description of Cases

	Case 1 (Agency 1)	Case 2 (Agency 2)	Case 3 (Agency 3)
Main business	Creative events and communication agency (Live events & experiential communications)	Experiential agency (Live events & experiential marketing campaigns)	Brand agency (Experiential marketing campaigns & live events).
Number of employees	78	155	100 (approx.)
Head office location	Manchester, UK (not central)	London, UK (not central)	London, UK (not central)

Gross turnover	£13.8m (2016)	£34.8m (2016)	£20.5m (2016)
Ownership structure	Part-owned by MD Private equity backed	Owned by a large media group	Independently owned by founding partner
In-house departments	Board of directors MD & Leadership team Client account management Creative studio Production team Strategy team	Board of directors CEO MD & Leadership team Client account management Creative studio Production team Strategy team	CEO MD & Leadership team Client account management Creative studio Production team Strategy team
Physical facilities	Two floors Open plan offices Departmental teams sit together Large open plan communal space Kitchen with free breakfast / coffee & tea and snacks Light filled offices	Two floors Open plan offices Departmental teams sit together Large open plan communal space Kitchen with free breakfast / coffee & tea and snacks Light filled offices	Three floors Open plan offices Departmental teams sit together Large open plan communal space Kitchen with free breakfast / coffee & tea and snacks Light filled offices

7.7 Methodology – grounded theory

Grounded theory is a research methodology in which theory emerges from, and is grounded in, the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The purpose is to generate credible descriptions and sense-making of peoples' actions and words (Kempster & Parry, 2011, p. 106) and a grounded theory is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents (Parry, 1998). It is therefore an appropriate choice for this study on the phenomenon of shared leadership, which reflects the shift in leadership studies to an understanding of leadership as a relational process which will adapt and change dependent on the context within which it is occurring (Parry, 1998). It is also epistemologically consistent with my social constructionist view, which sees leadership as being given meaning through the constructions of the social actors who engage in it.

A grounded theory approach offers an opportunity to explore shared leadership from

an alternative perspective to that of the dominant approach, which has been largely

positivistic in the form of hypothesis testing and quantitative data (Kempster & Parry, 2011;

Sweeney et al., 2019). Whilst it is an established methodology in many of the social

sciences, grounded theory is still in its infancy in leadership studies, though it has been

applied, and extended, in the work of Kan and Parry (2004); Kempster and Parry (2011);

Parry (1998); Rowland and Parry (2009), who all place great importance on the contextual

and processual elements of leadership theory, as I have in this study.

There is one particular approach to undertaking grounded theory which has

developed from Strauss and Corbin's method – constructionist grounded theory, initially

developed by Charmaz (2008, 2014). Charmaz notes that the development of her strand of

grounded theory is consistent with the current form of social constructionism discussed in

chapter 2, and that there is a strong relationship between the two (Charmaz, 2014). In

particular, consistency occurs in the view of action as the central focus for research, and an

agreement that action has arisen within a socially created situation and social structures

(Charmaz, 2014).

> "Grounded theory methods consist of systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting
> and analysing qualitative data to construct theories from the data themselves. Thus
> researchers construct a theory 'grounded' in their data. Grounded theory begins with
> inductive data, invokes iterative strategies of going back and forth between data and
> analysis, uses comparative methods and keeps you interacting and involved with your
> data and emerging analysis" (Charmaz, 2014: 1).

Working within the interpretive tradition, the researcher starts with and develops analyses

from the point of view of the experiencing person. It is therefore a method for

understanding the participants' social constructions, and aims "to capture the worlds of

people by describing their situations, thoughts, feelings and actions and by relying on

portraying the research participants' lives and voices. Their concerns shape the direction

and form of the research" (Charmaz, 1996, p. 30) . However, constructionist grounded

theory also focuses on the constructions the researcher makes through inquiry. The

relativity of the researcher's perspectives, positions, practices and research situation – how

the researcher affects the research process – is as important as the constructions made by

the participants themselves (Charmaz, 2014). The researcher and researched co-construct

the data – data are a product of the research process, not simply observed objects of it.

Researchers are part of the research situation, and their positions, privileges, perspectives

and interactions affect it (Charmaz, 2008, p. 402). For further discussion on this, and the

impact of the literature, please see chapter 2.4. This thesis therefore uses grounded theory

as an approach as the methodological approach, including its guides on how to analyse the

data for a number of reasons:

- Shared leadership research is still relatively new, and there has been very little

    empirical work on theory building, particularly in organisational contexts and

    particularly focused on antecedents. The purpose of this research was not to test

    hypothesis, but to develop theories of how shared leadership is accomplished in a

    specific organisational context. As such, grounded theory is a suitable method

    because it is designed to build theory.

- Grounded theory allows for analysis of data that is rooted in interpretivist

    epistemology, in which reality is viewed as socially constructed. It also offers an

    alternative data analysis method to positivistic epistemological perspectives.

- Interpretivist, qualitative inquiries and case studies are often criticised for merely

    describing what was observed. Grounded theory goes some way to addressing the

    tendency towards providing a sequential, descriptive narrative which fails to provide

meaningful findings. It allows the production of a meaningful theory that is

grounded in and generated through the data.

- Grounded theory is particularly well suited to case study enquiries and to leadership

    research (Parry, 1998; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

- An interpretivist view is epistemologically consistent with researching social

    constructionism, with a grounded theory approach. Grounded theory requires the

    researcher to become very familiar with the research subject and the data. The

    researcher must start the data analysis with an open mind to all possibilities and

    move iteratively between what is found in the data, the research questions and

    conceptualisations of findings. This results in a data coding and analysis process

    which is constantly refined until there is the ultimate development of a specific

    theory.

7.8   Data collection – qualitative methods

This part of the chapter outlines the specific decisions taken in collecting and

analysing the data, in order to further justify the research strategy adopted in this thesis. It

begins by detailing the units of analysis chosen within each case. From there, the

justification for a reliance on qualitative methods is outlined, before moving on to discuss

the mechanics of the analytical process which has led to an understanding of the

phenomenon studied.

Given the largely positivistic views within leadership studies, quantitative methods of

data collection still dominate (Kempster & Parry, 2011; Klenke et al., 2016; Parry, 1998). This

is true even of the newer types of leadership research, with shared leadership remaining

largely a quantitative domain (Binci et al., 2016; Serban & Roberts, 2016). This is evident in

Sweeney et al. (2019) systematic review of the literature, which confirmed that 73% of shared leadership studies used a quantitative approach. If we accept, as I do, that leadership is a social phenomenon that relies on the subjective interpretations and subsequent constructions between social actors, then this domination of quantitative methods should be considered problematic. Quantitative methods do not allow for the emergence of data related to the impact of context, nor do they enable researchers to follow interesting threads in order to examine interpretations, meanings and constructions of leadership (Klenke et al., 2016). Lastly, the reliance on the survey as an instrument in quantitative methods means that the richness equated to qualitative data is not available to the researcher (Parry, 1998). Importantly, when we consider leadership as a dynamic and changeable process of influence that occurs naturally within a social system and is shared among members of that social system, then leadership needs to be studied as a process in itself (Parry, 1998; Yukl, 1998, 2013). Qualitative studies are therefore needed in order to gain an understanding of the leadership processes that occur in organisational settings (Bryman, 2004). This study aimed to complement the dominant discourse of quantitative research into shared leadership through the use of qualitative methods - the methods employed enabled "...the emergence of nuanced and contextualised richness within organisational relationships and practices" (Kempster & Parry, 2011, p. 108).

A summary of the primary data collection can be found in Table 7.4. The primary data were the transcripts of the 34 semi-structured interviews with employees from each of the three case studies, alongside the observational notes from approximately 30 hours of observation.

Table 7.4: Data collection – summary of primary data collection

	Case study 1 (Agency 1)	Case study 2 (Agency 2)	Case study 3 (Agency 3)	Total
Number of interviews	7	12	15	34
Interview hours	4 hours 26	6 hours 58	7 hours 40	19 hours 4 minutes
Observation hours	5	21	7	32
First round of data collection	Observation and interviewing on the following date: 23rd July 2018 Interviewing only on: 27th July 2018 28th August 2018	Full working days in the head office, observing and interviewing on the following dates: 24th July 2018 25th July 2018 26th July 2018	Full working days in the head office, observing and interviewing on the following dates: 15th January 2019 16th January 2019	
Second round of data collection	Planned for early 2020, but unable to conduct (partly due to the covid-19 pandemic)	1 interview with 2 staff members: 25th April 2019	2 interviews with 4 staff members: 21st March 2019	

7.9 Data source 1 - interviews

Following the suggestion of Parry (1998) that interviews provide useful insights into leadership, semi structured interviews form the major collection method for this study. This method was seen as the most appropriate method as it enabled the researcher to understand the interactions and the associated constructions that the participants experience during their working lives. Semi-structured interviews also allowed for flexibility, enabling the exploration of the interviewee's point of view and the probing of participant's responses (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016). Similarly, the use of a semi-structured approach allowed for the clarification of participants' understanding and meanings of

certain concepts (in particular leadership processes and contextual issues), which is

consistent with a social constructionist view and that of a grounded theory approach.

Additionally, the research had a strong focus on leadership and there were therefore

key areas that required exploration. The use of a semi-structured approach, as opposed to a

structured or unstructured one, was deemed to be the most appropriate because semi-

structured interviews enable the move from the general to the specific (Bryman, 2016;

Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2012) – this is particularly apt for this research in which

participants were asked to discuss their work within a general leadership context, and then

talk specifically about how and when leadership is shared around a team. The research

questions therefore called for the use of a method that allowed flexibility in order to explore

what is potentially a large topic, with the aim of drawing out rich and detailed answers

relating to the primary competencies that make up the leadership profile. The use of

qualitative semi-structured interviews was therefore seen as the most appropriate research

design in order to enable this process.

7.9.1   Interview sampling – participant selection

Flick (2014) notes that sampling is a term now widely accepted in both quantitative and

qualitative research as it is now acknowledged that qualitative researchers are still required

to select specific case studies or participants and, as such, the technique in which they do so

should be examined. The selection of the cases has been described in 6.4.1 – here, I will

outline the selection criteria for the interview participants.   Flick (2014) suggests that

decisions need to be made on how many men / women will be selected for interviews, the

age range, whether they will have a specific job role and so on. For this research, the age

range and gender of participants was less relevant, though of course should be noted. In

order to limit the issues, participants were selected with a view that diversity is managed

and variation and variety in the phenomenon can be captured as far as possible.

The key selection criteria for the participants was based on Patton's suggestion of

critical cases (2015) – Patton suggests that one method of sampling for qualitative research

is to select those whose experiences to be studied are especially clear. This is

straightforward in this instance – the role of the participant was the central selection

criteria. The aim for this research was to gain a contextual understanding of how leadership

might be shared around cross functional teams within an experiential agency and interviews

therefore took place with participants undertaking a range of roles and working within a

range of teams. Teams involved in this study were responsible for delivering experience-

based projects for clients and team members worked on a variety of projects, usually

consecutively. In all three cases, team members sit with their core team, in which they

undertake similar tasks to each other (e.g. creative team designs the creative aspects of an

event and the account team manage the relationship with the clients) but also form

interdependent project teams for each project that comes into the agency.

It was also important to ensure that data was gathered from participants distributed

around the organisation, in order to understand how leadership is shared in transient,

dynamic and ever-changing teams. As demonstrated in chapters 4, the extant literature on

shared leadership has almost exclusively researched the concept through the lens of single,

static teams with clear membership boundaries. Mathieu et al. (2008) suggest there is the

risk within shared leadership theory that team level inputs are assumed as static within

teams whereas, in many commercial organisations, membership of teams can be fluid,

depending on business need. For example, leadership functions may need to be completed

by the appointed 'leader' and others could be distributed among the team – this is certainly

the case with experiential agency teams, that 'pulsate' during the event life-cycle, starting

with a small team of key strategic decisions makers and growing into a large, and often

networked, team as the project delivery draws closer. In addition, as Sweeney et al. (2019)

point out, even in organisations with team based structures, team membership can be

transient – again, this would be true of the experiential agencies, in which teams form from

across departments in order to deliver projects, but members of the team still remain part

of their formal departmental team throughout the process (e.g. a creative team member

might join with an event manager, a strategist and a production expert to design and deliver

the experience, but remain part of the creative department at the same time). While this

type of organisational team is increasingly common, to date no research has been

undertaken that explores how leadership might be shared across team boundaries.

For this study, participants were therefore selected from all layers of management

hierarchy and also incorporated employees from across the business. The units of analysis

within each case were the employees and leadership team members, because they

represent a formal articulation of event management in experiential agencies (Table 7.5

details the job roles and level of management of the participants. A full, anonymised, list of

participants from each organisation is presented in appendix 2).

Table 7.5: List of interview participants, job title, team and level of management

Case study	Interviewee's anonymised name	Job title	Core team	Level of management
Agency 1	Kate	Head of Engagement	Leadership team	Leadership team
Agency 1	Martin	Managing Director	Leadership team	Leadership team
Agency 1	Mary	Project Director	Account / client team	Team leader
Agency 1	Hazel	Deputy Design Director	Creative team	Team leader

Agency 1	Clare	Project Manager	Account / client team	Team member
Agency 1	Caroline	Project Manager	Account / client team	Team member
Agency 1	Alice	Exhibition Designer	Exhibition team	Team member
Agency 1	Paul	Creative Artworker	Creative team	Team member
Agency 2	Sophia	Strategy Director	Strategy team	Leadership team
Agency 2	Matt	Creative Director	Creative team	Leadership team
Agency 2	James	CEO	Leadership team	Leadership team
Agency 2	Jane	Senior Account Director	Account / client team	Team leader
Agency 2	Phoebe	Account Director	Account / client team	Team leader
Agency 2	Louise	Traffic Manager	Creative team	Team leader
Agency 2	Lisa	Senior Account Manager	Account / client team	Team member
Agency 2	Hayley	Comms & PR manager	Communication / PR	Team member
Agency 2	Tim	Design Director	Creative team	Team member
Agency 2	Mandy	Senior Account Executive	Account / client team	Team member
Agency 2	Jenna	Marketing & PR manager	Communication / PR	Team member
Agency 3	Stewart	Founding Partner & CEO	Leadership team	Leadership team
Agency 3	Dave	Director - Creative and Strategy	Strategy team	Leadership team
Agency 3	Donna	Director - People	HR	Leadership team
Agency 3	Jo	Account Director	Account / client team	Team leader
Agency 3	Andrew	Senior Production Director	Production team	Team leader
Agency 3	Robert	Creative Director	Creative team	Team leader

Agency 3	Susie	Group Design Head	Creative team	Team leader
Agency 3	Charlie	Strategy Director	Strategy team	Team member
Agency 3	Rodrigo	Strategy Director	Strategy team	Team member
Agency 3	Charlotte	Senior Account Manager	Account / client team	Team member
Agency 3	Mark	Senior Designer	Creative team	Team member

There was, of course, an element of convenience sampling within this research which should be acknowledged. As already described, access was only available via an agreed gatekeeper, nominated to support me by the CEO of the organisation. This meant that the selection and recruitment of interview participants was largely placed into the hands of the key contact, rather than being driven by me. In many ways there were advantages to this process – for example, budget and time constraints meant that I was unable to visit the organisations before the first round of data collection, but my contact was able to make all necessary recruitment arrangements on my behalf. In addition, by gathering the support of the CEO, participants received requests that were endorsed by the organisation, and came via a known and trusted colleague – this ensured that requests for interviews were far more successful than if I had made attempts to contact individuals (King et al., 2019). However, using an insider to help with recruitment, and using the CEO as a route into the organisation did also present potential risks. For example, whilst participants had been given the choice to participate, the final decision around who would be interviewed was made by the organisations themselves. It is possible then that these selections were overtly biased, with the gatekeepers consciously choosing participants who are likely to hold certain views (King et al., 2019). In addition, there is the risk of unintentional distortion, which stems from a reliance by my contact to use their own personal networks. Lastly, there is a clear ethical risk that people may have been

pressurised to participate, which removes their informed consent. As suggested by King et al. (2019), in order to balance these risks, I took the following steps:

- Ensured that the key contact was thoroughly briefed, via both telephone and email, before recruitment of participants began

- Gave guidance on the number of participants I needed, which teams they could be from, and the levels of seniority

- Provided participant information regarding the research project and the interview process, which was circulated with the recruitment email

- Once the participants had expressed interest, the insider passed their contact details directly to me. At this point, each participant was provided with a participant information sheet, and a participant consent form via email and were given the opportunity to seek clarification on the project and interview or assurances of privacy etc.

- Asked for both signed and verbal informed consent

Whilst the decision as to when to stop collecting data was driven by the concept of theoretical saturation (see 7.9), it should be noted that the number of participants was negotiated with the first case study in the first instance, and when a number was agreed upon (10 people) then this number was replicated across the other two case studies in order to provide consistency and maintain comparative validity. Return access to present findings was also negotiated during the access agreement stage – this does mean that decisions on the number of interviews were made pragmatically in order to secure access. However, leading scholars writing about grounded theory, such as Creswell (1998, p. 64) and Charmaz (2006, p. 114) suggest guidelines of between 20 and 30 interviews to be adequate. In this study, 30 participants were interviewed, during 34 interviews (some

participants were interviewed more than once), thus meeting the sufficient sample sizes

indicated by these guidelines and being comparable to the average number of participants

used in most qualitative PhD studies, identified by Mason (2010) as being between 28 and

31.

7.9.2   Interview process

As the interview process is of an exploratory nature, these interviews were based

around an interview guide consisting of a list of general themes emanating from the

literature (see appendix 4 for examples of the interview guides); this semi-structured and

open ended process allowed the interviewer to guide the flow of the conversation and

allowed for the incorporation of additional questions to explore the research questions in

more detail (Saunders et al., 2016). However, the key to qualitative interviewing is flexibility

(King et al., 2019), and as such, the guides were flexible and outlined only the main topics

that should be covered. This method allowed the participant to lead the interaction, and

helped to solicit insights into aspects of leadership in an experiential agency context (King et

al., 2019). Different interview guides that reflected leadership responsibilities were

developed – as such, there was an interview guide for CEO / management level participants,

another for those with managerial responsibility and one for those without formal

leadership roles. This reflected the understanding of leadership as a process that anyone

within the organisation can undertake, but also took into consideration the differences in

formal and informal leadership practice. As the number of interviews progressed, the

interview guides changed and developed – this ensured that insights gained in the process

of carrying out the interviews informed subsequent interviews (King et al., 2019). It also

reflected the way in which a grounded theory approach, using the constant comparative

method, guided the data collection and analysis, and the ways in which emergent data

shaped the direction of the interviews (Charmaz, 2014). This is fully explored in 7.5-7.9).

The interview questions were developed using Patton's six types of questions (2015)

that can be asked in qualitative interviews. These are listed in Table 7.6, with some example

questions drawn from the interview guides to illustrate the type of questions asked.

Table 7.6: Patton's six types of questions in qualitative interviewing

Patton's six types of questions	Example questions asked in this thesis
Background / demographic questions Straightforward descriptive information	Can you tell me about your role in the organisation? Can you describe your team to me? What is it like to work in your organisation? How long have you worked here?
Experience / behaviour questions Specific overt actions	Can you give me an example of a time when the team has faced a difficult problem and has come together to resolve it? What happened? What are some specific ways that various team members use their expertise and interests? What happens when there is conflict within the teams?
Opinion values questions What the participant thinks about the topic	What does leadership mean to you? Would you say leadership is shared among members of your team? Could you explain how? How are decisions made in the team? Who leads? And why might others not take on leadership roles?
Feelings questions Focusing on participants' emotional experiences	Would you describe yourself as a leader? How do you feel when the team experiences moments of stress? Does the organisation / team have a clear sense of purpose?
Knowledge questions Factual information the participant holds	Who are the leaders in your team / organisation? How long have your team worked together?
Sensory questions	This type of question was not relevant to this study.

These questions relate to sensory aspects of experiences	

The interviews took place in a one-to-one environment, allowing for the development of rapport and for the interviewer and interviewee to fully understand the purpose of the research. The length of the interview was kept to between 30 and 60 minutes, and audio recorded. The audio-recording of the interviews was deemed to be appropriate because it allowed the interviewer to concentrate on the conversation and listening to responses, as well as the monitoring and recording of the contextual information (the behaviours and non-verbal actions of the participants and the interview environment). The presence of a recording device may inhibit the interviewee but interviews were based on a pre-negotiated agreement which ensured arrangements were mutually convenient. This included agreements for the place and location and for the length of time required as well as the objectives of the research and the agreement of the recording of the interview (Saunders et al., 2016).

7.9.3   Limitations of semi-structured interviews

In all qualitative interviews, there is the potential for interviewer bias (Saunders et al., 2016). This bias relates to the interviewer's own experience and background and how that might inform and shape the direction of the interview, with the interviewer asking leading questions, or pushing their own perceptions and constructions on the participants (Fausing, Joensson, Lewandowski, & Bligh, 2015b). This limitation was particularly relevant in this research, due to my own experience in industry. Interviewer bias also relates to tone of voice, comments and non-verbal behaviour, which can result in the interviewer trying to impose the responses that may relate to the research questions or to the findings that the researcher is hoping to discover (Flick, 2014; King et al., 2019). This was a particular risk

during the second round of data collection, when the initial findings were presented to the

participants in order to receive clarity, feedback and eventually validation of the theoretical

development.

This research method may also invoke some interviewee or response bias in that the

participants may have wished to position themselves in a desirable way – i.e. to respond

with only positive answers or to stress that yes, of course, leadership is shared throughout

the organisation, in order to show themselves, or their colleagues or organisation in the

best light (Saunders et al., 2016). Whilst this is an acknowledged issue with qualitative

research, the benefits of using the semi-structured interviews in order to draw out more

detailed information in order to counteract this bias are well established within research

literature (see for example Saunders et al. (2016) or (Bryman, 2016)).

7.10 Data source 2 - Observation

In order to identify relationships with participants, and to develop an understanding

of the context of each case study, passive participation observation (Bryman, 2016; Savin-

Baden & Howell Major, 2012) was used to observe the participants, activities, interactions

and subtle factors (Creswell, 1998). While the process of leadership itself is hard to observe

(Parry 1998), observation of the participants in their work environment was important to

this study as it facilitated my understanding of how participants interact with each other, in

order to gain a holistic view of the phenomena being studied (De Walt & De Walt, 2002;

Schensul, Schensul, & LeCompte, 1999). As such, I spent time immersed in the working

environment by sharing the office spaces of each case (see Table 7.4 for details). In Agency

2, in particular, the 21 hours I spent in observation were useful as I was given desk space

with one of the client teams and was able to fully immerse myself in the culture, coming and

going for full working days, as the other employees did. In the other two agencies, the

observation was less immersive and less structured, though I did manage to spend time with

the teams and observing similar working patterns.

A participant observation guide was prepared for the observation sessions (see

appendix 5) which helped to describe the general (who / what / when) and the specific

(verbal behaviours such as who speaks to who /who initiates the conversation / language /

tone of voice; physical behaviours such as who is / isn't interaction, human traffic and

communication behaviours such as how do they communicate / how often etc). Watching

the way in which team members interacted both with each other and with other members

of the organisation enabled a prolonged immersion into the organisation. This, in turn

created an understanding of the organisation as the participant sees it and to spend more

time in closer contact with the participants. (Bryman, 2016). In particular, it helped to

confirm findings from the interviews, in which participants described incidences where

leadership behaviours and processes happened. It also revealed hidden activities –

moments when leadership occurred which participants might not describe as leadership, for

example.

However, it was particularly challenging to observe relationships and leadership

within cross-functional teams who sat in different parts of the building or in other buildings

completely, especially as much of the communication was done via emails or phone calls.

Upon reflection, observation added little to the overall understanding of the nuances of

shared leadership in practice, as it proved very difficult to 'spot' leadership without directly

shadowing members of teams for long periods of time. The time spent in observation was

useful, and illuminating, however in terms of understanding the contextual environment

within which leadership was occurring (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2012). For example, it

allowed me to learn the native language of each organisation – the formal and informal use of language that need to be understood in order to penetrate and begin to understand an organisations culture (Becker & Geer, 1957; Bryman, 2016). Observation therefore enabled a much clearer insight into the culture of the business, and the way in which relationships were enacted in the workplace, and this proved invaluable when building theoretical conclusions.

One last notable benefit came from the time immersed in the three cases – my reflective research diary and field notes (see next section) were vastly improved by updating them immediately after each interview during my observation time. I was able to sit down at my desk immediately after each interview and reflect on what had been discussed, and to consider these in light of what I was observing that day. These combined reflections proved to be insightful and useful in terms of informing the development interview guides, and in terms of clarifying theoretical insights, and developing initial concepts.

7.11 Data source 3 - Research diary

Reflexivity has been an important part of this thesis and, in chapter 2, I explored how my theoretical and disciplinary background might inform the interpretations made in this thesis (Payne, 2007). By establishing the epistemological position for the study the way in which the underlying assumptions about the world would shape the research were highlighted. This epistemological reflexivity allowed me to consider the impact of my theoretical assumptions about the world onto this body of work (King et al., 2019; Wilig, 2001). It is also, however, necessary to critically examine the impact I have on my own research, and on the context in which the research takes place (King et al., 2019). My subjectivity – including decisions such as the choice of methods, and the inherent values

and biases I hold – inform the knowledge production that this thesis represents (Bryman, 2016). It follows, therefore, that reflecting on these decisions before, during and after the data collection and analysis will help to acknowledge my role in the analysis and interpretation of the data (Payne, 2007). Giving consideration to the ways in which our interests and experiences might have affected this research is described by Wilig (2001) as personal reflexivity.

It is necessary, then, for personal reflexivity to be in action throughout the data collection process, so that reflection becomes an ongoing part of the research, enabling the researcher to critically self-reflect on highly personal activities such as qualitative interviewing (King et al., 2019). In order to ensure that due consideration was given to both what was being done, I kept a research diary. This diary was a mixture of my reflections and my field notes, and aimed to highlight both my own particular perspective of the data being gathered, and also to reflect on my own interviewing style in order to reflect on whether I swayed responses by being too involved, or offered too much of my own perspective.

The research diary therefore had two purposes – firstly, it was a record of what I did, when and with whom and secondly, it recorded the detailed thoughts I had during the research process (how the research was unfolding, why I made certain choices or decisions etc). As King et al. (2019) suggests, this data became very useful in its own right, as it offered elaborations that enhanced my analysis and shed light on the interpretations I was making. In this way, the research diary was both useful as data in its own right, but also ensured accountability for the interpretations I was placing on the things I saw and heard during the data collection process (Finlay, 2002). For an extract of my research diary, see appendix 6.

7.12 Data source 4 - Secondary data

In order to further enhance the exploratory nature of the overall research aims, to ensure that a contextual approach was taken (as suggested by Porter and McLaughlin (2006); Uhl-Bien et al. (2007) and to give a clear case study perspective, secondary data was also collected. The secondary data comprised of information regarding each organisation, including website material, organisational structures, organisational vision and mission statements. These were supplemented with the notes I took after each interview and a reflective diary of my initial observations and interpretations. The secondary data was used to support a clear holistic understanding of leadership within the studied organisations and to learn the language of the organisation.

The next section outlines the approach taken to data collection and analysis in more detail – in doing so it illuminates the rigour used in the mechanics of the analytic process and the development of theory, and further establishes the credibility and trustworthiness of the study.

7.13 Data analysis and coding processes

Constructionist grounded theory has at its heart flexibility and the encouragement of innovation as researchers attempt to understand the studied phenomenon and to develop new theories. Charmaz (2014: 15) lists nine distinctions of grounded theory research. These are:

1. Conduct data collection and analysis simultaneously in an iterative process.
2. Analyse actions and processes rather than themes and structure.
3. Use comparative methods.
4. Draw on data (e.g. narratives and descriptions) in service of developing new conceptual categories.
5. Develop inductive abstract analytic categories through systematic data analysis.
6. Emphasise theory construction rather than description or application of current theories.

7. Engage in theoretical sampling.
8. Search for variation in the studied categories or processes.
9. Pursue developing a category rather than covering a specific empirical topic.

The next section illustrates how these nine criteria have been met through the systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to the phenomenon of shared leadership in experiential agency teams. Table 7.7 provides an overview of the stages of the research process, which were guided by Charmaz's nine criteria. The data analysis process is summarised in the next section, and clarified further in the three chapters that follow.

Table 7.7: Research process of grounded theory development

Research design		
Stage	Process	Rationale
Stage 1 – review the literature	Define a broad, open research question via review of leadership and events general literature Review philosophical and methodological literature	Narrowed the focus of the inquiry Defined philosophical perspective of the study
Stage 2 – select case and case studies	Chose the context of the study and locate instrumental cases	Ensured that the case was theoretically relevant Used exemplifying cases in order to develop theoretical understanding
Data collection		
Stage	Process	Rationale
Stage 3 – Develop data collection processes	Determine primary and secondary sources of data	Strengthened prospects of theory development via a variety of data sources
Stage 4 – Enter the field	Iterative process of collection and analysis. Reflection on both methods used and questions asked in interviews. Included interview recording and transcription, observation, reflective note taking and memo-writing	Moving back and forth between data collection and data analysis allowed for constant comparison and inductive theory-building via identified concepts
Data analysis		
Stage	Process	Rationale

Stage 5: Establishing initial concepts	Open coding	Develop the 9 concepts, eventually labelled as conditional factors
Stage 6: Developing core categories	Axial coding	Develop the connections between the initial concepts and refine into two core categories
Stage 7: Build theory	Selective coding	
Stage 8: Closure	Theoretical saturation	The continued sampling and analysis of data revealed no new concepts, and theory was well developed
Discussion		
Stage	Process	Rationale
Stage 9: Compare emergent theory with extant literature	Comparison with both contrasting and confirming conceptual frameworks	Improves definitions within theory and internal validity. Improves external validity by establishing contexts and domains in which the findings can be generalised

7.13.1 Open coding

The process of open coding, as shown chapter 8, is the process of giving names to our ideas and concepts, in order to further define them. The process of open coding involved a close reading of the data in order to create analytic codes and categories developed solely from the data. In order to support this process, the constant comparative method was used, as already described in section 7.5 (Charmaz, 1996). The constant comparative method included the process of emergent conceptual analysis which aimed for an interpretive understanding of shared leadership in teams, whilst also accounting for the context of experiential agencies, and the impact the leadership teams might have. This close engagement with the research process enabled an increased theoretical depth and reach of the analysis, as I gathered more purposeful data in order to further elaborate my grounded theory.

All interviews were audio recorded, and transcribed, before being transferred to the qualitative data analysis software NVivo. Using the constant comparative method, all interviews were transcribed and coded one at a time and each case was completed and initially coded, before the analysis process began on the next one. The following questions were used throughout the coding process to guide the analysis. The questions were adapted from Charmaz (1996); Glaser and Strauss (1967); Strauss and Corbin (1998):

- What is happening here?
- Under what conditions does this happen?
- What is this data a study of?
- What are the people doing?
- What are the people saying?
- How do structure and context serve to support, maintain, impede or change these actions and statements?

Concepts were built using the coding process, with textual data taken from the primary and secondary data sources listed below.

Primary data
- Transcripts from 34 semi-structured interviews;
- Emailed responses to additional questions from 5 participants;
- 35 hours of observational notes.

Secondary data
- Organisational websites;
- Organisational structure / employee charts;
- Mission / vision / behavioural statements.

The initial nine concepts were drawn from these data sources. See table 7.8 below for an example of how a concept was drawn from data.

Table 7.8: Example of how concepts were drawn from data

Concept	Data
Transparency	You don't feel like it's kind of an impossible task or it's a pain to speak to those higher up. You know, when you have all got respect for each other and you talk on a level playing field, it's easier to talk to those in the leadership team.

	We have an annual meeting, where the board generally present about what we're doing, where the company's going, the things that we are focusing on, new big initiatives things like that...we are kept up to date with where things stand financially and … which sectors we need to move into, what we need to improve on. I think that's really transparent in terms of what they are doing in terms of leadership of the company.
Networks of expertise	So they'll come to me and ask about my expertise in that field. Just like I would come to them and ask about their expertise.

Surrounding yourself with the best people for the job, and also it comes up again and again, not being an expert in everything but having someone that is an expert in that one thing and having the absolute trust in that person that they know what they are doing, and they are going to deliver on what we've tasked them to deliver. |

7.13.2 Axial coding

The next stage of the data collection and analysis process was the axial coding process, as shown in chapter 9. The purpose of this stage of grounded theory is to remain close to the descriptive data, discussed in chapter 8, but to move beyond that and into a deeper interpretation and articulation of the 9 concepts, or conditional factors (known in grounded theory as subcategories).

Axial coding represents a development of the interpretivist analysis, where patterns that emerged from the initial coding of the data were then explored more fully (Charmaz, 2008, 2014). During this stage, the nine initial concepts were refined into two core relatable categories. Five concepts were related to the core category of trust and four concepts were related to the core category of sense of belonging. In order to do this, a descriptive summary of the concepts drawn from data were combined with an interpretive analysis of them as related to each other and to the core category. These refined categories were then developed in turn in order to demonstrate their conceptual merit. Lastly, the two core

categories were related to the extant literature on shared leadership, and other relevant

bodies of literature, including literature on social identity, trust and sense of belonging.

The nature of qualitative case study research using a grounded theory approach results

in a substantial element of narrative, which is 'thick' and hard to summarise (Flyvbjerg,

2006). This is often presented as a drawback to both case study research and grounded

theory, but in fact is one of the strengths, with the thick descriptions offering insights into

lived experiences that other methodologies do not (Maxwell, 2013). However, this

substantial level of narrative does present a challenge for the type of research undertaken

in this study, in that it is difficult to present the amount of data gathered in a way that goes

beyond a descriptive, sequential narrative. The issue with such a narrative is that it can lack

insight, be overtly descriptive, without any meaning derived from it, and can be difficult to

read (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Langley & Abdallah, 2011) or that it is too subjective and contains

evidence of arbitrary judgements by the researcher.

The key to presenting something that is both interesting to read and presents

insights in a credible way is based on an emphasis on interpretation, as encouraged by

qualitative inquiry (Stake, 1995). Qualitative studies are not confined to the identification of

variables and the development of measurement instruments, reported via the statistical

analysis and interpretation processes. Instead, the qualitative case study researcher is

aiming for thick description and an understanding of the experience and meaning of the

participants. The emphasis then, as Stake (1995, p. 9) suggests, is on being an interpreter in

the field, observing the workings of the case, objectively recording what is happening but

also examining the meaning, and continuing to collect data until those meanings have been

substantiated.

This interpretation therefore needs the scholar to draw their own assertions about the data (Erickson, 1986), whilst simultaneously acknowledging that other interpretations exist than those of the researcher (Stake, 1995). Interpretation, however, is often viewed as the greatest weakness of the grounded theory method, with critics pointing to issues with researchers 'remaining within the data' – trying to remain objective whilst simultaneously allowing personal experience to make sense of the data (Kempster & Parry, 2011). The process of developing a grounded theory requires emergent conceptual analysis and the movement from empirical data to codes and concepts and then into abstraction via the axial and selective coding process. Abstraction such as this requires interpretation which goes beyond surface level data and relies on metaphors, related concepts and other supplementary literature in order to assist the emergent process (Kempster & Parry, 2011). This is what grounded theorists call theoretical sensitivity, which concerns the researcher being able to reconstruct meaning from the data and separate what is relevant from what isn't. This allows them to develop theory, and the theories themselves are "interpretations made from a given perspective as adopted or researched by researchers" (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 279)

Case study research undertaken with a grounded theory approach therefore consists of both an inherent strength – the nuanced, deep, rich understanding of the observed – and an inherent weakness – the closeness required by the researcher, which poses risks of bias and implies issues with credibility and trustworthiness. In order to counteract this potential bias, and to defend against claims of validity threats such as arbitrary judgements, I needed to ensure there was rigour in my study. Designing the study as a qualitative case-study, using a grounded theory strategy had several benefits in terms of demonstrating the validity of the study. These are outlined below:

- Collection of rich data. A qualitative approach to data collection resulted in rich data that was both detailed and varied enough to provide a full and revealing picture of what was going on. This rich data provided for the interpretations and conclusions (Maxwell, 2013).

- Member checking of interpretations. Because the researcher gets very close to those being studied and – in the case of this study – presented concepts, categories and the developed theory to participants directly, findings are more likely to be corrected by the participants (Flyvbjerg, 2006). In this way, I minimised construct error and poor validation of concepts, categories and theory, thus improving reliability within the findings.

- Discrepant evidence or negative cases. Here I was aware of Flyvbjerg (2006) description of 'bias towards verification', which suggests that there is a tendency to confirm the researcher's preconceived notions – this was potentially relevant in this study, due to my previous experience of working in a similar environment to that of the context of the study. In order to mitigate against this, I engaged with the examination of both the supporting and discrepant data, which allowed for the exploration of instances which disproved emergent themes (Maxwell, 2013). In addition, I sought feedback on my conclusions from both my participants and my supervisory team, as well as through presentations at various conferences.

- Internal generalisability. Generalisability within the case is a key issue for qualitative case studies, and the validity of the findings depend on the internal generalisability to the case as a whole (Maxwell, 2013). Adequately understanding the variation of the phenomena being studied is necessary – in this study, this is achieved through

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diversity within the units of analysis, in-depth interviews and observation and

through reflection, field notes and memo taking.

- Dependability. This relates to the issues of reliability in positivist research, and here

it was accomplished through an auditable research process, evidenced through the

use of field notes, memo-taking and the primary data.

We can see then that a qualitative, collective-case study, using a grounded theory approach

adds substantial weight to the validity of the study. To further understand the validity it is

necessary to consider whether enough data was collected to justify the developed theory –

theoretical saturation is therefore discussed in the next section.

7.14 Theoretical saturation – deciding when to stop

The number of cases involved in the study and the amount of data needed to support

theoretical development was not pre-determined but was decided by the notions of

theoretical saturation and constant comparison method, drawn from the grounded theory

methodology. The constant comparative process (Charmaz, 1996) requires the researcher to

constantly compare the data collected with previous data analysis – it is an evolving process

in which the researcher gathers more data, analyses it, compares this analyses to previous

iterations and then gathers further data to clarify the emerging theoretical relationship

between the concepts and categories (Charmaz, 2014; Parry, 1998). In this thesis, this

meant that interviews and observation were conducted at agency 1 first, closely followed by

agency 2 – this took place over an intense two month period in July / August 2018. The data

was then transcribed and initial analysis undertaken before selecting and visiting a third

case. A gap of five months was left between data collection of case study 2 and 3 – this

break between data collection allowed time for reflection between the different stages of

data collection and analysis, and ensured that questions were modified to reflect emerging theory (Charmaz, 1996). Case study 3 therefore represented an opportunity to both develop concepts further and to verify my findings thus far. The process of constant comparison and how it influenced my theoretical developments is described in chapters 8, 9 and 10.

In addition, to the use of the constant comparison method, grounded theory saturation also helped to determine when to stop gathering data. Theoretical saturation is described by Glaser and Strauss (1967) as the point at which no additional data is being found that assists in the development of the grounded theorist's categories and thus in the overall development of the theory – "As he sees similar instances over and over again, the researcher becomes empirically confident that a category is saturated" (p. 61).

In grounded theory, theoretical saturation is a specific, dynamic, process that involves moving backwards and forwards between data collection and data analysis until no new concepts, categories or relationships emerge and the theory has been fully developed (Charmaz, 1996; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The theoretical saturation point is a contested subject in qualitative research – the point of saturation is difficult to identify and often hard to justify (Mason, 2010). Some researchers argue that saturation is a concept that cannot be applied to qualitative research as the examination and interpretation could lead to a potentially limitless finding of 'new' themes (Green & Thorogood, 2009). Certainly, from an interpretivist perspective, knowing when to stop sampling the different groups is problematic, as the researcher is forced to decide when to stop being creative in his/her interpretations of the data.

However, this dynamic approach to data collection and analysis was particularly useful in guiding the decision of when to stop gathering data in this study, because it encouraged the use of respondent validation. Through the combining of data collection and

analysis, I was able to pursue emerging themes from early waves of analysis and to present developing concepts and categories to participants (Wasserman, Claire, & Wilson, 2009). Throughout the data collection, participant feedback was therefore sought on interpretations of the data, and the participants were given the opportunity to discuss and clarify the findings, as well as to offer new perspectives (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Bryman, 2008; Maxwell, 2013).

This cyclical process was repeated until, finally, the developed theory was presented to participants when, in March, April and October of 2019, I returned to two of the three case studies for a second round of data collection. I presented my 9 initial concepts, the 2 core categories drawn from these concepts and the developed theory to participants from both agency 2 and agency 3. During this second round of data collection, hour-long, semi structured interviews were conducted with between 2 and 4 people from each organisation. Apart from one participant, all interviewees had also been interviewed during round 1 of the data collection (for full details of who was interviewed twice, see appendix 2). The purpose of revisiting the interviewees, and presenting the developed theory was to give the participants the opportunity to correct and clarify constructs, ensuring validation of the theory from those who know the phenomenon best. During this process respondents were able to validate the findings and I was able to express empirical confidence that the category development for the theory was saturated (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In this way, rigour was provided to the research process, with feedback from the participants validating that the theory was sufficiently developed to cease data collection. With this validation, and through conversations with my supervisors, I therefore felt confident in my decision to stop data collection after the completion of three case studies. In this study then, theoretical saturation was achieved via member checking of the research findings, which

demonstrated that anything new that was arising from my data didn't add to the overall developed theory (Dey, 1999).

7.15   Developing theory

By adopting a constructionist grounded theory methodology, a theory of shared leadership through relational connections was developed, which highlights a sense of belonging and trust as key conditions to the sharing of leadership in experiential agencies. This is the ultimate purpose of the grounded theory methodology – the final integration of all the strands towards the development of a theory. The two refined categories that were developed through the axial coding process were subjected to further development, related back to the data and – using theoretical saturation – developed towards a theory that remained grounded in the data. Chapter 10 describes the outcomes of this process. It is important to note that the theory has been developed, and is not a discovered aspect of a pre-existing reality which is 'out there' – to think in this way would be to take a positivist position (Annells, 1996), which is contrary to the positions taken within this thesis. Instead, the development of theory drew on both the grounded theory approach and my epistemological position as a social constructionist – this has resulted in theory that was drawn from interpretations made from the participants' perspectives.

7.16   Particularization versus generalisation

Unlike in quantitative studies, an ability to extend the research results beyond the specific context of those directly studied is not normally the focus of qualitative studies. As Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2009) suggest, generalisations are considered to be less important when considering research from a social constructionist viewpoint, because each situation is, by its very nature, unique. Each situation is a product of a unique combination

of a particular set of circumstances and individuals. Rather, as has been extensively argued,

case studies undertaken from a social constructionist perspective should be evaluated on

their ability to illuminate the richness and particularity of what it describes (Chen & Barnett

Pearce, 1995). This then relates to the strategy of particularization described by Lee and

Saunders (2017) and implicitly supported in the work of Stake (1995) who suggests that

"case study research is not sampling research. We do not study a case primarily to

understand other cases. Our first obligation is to understand this one case" (p. 4).

Particularization is the process of "reporting why some of the characteristics or events that

comprise the phenomenon are how they are in the specific context that is being

studied"(Lee and Saunders, 2017, p. 22) and, as such, it is considered a key strength of case

study research. A strategy involving particularization therefore involves asking why this

phenomenon has manifested itself here, at this particular time and why is that interesting –

in other words, particularization involves developing a deep understanding of the case.

Particularization does not exclude generalization, but does largely dismiss the idea of

analytical generalization that is proposed by Yin (2018).

Nevertheless, whilst many argue that generalisability is not a concern for case study

research , I argue – as others have (see Helstad & Moller, 2013, p. 250; VanWynsberghe &

Khan, 2007) that the findings in this thesis are not simple illustrations of examples of a

phenomenon, but should instead be considered as having the potential to be transferable to

other contexts (Lee & Saunders, 2017; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Transferability can be

accomplished through thick, descriptive data which provided the reader with enough

information to determine if the emerging themes are relevant across other situations and

other cases (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, transferability arises from two elements

of the research - the first is the comparative nature of the study and the second is the

similarities exhibited within the cases that may be found in other contexts.

Transferability is therefore supported by the comparative nature of the study – and

in particular the use of grounded theory, which is inherently comparative and lends itself to

inductive theory-generation based on related concepts drawn from data within the case

(Charmaz, 2008). The use of a comparative approach within the three cases and the process

of comparing the cases to prior knowledge, experience and to theory, means that the

findings reported in this thesis can be considered empirical developments of the general

theory of shared leadership (Lee & Saunders, 2017; VanWynsberghe & Khan, 2007).

Comparing cases allowed "…for the consideration of how similar processes lead to different

outcomes in some situations, how different influences lead to similar outcomes in others;

and how seemingly distinct phenomena may be related to similar trends or pressures"

(Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017, p. 15). In this way, comparison allows for the insights generated in

this study to be transferred to other cases, which builds a stronger argument for the

significance of the findings of this research.

The second element of transferability is based on the selection of case studies that

are likely to have similarities to other contexts (Lee & Saunders, 2017). In this study,

organisations were selected that were involved in creative, complex work with a variety of

stakeholders. The organisations were all team based, and those teams were inherently

interdependent in their working practices. These characteristics are transferable across a

range of industries, including marketing, project management, tourism and hospitality.

Similarities and relationships between these industries have been well documented (Bladen

et al., 2018; Bowdin et al., 2011) and whilst there is much that makes each sector distinct,

there is also much that tourism, hospitality, marketing and project management share in

common. Similarities can be seen in the service nature of the output, the reliance on key customer and client stakeholders and the resultant need for business cases, strategic planning, health safety and risk assessments, and a reliance on resource / time and workload planning (Bladen et al., 2018). These areas of commonality provide indications that the findings in this study may be applicable elsewhere. The potential for transferability can also be seen clearly in the work of Clarke (2012) who suggested that future studies should focus on shared leadership in project management organisations specifically. Other similar organisational set ups, such as destination management organisations, service organisations and product development teams, have already been the focus of shared leadership studies and the findings in this study should therefore be seen as an extension of this theoretical development (Benson & Blackman, 2011; Hoch & Dulebohn, 2013; Hu et al., 2017). In addition to highlighting potential transferability here, transferability was also accomplished through thick, descriptive data which provided the reader with enough information that they can determine if the emerging themes are relevant across other situations and other cases.

This thesis therefore used a particularization strategy, with the anticipation that the findings may be used as a guide to what may occur in other settings, and therefore "..to expand the scope of the theory that guides or emerges from the original case" (VanWynsberghe & Khan, 2007, p. 85).

7.17 Ethical considerations

This section describes the measures taken to ensure the research was undertaken with appropriate levels of responsible conduct. The primary research proposal obtained ethical approval from Sheffield Hallam University in June 2018. In addition to the formal

ethical compliance required by the University, each of the participants were provided with introductory emails, participant information sheets and participant consent forms so that they clearly understood the purpose of the research and consented to participate. Copies of these are included in the appendices. At the start of each interview, participants were reassured of their anonymity and it was confirmed they consented to continue, in the knowledge that they had the right to refuse to answer questions and withdraw at any stage. All organisations and individual names have been changed in this thesis, and core teams have been described generically, in order to protect anonymity.

7.18 Concluding remarks

This chapter has outlined how both my epistemological position as a social constructionist and my understanding of leadership as an influence process has informed the methodological choices made in this thesis. The chapter has clarified how the choices of a qualitative case study, using a grounded theory approach to data collection and analysis are consistent with my philosophical and theoretical foundations. It has also described, in detail, the process of data collection and data analysis with justification throughout of the choices made. Over the next three chapters, this research process will be explicated as I present my initial concept findings (chapter 8), the development of two core categories (chapter 9) and the way these categories, and the constant comparison method helped to build a theory of relational connections and the emergence of shared leadership (chapter 10).

8 FINDINGS CHAPTER

8.1 Chapter introduction

This research has identified nine distinct antecedent conditions that enable the emergence of shared leadership within the context of experiential agencies (see table 8.1). As explained in chapter 7.6, all interviews started with an overview of what is meant by shared leadership by the interviewer, and a brief discussion of whether the participants thought leadership was shared in their organisation. All interviewees agreed that leadership was shared in their respective organisations, and the resulting discussions about when, how and why it was shared form the basis of the data presented below, from which the nine conditions were identified. Using grounded theory methods, the process of the data collection continued in tandem with the open coding – thus the conditions were refined through discussions with later participants. In addition, returning to the earlier participants with the developed concepts and categories enabled the triangulation of the findings. Through the use of the constructionist grounded theory approaches to data collection and analysis (Charmaz, 2000, 2008, 2017), the data and the findings remained interconnected.

The chapter describes how I came to recognise the concepts during the open coding phase and, throughout the chapter, the way in which these concepts are grounded in the data is specifically addressed, as is how the meaning applied to each concept was determined. This interpretation of the data explains to the reader both the relevance of my findings, and brings transparency to my data analysis process (Stake, 1995). In addition, and taking into account my social constructionist perspective, priority was given to participants' views and voices, which were considered as integral to both the analysis and its presentation (Charmaz, 2008). The relationship between myself as the researcher and the

participants is included as part of the process of the research (Chen & Barnett Pearce, 1995)

- as such, I present here the constructs that I have interpreted through the participants own

interpretations of their lived experiences.

Table 8.1: Nine antecedent conditions for shared leadership in experiential agencies

Macro (organisational / leadership team) level conditions	Enhance the meaningfulness of work Transparency Empowering staff Maintain a cultural identity
Meso (team) level conditions	Networks of expertise Collaborative approach
Micro (individual) level conditions	Open communication strategies Contextual understanding Willingness to participate

The first section of this chapter is concerned with conditions related to the

organisational leadership team (termed here as 'macro level'), with this research identifying

that leadership teams are the key to creating and maintaining conditions which enable team

members to share in leadership. In particular, this study has identified the role of the

leadership team as gatekeepers to the sharing of leadership, which has thus far not been

discussed in existing literature which tends to focus on team-based antecedents, and

ignored the wider contextual factors in which shared leadership takes place.

The findings have also highlighted that, whist it is a prerequisite that these

conditions are encouraged or enacted by the leadership team, the desire to share

leadership must be primarily driven by the teams themselves. The second section of the

chapter therefore focuses on the project team level (termed 'meso level') and discusses how

interdependent, cross-functional project teams in experiential agencies need to recognise

the network of expertise they work within, and to implement a collaborative – strategic -

approach in order for shared leadership to emerge. Finally, the third section addresses how

individual team members (termed 'micro level') need to commit to open communication

practices, a deeper understanding of others work and express a willingness to take on

leadership roles work in order to enable the emergence of shared leadership.

As already noted, few studies focus on the antecedents of shared leadership

(Sweeney et al., 2019; Zhu et al., 2018) - this research is the first thorough examination of

antecedent conditions for shared leadership that exist in these experiential agencies, and

the nine conditions identified in this chapter are significant findings in terms of furthering

our understanding of the conditions that are needed in order to share leadership around

organisations. In particular, the findings represent the first study to analyse antecedents

from the perspective of multiple levels throughout an organisation. The findings presented

are therefore an important contribution to the theoretical development of shared

leadership.

In the following two chapters, the axial coding process and the data analysis is

presented, demonstrating how these concepts were further developed into two core

categories. From there, the development of the conceptual theory is discussed as I

demonstrate that it is grounded in the data, via the process of selective coding (Maxwell,

2013). My data collection and analytical process is shown table 8.2 below.

Table 8.2: Data collection and analytical process

Date	Data collection	Data analysis	Grounded theory
July 2018	Round 1: five interviews at Agency 1	Analytical note taking Revision of interview questions	
September 2018	Round 2: four interviews at Agency 1	Analytical note taking Transcription Reflective practice Revision of interview questions	

November 2018	Round 3: ten interviews at Agency 2	Analytical note taking after each interview Transcription Open coding Memo-writing	
January 2019	Round 4: ten interviews at Agency 3	Analytical note taking after each interview Transcription Open coding Memo-writing	
February / March 2019		Constant comparison of data – coding revised and developed 2nd review of literature Memo-writing	Axial coding Category development via selective coding
March 2019	Round 5: four interviews at Agency 3	Process of theoretical saturation started	Memo-writing Categories integrated
April 2019	Round 6: two interviews at Agency 2	Process of theoretical saturation started	Memo-writing Theory building Theoretical saturation Grounded theory finalised
May 2020	Round 7: four interviews at Agency 1		Process not completed due to Covid 19 pandemic

In order to provide clarity to the reader, and to note the multiple formal leadership levels within the data, participants are labelled with their anonymised name, the agency they work for and their managerial position (LT = leadership team; TL = team leader; TM = team member).

8.2   Presentation of macro (organisational) level concept development

In this section, I use the data to answer the research question 'what can organisational leadership teams do to facilitate the sharing of leadership among cross-functional, interdependent teams?' The findings relate to the macro level conditions that

emerged from the data and are described in detail below. A brief summation of the findings reported in this section is provided below (see also table 8.3).

The first condition is that of transparency – in this context, transparency means that the leadership team must undertake open and honest communication that will ensure team members feel 'on board' with the work. The second condition is the empowerment of staff – encouraging staff to take ownership and to be accountable for doing their own work. In this instance, doing their work requires the sharing of leadership – of taking on responsibility for certain areas of delivery when required. In addition, the leadership team must enhance the meaningfulness of work – they need to put strategies in place that help employees to understand the goals, values and visions. By doing so, they ensure that the employees understand why they are doing their job, which increases motivation and engagement. Lastly, the leadership team should maintain a clear cultural identity. They should set and guide the cultural behaviours – this demonstrates a belief and investment in their people. It will also ensure environments where employees feel supported and able to do their jobs with freedom.

> *It is interesting to note that, despite the leadership teams expressing a desire for leadership to be shared around the organisation, they viewed their role through a traditional, hierarchical lens. In this way, the leadership team positioned themselves as gatekeepers to the sharing of leadership. This is explored further throughout the section.*

Table 8.3: Summary of organisational antecedent conditions related to the development of shared leadership

Action	Description
Enhance the meaningfulness of work	Provide a set of clear business values and ensure there is a clear vision for the organisation. This vision needs to be communicated well and should be consistent.
Transparency	Engage in open communication and demonstrate honesty and approachability in your dealings with employees.

Empowerment of staff	Empower staff to take responsibility – inspire / encourage ownership and autonomy whilst enabling staff to feel supported whilst doing their jobs.
Maintain a collective identity	Encourage and maintain a strong, collective, organisational cultural identity.

8.2.1   Enhance the meaningfulness of work

"'You aren't part of the team if you don't know where that team is going" Jane, Agency 2

This condition is defined as the need for an organisation to provide a clear vision for the organisation, which is communicated properly so that employees feel part of the wider organisational strategy - something larger than just their individual tasks of employment. Whilst this condition is presented first, it was by no means the first code that I discovered in the data. In fact, at first, I coded this as 'setting an organisational vision'. And indeed, members of the leadership teams at all three organisations were clear on how important setting and guiding the vision were (see table 8.4) They felt that a key element of their role was to create the vision for the business, and to ensure that employees were on board with that vision.

Table 8.4: Leadership team members on organisational vision

Dave (LT, Agency 3): So I think, in that sense, we need to continue to provide a vision for people that shows that, whilst we will probably never be the biggest, we can be slightly smarter. We can be better than even the biggest of our competitors. I think the other reason why it's probably become harder to portray - or to give a vision to people of what the future holds - is that it's become a much more complicated, fragmented, not only media landscape, but agency landscape.
Martin (LT, Agency 1): And you know critical self-reflection - when it comes to it, you can't seemingly have an entire business lead itself. Because everybody's got different things that they want to get out of that. So there does require a vision, you know some sort of plan, why we're all doing this, and somebody standing up saying, go with me on this or at least trying to get behind the people. So telling them that 'we are going to do this, because it's going to help us in this way'. That's where a leader does some leading.
James (LT, Agency 2): Our vision is our long term "north star", while purpose is why we are doing what we do each day. Our vision is that experience matters. Our purpose is to make marketing more immersive in a world of increasing interruptions.

The need for the leadership team to set the vision was also highlighted by participants. When asked what leadership meant to them, they invariably turned to the idea that leadership was about setting and guiding the organisational vision (see table 8.5)

Table 8.5: Employee perceptions of organisational vision

Clare (TM, Agency 1): Whether it's good for you or good for the company, I think they always have kind of a more of an overarching vision of what's happening around you.
Charlie (TM, Agency 3): I'm going to state the obvious one is everyone having a sight of the goal. [pauses]…You can have collaborative leadership, which is great. But in the end, you need someone that's going to make a decision as well. Whether that's a vision or whether that's leading a project. So I think good leadership is getting that balance of everyone feeling like they they've got a say in where its leading to but definitely having people that will make that decision on where it's going…The leadership in terms of the actual agency is, I suppose, leading by example in terms of culture and ethos. Because actually I would say you literally look to the most senior people to get a feeling of that and then of the vision side. So what type of agency do you want to be in discipline and then the simple things like, what are we going after, what type of categories?
Hayley (TM, Agency 2): [Leadership is about the] future of the business. So I think it's yeah having the foresight I think, I referenced it earlier - foresight to future proof a business and remain truly competitive and that then ladders down into talent, making sure everyone is happy in order for us to retain the clients we have, or have the right talent in place to either win or get invited to the table for some of these pieces of business that are going out for tender.

But 'setting the vision' didn't fully describe what the participants were describing to me. I also noticed that the participants were often talking about how important it was for the leadership team to explicitly communicate the vision of the organisation. Participants felt that if they understood the direction of the business – fundamentally, why they are doing their job – then they would feel that they were part of something larger than just their individual tasks of employment. What became apparent, then, was that the leadership team must do more than just decide on the direction of the business and aim towards it – they must make the vision inclusive to everyone in the business, and in doing so, they must be as explicit about the vision internally as they are externally.

Mary (TL, Agency 1): Ermmmm. I think leadership is having someone that....[pause] it's a bit like...mentoring, is that the right word? Having someone who has got that vision, got that goal. In the best interest really for you and for the business behind it. But then also that they include you and take you along in that journey rather than being too...this is it; you have to conform and do and whatever. For me personally. I mean, I just work better and I like to work when it is a team effort. We are all one team - we might have different job titles, but if we're all clear on what that end goal is and you've got someone kind of shaping, and with the experience.
Interviewer: So it's inclusive and you're all pulling towards the same result?
Mary: Yeah, yeah I think so. Because if you don't have that, then how are you going to get there? Because if you're excluding people or you don't feel like you are part of that, then what motivates me to want to do it? Because if you just doing it because of whatever and I don't understand why or I'm just told to do this, then what am I going to get out of it? Why would I put that extra bit of effort in?

My understanding of this exchange with Mary was that communicating a clear, inclusive vision helped her to understand the organisational goals, values and mission. This understanding built feelings of value for her and creates a perception that the work she does is meaningful and important. It also enabled her to align herself with the organisation's goals – so that they were all pulling towards the same thing (literally, all one big team). This exchange was the catalyst that led to the extension of the code from 'creating an organisational vision' to the concept of 'enhancing the meaningfulness of the work'. I found that when the participants felt that the organisation was going in the right direction, they talked very positively about their own work, why it was important and how much enjoyment and value they got out of it. Here Stewart, CEO from Agency 3 talks about being explicit regarding the organisational vision, and how it can help employees to think of their work as meaningful:

> *It's an interesting point about how much you share with your employees. And that sense of - well only what I can affect. But I guess there is also that bit where you talk about team-ship in terms of leader-ship. Actually, you know, it's been interesting when people say 'Well I know what else I can do to help' as opposed to just waiting for stuff to happen to them. I think that's almost that - that process of osmosis, it feels that they can step into and explore more, as opposed to just waiting passively for what is going to come down to them.*

However, as Jenna (TM, Agency 2) points out:

[Having an organisational vision] feels a bit multifaceted because if the vision of the agency is one that the employees have bought into, that's already a level of trust because the people leading it have got it on track to go to a specific destination. But then the methods in which the leadership team use to get, or to continue that momentum, can sometimes make you a bit unsure and feel a little bit nervous.

This was a recurring theme – the participants felt that an organisational vision was really important for them in order to feel their work is important and their contribution to the organisation is of value. And, if they felt their work was valued, then they expressed a desire to take on informal leadership responsibilities, in order to continue to do a good job. But this wasn't a stable entity – if the leadership team were perceived to be taking the organisation in the wrong direction or the participants didn't understand the decisions being made, there was a clear impact on the participants' feelings about their jobs. This then led me to discussions with participants about how the leadership team can stop that happening – this is summarised as being transparent.

8.2.2   Transparency

"You don't feel like it's kind of an impossible task or it's a pain to speak to those higher up. You know, when you have all got respect for each other and you talk on a level playing field, it's easier to talk to those in the leadership team." Paul, TM, Agency 1

Transparency can be described as the leadership team engaging in open communication and demonstrating honesty and approachability to their employees. For the participants of this study, transparency consisted of open and honest communication from the leadership teams.

Fairly early on in my data collection, I realised that open communication was a recurring discussion point. Specifically, participants discussed how important they felt it was that the leadership teams were being open and honest with them about what was

happening with the business. During my first round of data collection, communication as a theme came over so strongly that I presumed that it would be pivotal to my findings. As I explored the notion further in my later rounds of data collection, it became clear that the participants had something quite specific in mind when they discussed communication from the leadership team - they were talking about communication as a relational factor that promoted accountability from the leadership team, and loyalty from the employees.

The importance of understanding what was happening in the organisation was a key element for the participants to feel like they could engage with leadership - though the different cases had different experiences of transparency from their leadership team. For employees at Agency 3, open honest communication was stressed repeatedly as something the organisation did well (see table 8.6 for examples) – mostly through agency meetings and briefing sessions, which were mentioned frequently.

Table 8.6: Agency 3 participants on transparency from the leadership team

Jo (TL): We have an annual meeting, where the board generally present about what we're doing, where the company's going, the things that we are focusing on, new big initiatives things like that…we are kept up to date with where things stand financially and … which sectors we need to move into, what we need to improve on. I think that's really transparent in terms of what they are doing in terms of leadership of the company.
Robert (TL): As an organisation, they communicate well….So, they are quite open – I've worked in places that are really closed, and you don't know what's going on. There are whisperings behind the door. But that very rarely happens here.
Charlotte (TM): And one thing that is really positive about the full agency meetings that we have – they are supposed to be once a month, but they often don't happen that regularly – but there's always a financial update. There's always updates on the wider business and one thing that they've started doing…is the honesty. They are much more transparent about our finances and what we're trying to do.
Andrew (TL): They are good at holding their hands up if they have tried stuff – they'll turn around and say, 'we tried it, it didn't really work'. They are good from that point of view

At Agency 1, however, agency wide communication has been a problem.

Mary (TL, Agency 1): I'm not saying every week, because we wouldn't know what was going on, but to be aware, to see what's happening and to communicate – I think that's a massive thing as well, for everybody…They have been guilty of that in the past, of things happening, and everyone knows the real reason why it's happened, but they come out with another story and it's obviously not right. And that's when rumours start – people are thinking they aren't saying this, what else are they not saying…if we know why, or we know what's happening, it makes more sense. You get it...If you don't know, you don't feel engaged and you wonder what else is changing.

Mary's quote clearly illustrated the main reason why employees feel being open and honest

and having a good communication strategy is important to their engagement with their own

work, and their willingness to take on leadership responsibilities that are outside of their

formal duties. The leadership team at Agency 1 are making changes to rectify the issues

outlined above. They have brought in agency meetings, an open-door policy for the

leadership team and had even moved towards creating a flat organisational structure. But

this had actually created more problems, where decisions were made without transparency

and employees felt resistant to the changes, resulting the breakdown of trust.

An example of this is that the leadership team had pushed through an office refit in

order to try to replicate an open, learning space -like a campus. There was a widespread

feeling that – whilst the premise of the refit was sound, and even useful / important – the

way it was dealt with was poor. This quote demonstrates the issues:

Caroline (TM, Agency 1): We've just had an office refit, so we haven't got proper desks. So, they gave us these desks without realising, so now they've banned second screens. It's impossible to do a budget based on the system we've got, without a second screen! Things weren't done logically. Or we get told things are going to happen and then everyone's like 'why?' but you just get me to do it anyway. That always causes a bit of an atmosphere….This is the thing again, where the idea is a really good one and it works. It's just how it's been executed that doesn't work….at no point where we ever consulted, and I think that's another thing that frustrates people, is that these things just happen. So, you come into work one day and it's like 'right you've got until the end of the week, here's a box, clear your desk – you are getting a new desk'. It's like, actually, if you had of talked to us about it, we would have said well no, I need a second screen, I need this, I need that. I can get rid of that, and we can comprise – but there are certain things that you need to do your job and

> *that wasn't necessarily consulted…and the other thing is that they get to keep their big desks!*

We can see then that Caroline was expressing clear frustration at the lack of transparency she was experiencing in her workplace. This was echoed in the other organisations too, as this quote from Rod (TM, Agency 3) demonstrates:

> *It's quite transparent, but if you talk to a few more junior people, you see many times when there's a decision somewhere…and the senior team decide not to pass on this feedback to the creative or the strategist. So, they learn that a few days before, through a private channel. And then suddenly you've got a really demotivated team, a resentful team…you feel a lack of control and you lose that ownership.*

So this lack of open, honest communication from leadership teams created feelings of frustrating in employees, and that frustration manifested itself as feelings of a lack of control over their work. These discussions around a lack of transparency were a recurring theme, and felt really important in terms of the employee's capacity to undertake leadership behaviours in their work space. Following this thought process through, especially in relation to the findings around the organisation's control of the meaningfulness of work, lead me to start considering the next concept – that of empowering staff.

8.2.3   Empowering staff

"It's about treating people like adults - we want people to work here because they genuinely want to work here and they want to do well, for their own career progression, but also for the greater good of the business. Sort of the idea that if everybody works really hard then the end goal is reachable - and everybody succeeds out of it." Kate, Agency 1

In the context of these agencies, empowerment meant a commitment to ensuring that employees took control, ownership and responsibility for the work that they do – in other words, a commitment to enabling leadership to be shared among team members. Employees are encouraged to lead, to identify opportunities and to share decision making and problem solving. Empowering staff demonstrates a belief and investment in their

people and creates environments where employees feel supported and able to do their jobs

with freedom.

Empowerment is facilitated through formally designated leadership roles – they

foster environments which enable, inspire and encourage staff to take ownership of tasks.

Matt explains why empowerment is so vital to leadership within the business:

> *Matt (LT, Agency 2): As I said earlier, we are - and it comes from the top down - we are quite a hands-off managing structure / leadership / organisation. Most of the time I think that works really well for empowerment, people work well just being allowed to do it. You know 'I can cut my own cloth here; I can find my own role'. You'll get the support of your managers, or your leaders, to do that. And I think then that the leaders are there as a gentle guider when needed. So leadership, I think, is about - well here, especially - about being open, nurturing and encouraging. As opposed to being constricting, framework setting people. That's probably also because we are busy ourselves, in a quite small organisation we don't have a middle layer of managers who just manage. So we are involved.*

Empowerment is formed through giving staff ownership of clear areas of responsibility and

through ensuring staff feel accountable. These two areas are linked – if employees are

accountable for something, but have no control over it, then they feel destabilised and

removed from the outcomes, which results in a lack of ownership.

> *Charlie (TM, Agency 3): So in strategy, we are all creating different tools in channel, brand, category, whatever it is. And we've all been tasked with a different one to develop. And it's not like we've teamed up a senior with a junior. The Juniors also have their own…They've all got the same weighting. So in that way, John [head of strategy] is being a good leader, because he's being inclusive, he's empowering people, he's involving everyone.*

Encouraging staff to take ownership of tasks has been specifically fostered at two of the
organisations through the initiatives explored below:

The X initiative at Agency 3

The X initiative passes ownership of project outcomes to a specified group of people.

It aims to inspire collaboration, and to improve the decision-making process. It is built on

the idea that the most effective project teams are built on a network of experts who step

up, in an unasked and unforced way – and take on responsibility for the tasks. However,

Agency 3 found that due to a number of issues around communication, and differences in

teams, this wasn't happening. So, the X was created in order to formally replicate

something that the leadership team felt should – but didn't – happen organically. Here's

one of the leadership team explaining the purpose of the initiative:

> *Dave (LT, Agency 3): We are trying to move to a system called the X. Which is ultimately about empowering people to make decisions more collaboratively. And whilst there is still a degree of ownership over role and ownership over output, from my own personal experience and other experiences that I've seen here, when people work in a much more smaller unit, taking collective responsibility for it, you don't get that same sort of friction between departmental lines…We need to know where we have to take accountability. But at the same time, things can work in a slightly more organic and slightly more collaborative way, I think through that process. But I do think there is a need to get back to some parameters around where people have ownership.*

And here is an employee describing why it works so well:

> *Susie (TL, Agency 3): And when we worked like that, it's really good. I worked on [client name] last year - it was myself, and a strategist and we went to all the meetings together, huddled together every time we had to make decisions, went to all the big client meetings. And that actually worked really well. So I think that's something that we're going to try and do more of. Without it, you end up with like 15 people in a room, trying to make a decision and in terms of process and enjoyment of job, that's really good. I think you cut a lot of the extra people out who don't necessarily need to be in the room, and I think you take more initiative and ownership over the job and you make the right decision.*

The Y initiative at Agency 1

The Y initiative is an initiative that removes the bureaucratic red tape of an

organisation, and places the responsibility back on the employee. So, they have rewards

such as uncapped holidays and no office hours, and no official line management processes –

but in return, they are expected to take ownership and do their job.

> ***Interviewer: And what about with the teams. I guess you're asking them to take on a lot of responsibility for their own roles, which they might not be used to?***
> *Kate (LT, Agency 1): There is definitely an element of that as well - we are pushing a lot of responsibility back on to the employee. But it sort of goes hand-in-hand with*

the fact that we're also giving them a lot of autonomy as well, you know the idea that teams can sort themselves out, that if your team are happy for you to finish it on whatever day then fine, if you want to work from home you can do. As long as clients are happy and deadlines are met. So it sort of goes hand-in-hand - I suppose with great autonomy comes great responsibility [laughs]. I mean, we're going to give you unlimited holidays and a pretty good benefits package, but with that means that you have to be a lot more responsible for your time keeping. We're going to trust that you're going to do it.

And the participants from Agency 1 were very positive about the changes too (see table 8.7)

Table 8.7: Participants views of Y initiative at Agency 1

Clare (TM, Agency 1): There's a lot of trust in people who work at [Agency 1] to kind of get on with it and do it and which is nice and I think that's something to kind of get your head around begin with. I feel like the changes at [Agency 1] have made me feel valued as an employee and trusted to do my job
Alice (TM, Agency 1): Well personally, like you'll go above and beyond when you need to because you know it's fine because they respect you for doing it. And if you need that half afternoon off, it's just there - the flexibility. You can have it. It does help. Mentally it helps.

8.2.4 Maintain the organisation's cultural identity

"We've certainly gone through some navel-gazing, I guess - looking at our culture thinking, about who we are and who we want to be as an employer and what matters to us. And it's that connecting the culture with the business outcomes and also checking whether or not that culture impedes our growth as an organisation." Donna (LT, Agency 3)

All three organisations were striving to demonstrate an investment in their people that went beyond monetising their performance or viewing them as a resource. This was expressed as developing an open, friendly, inclusive culture with the aim of employees feeling part of one large team. When the organisation valued their employees beyond just their performance, participants expressed more willingness to engage in additional responsibilities (such as leadership) for the good of the organisation.

In order to unpick how I came to this conclusion I present below an overview of

some discussions I had with members of the different leadership teams. Across all three

leadership teams, the employees were seen as being key to the success of the business:

> *Martin (LT, Agency 1): [When I took over…] there wasn't enough of an identity - of a*
> *culture - within the business; it had always been [Agency 1] the brand, rather than*
> *recognising that - because we're a people business in the service industry - that*
> *everybody in the business is the business. And if there are people in the business that*
> *aren't feeling that, then there is an issue"*

Recognising the importance of their workforce, all three organisations had focussed on

growing a positive working environment that provided a strong cultural identity. In this way,

the leadership teams felt they were able to recruit and retain the best talent, which helped

them to achieve their business goals.

This working environment extended beyond providing a nice place to work (though

all three organisations had free tea / coffee / breakfast and other food available all day and

large, comfortable spaces for employees to socialise in). Instead, the leadership teams told

me they were specifically trying to maintain an organisational culture that reflected how

much they valued their employees. Culture was seen as the glue that holds everyone

together:

> *James (LT, Agency 2): We believe that culture is key to our success and more*
> *important than any process or system. And in a time of continual change, culture is*
> *the one constant that pulls us all together. Our culture is one of collaborative passion*
> *for creating great experiences. Each person is key to our success and individuals*
> *should be given both the space and support to reach their potential. And most*
> *importantly, not afraid to fail.*

The leadership teams tended to express the culture in terms of their organisational values

and behaviours. The participant above continued that quote with:

> *We ask people to turn up with fire in their belly and we are bound together by a set*
> *of core values, which are best described in the following statements: Be passionate.*
> *Luke warm is boring. Get curious and believe in magic. Have great ideas! Creativity*

solves problems. Remember a challenge is a chance for you to do your best. Take the initiative. Be kind to each other. Be generous. Be Brave. We've got your back.

During the first round of interviews, I had noticed that when I asked the employees at Agency 3 about the organisational culture, most of them said things like 'it's nice, it's a lovely place to work' but few went beyond that. And none could clearly express what the cultural identity was – certainly there was no sense of a shared identity within the business. This was in contrast to the employees at Agency 2 who, when asked about the organisational culture, every single person replied with a variation of 'we are a family'. As this didn't happen at Agency 3, during my second round of data collection, I wanted to explore the cultural identity with them a bit more. Here it is useful to take a look at the notes I took straight after the meeting, which explains how I concluded that this sense of a shared cultural identity was important:

> *Researcher's memo notes: Discussions with the leadership team at [Agency 3] about this potential lack of a shared organisational culture, or cultural identity, really resonated with them - they felt that they were working hard on changing the culture but weren't doing enough. Was a very interesting discussion about their cultural identity being in transition – they had made a conscious decision about moving from a very heavily 'everyone down the pub' led culture, which they felt excluded some employees from participating. So, they wanted to move towards something else, but that they didn't know what that something else was yet.*

> *Clearly important that the cultural identity is somehow maintained - if the leadership team don't foster, or enable, or give permission for cultural time, then it becomes disparate. And the employees certainly felt that - they would say it's a lovely place to work, a nice place, a friendly place - but they couldn't describe what the culture was. And the discussion with Andrew and Jo echoed this – they felt that there wasn't a strong sense of culture at the organisation, and that people used to bond down the pub, which made it easier to work with people they didn't sit with. But as that has stopped being encouraged, they felt that they were distanced from other people within the organisation and that more needed to be done in order to encourage people to get to know each other on a personal level. Because that personal level helped people work together.*

As my notes suggest, at Agency 3 employees perceived the importance of a strong cultural identity differently to the leadership team – I found this to be the case at the other two agencies as well. For employees, the culture was less about the business values, and more to do with the working environment, and in particular the relationships between employees – often expressed as team spirit. And it's this organisational culture that the employees referred to when they described why these organisations are good places to work. It's also this culture that made them feel part of something larger than just their immediate teams. For the employees though, the cultural identity was mostly reduced to the social aspects of the organisation (see table 8.8)

Table 8.8: Participants discuss cultural identity at work

Sophia (LT, Agency 2): There is a lot of flexibility and people are very approachable and friendly so there isn't a culture of fear, it's more like you feel at ease coming in to work and engaging with people at a very basic level. And I think that comes across from investing in these social activities and putting value on people's well-being as much as their performance
Interviewer: How would you describe the culture and Agency 3? Susie (TL, Agency 3): Really really good actually. I've worked for the many agencies in London and I would say the people here are probably one of the things that stand out the most…I think I really like everybody I work with. I really - genuinely - can't think of any one that I don't get on with here. And you don't get that at a lot of agencies. I think [Agency 3] puts quite a bit of time and money into those activities outside of work and just little bits and pieces whether it be, you know, charity or festivities at certain times of the year or just getting people involved in things. Exercise and that sort of thing.

The employees perceived an investment in social activities as a way in which the organisation demonstrated the value it places on its people, whereas the leadership team felt that the cultural identity was a guiding principle that helped to shape the attitudes and values of the workplace and assisted in the recruitment of staff members. It was these differences that led me to think about the importance of an organisational culture that is explicitly communicated throughout the business. The success of this strategy is in evidence

at Agency 2, where employees were clearly able to vocalise what the collective cultural identity was ('we are a family') and reported that having this strong culture helped them to get to know employees across the organisation, which in turn underpinned their ability to work well together across departmental lines and their willingness to share leadership.

8.3 Presentation of meso (team) level concept development

In this section, I answer the research question 'What conditions do interdependent teams need in order for team members to participate in shared leadership?'

In agency work, teams are inherently interdependent - to succeed they must work collaboratively in cross functional project teams. The following conditions were identified as enabling shared leadership to emerge across a number of interdependent departmental teams (see table 8.9).

Table 8.9: Summary of meso (team) level conditions related to development of shared leadership

Action	Description
Networks of expertise	Being an expert, and recognising and respecting other team members expertise, ensures that team members feel able to engage in leadership.
Collaborative approach	The ability and willingness to approach projects as group work through the removal of linear processes, which create team silos

My research has identified that interdependent cross-functional teams must be willing to take a collaborative approach to managing projects, and in doing so they must strive to have an understanding of co-worker's responsibilities, so that their empathy aids collaboration. They must also be willing to both be an expert and accept leadership from other experts. The next sections will explore the two identified conditions - in doing so, I will highlight how the concepts were grounded in the data.

"So they'll come to me and ask about my expertise in that field. Just like I would come to them and ask about their expertise" Mark (TM, Agency 3)

One of the reasons that the context of experiential agencies was of interest in this study was their reliance on a mixture of job roles that were responsible for different parts of the same project. The three cases I selected all had these job roles in house, which whilst becoming increasingly common in agencies, is not found everywhere. Here Clare (TM, Agency 1) explains the benefits:

> *We're really lucky at [Agency 1] - we've got different internal divisions, whereas a lot of agencies don't. So we've got a design studio, we've got film, we've got exhibitions and we've got a tech team in house, whereas a lot of agencies outsource everything. So that's a big change for people coming from other agencies, that we have everything in one place, at our fingertips.*

So using these agencies with in-house teams allowed me to understand the impact of a reliance on different job roles and it highlighted how important it was to respect and recognise other people's areas of expertise. It's important to distinguish here between providing a network of expertise, which I would describe as an organisational level action and being part of a network which is a team level action. I am describing the latter here - the willingness of team members to be the expert, and to recognise other team members expertise as an important condition to shared leadership.

This idea of recognising and respecting other team member's expertise emerged as a factor during data collection at my second case (Agency 2) but was most clearly reinforced during the time I spent with the last of my cases (Agency 3). Here, the participants clearly valued being surrounded by experts – a good description might be a network of experts that can be relied on to take ownership of their part of the project. Mark (TM, Agency 3) demonstrates this:

Yeah, I think I think I'm listened to and I've got my voice in terms of, if we are talking about what people do, I do the design. So I'm going to know more than anyone in that three about design. So they'll come to me and ask about my expertise in that field. Just like I would come to them and ask about their expertise….and if I disagree with a point, I feel comfortable enough to make my own counter argument about why we should or shouldn't do that. Just like the strategy person would do the same if they felt like they had something that was correct to say. It's a team thing. Everyone has the same goal. I don't think anyone is out to make themselves look better or get that promotion on anything like that. I think it is just there's this one project that we want to do really well, because we're all invested in it.

Across all three cases, discussions around working together with other teams within the organisation invariably resulted in discussions about how you rely on others to do aspects of the job, because they are the experts in those tasks. It is literally their job to use their expertise to help you – which clearly improves efficiencies and creates a working environment where shared leadership is enabled.

Hayley (TM, Agency 2): Surrounding yourself with the best people for the job, and also it comes up again and again, not being an expert in everything but having someone that is an expert in that one thing and having the absolute trust in that person that they know what they are doing, and they are going to deliver on what we've tasked them to deliver.

Participants frequently described how important it was to respect the expertise that lay within the interdependent teams.

Lisa (TM, Agency 2): So I think I've looked at it and thought 'oooh' - they are the designer, not me. You've got to let someone run with it and have their input but you are there monitoring what the brand should have. Do you know what I mean, whereas some people would be like 'I think this should be like that, and like that'….I'm like 'I don't ask you to do my budgets so I'm not going to stick my finger into your work' I love the creative side of it, but that's what the creative has been bought in to do so you should let them do it.

So from an employee point of view, having a network of experts has two benefits. The first is that you feel assured that someone with expertise will lead on their areas of knowledge during the delivery of the project, and second is that you realise that your expertise is

valued and respected – that you were important, and your work mattered. Participants felt, therefore, that working with networks of experts enabled them to either participate in leadership, or to accept leadership from others who are not in formal leadership roles.

In an important conversation for me, Louise (TM, Agency 2) discussed how she felt that sharing leadership among a project team was really useful and important, but that it posed risks as well. She felt that there was a risk that expertise got lost in the midst of collaboration and that, when everyone involved in a project had an opinion about every element of it 'you never get anything done'. Louise pointed out that every project was different, and every client demanded different things, so expertise should be respected throughout and that collaboration should be used on a case-by case basis. A collaborative approach to projects is discussed next.

8.3.2   Collaborative approach
"Getting into their world is so important" Jenna (TM, Agency 2)

During my first round of data collection, I noticed that some participants held particularly narrow views of their teams. When asked to describe their teams, participants invariably listed those people who did the same jobs as them, and sat next to them (i.e. other members of the accounts team, or other creatives in the studio). When I followed this up with questions around who they worked with to get projects completed, however, the participants all began to discuss colleagues from across the business.

> *Phoebe (TL, Agency 2): It's tricky because we are working on different projects all the time as well, and with different people on those projects. So sometimes I might be working with certain people and sometimes I might be working with a completely different set of people. So for example, when I was doing [client name], I was doing a sampling project, and working a lot with the team in [the other office]. And now I'm working on a design-based project so I'm working with people in the studio and hardly working with [the other office] at all. So the nature of what we do is on a project by project basis and you are working with different people all the time.*

This made me consider the working processes within agencies and how they were impacting on the ability to participate in shared leadership. It became clear that there is a traditional way of working in these agencies, which involves the project being passed from one team to another. Here's an explanation from Rod (TM, Agency 3):

A normal process might be that the accounts team take the brief, brief in the strategy team. Then strategy get a couple of days, weeks or months to think about it – they then brief the creative team, and the creative present back to the accounts team. There's a couple of rounds of discussion in house, and then the strategist gets dropped off the team and creative and accounts do the back and forth of the little amends [from the clients]."

At all the agencies, the teams were still sometimes working with this linear process and when this was happening, completing the project became very transactional, with each team member working in silo. As a member of the creative team, Louise (TM, Agency 2) outlines her perspective on this:

I think in the creative team, the way that people work is that you are very much just owning a project by yourself so you are working in silo. And so there is an opportunity where people don't necessarily look at helping each other in quite the same way.

These linear processes were recognised as problematic, as they were preventing employees from different teams from collaborating. At Agency 3, they are trying to replace the linear processes with their X initiative (previously described) in which small cross-functional project teams were formed from across the business. The purpose of creating these project teams was to ensure that the key decision makers from each department had the opportunity to collaborate on delivering the project. Collaboration was seen as the key to getting the best out of the team members:

Stewart (LT, Agency 3): I think historically that's how it was - that you'd do your job, get it to a certain point, and pass it on to the next one. But now because of the compression, the speed, we just can't do that. But again what that does instil is that great sense of kinship and team spirit, because you've got these complementary skills, who are all working together, rather than passing things on.

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Because of this X initiative, the Agency 3 participants insights into the benefits of a

collaborative approach were particularly useful in forming conclusions about how

collaboration may facilitate shared leadership. The positives of this collaborative approach

are outlined below:

> *Dave (LT, Agency 3): What you need is really organic, fluid conversation and that doesn't happen if you've got too much departmental silos. What happens is we'll start a creative review, and you don't get to the end of that creative review properly. So you've not had a full conversation; you've shared some stuff basically. As opposed to having a really good deep conversation about the work. And so it starts becoming very transactional. And it's that transactional nature in a business that I think then becomes pretty unhealthy.*

However, it was clear that it wasn't enough for the organisation to ensure teams could work

together – the teams themselves also had to be willing to cross departmental boundaries in

order to collaborate. So team level condition which emphasise linear process approaches to

project teamwork were identified as being less effective than collaborative approaches in

order to enable sharing leadership. Having this collaborative approach had a number of

positive outcomes, though some participants were keen to point out that it wasn't the easy

option (see Andrew's quote in table 8.10 below). In particular, participants indicated that it

enabled people from different departmental teams to feel part of one united project team,

which resulted in a willingness to share leadership.

Table 8.10: Participants discuss the benefits of a collaborative approach

Andrew (TL, Agency 3): there may be individuals in your team who prefer that linear process - 'here's your bit, here's my bit. I'll do that, you do this' - it's a bit more transactional. And I think there will be other people who are a bit more naturally engaged in this kind of collaborative working model and you know, they're a bit more aware of all the influencing factors that may contribute to its various success or failure. And have an awareness of that. I think probably sometimes that more transactional process, that box ticking, is a bit easier. And like you are saying, when everyone is under stress and under pressure - it's like that classic thinking isn't it, that when you are stressed there is a mode you default to.

Jo (TL, Agency 3): Generally, we have a close working relationship with the creative team and the more collaborative that you can be with them and the more you can include them in the discussions and the feedbacks that the client give and make sure everyone's part of the journey, then the more you're like one team, pushing everything forward and the better the project outcomes tend to be. I think in a lot of agencies, creatives and accounts tend to be at odds with each other. But I don't feel like that's the case here.

Rod (TM, Agency 3): But in a more every day sense, I think every project is a chance for anyone to showcase some leadership skills, I guess...But, I think it really depends on who you are working with as well. Some people are very into shouting the loudest. Which is probably harder for other people to show they have leadership skills, because they don't necessarily react well to that. And some teams are a bit more fluid, and sometimes you take the lead for a bit, sometimes it is going to be someone else, and sometimes you just all decide together.

8.4 Presentation of micro (individual) level concept development

In this section, I answer the research question 'What workplace conditions do individual team members need in order to participate in shared leadership?'

Whilst agency teams are inherently interdependent, they are ultimately made up of individuals with different job roles and responsibilities. To succeed in the sharing of leadership, individual team members must be willing to participate. The following conditions were identified as enabling shared leadership to emerge across interdependent departmental teams (see table 8.11). This research has identified that linear processes must be removed from teams in order to allow a collaborative approach - in this section, I note that individuals must also be willing to take a collaborative approach to managing projects, and in doing so they must strive to have an understanding of co-worker's responsibilities, so that their empathy aids collaboration. Lastly, and essentially, individuals must be willing to participate in the actions identified and be prepared to accept and undertake the responsibilities inherent in the sharing of leadership. These micro level conditions are

explored in detail next, with the continued descriptions of how the concepts are grounded in the data.

Table 8.11: Summary of micro (individual) level conditions related to development of shared leadership

Action	Description
Contextual understanding	Empathy for co-workers is derived from an understanding of actual processes and procedures of other team's roles
Open communication strategies	Good communication formed the basis for establishing and maintaining relationships between the team members. As such, individual team members needed specific communication strategies, designed with specific co-workers in mind
Willingness to participate	Individuals must be willing to participate in the sharing of leadership

8.4.1   Contextual understanding

"The account team work very collaboratively - as opposed to here is the brief for the creative team, and this powerful creative director saying, 'right you can do this this and this' – at this agency it's very much more in partnership with everyone." Matt, Agency 2

As I explored the data around collaborative approaches, I noticed that participants often referred to one specific reason why they weren't willing to work with other departmental teams. This was a noticeable blockage to the sharing of leadership and I eventually categorised this as contextual understanding, which I describe as the need for team members to understand the nuances of each other's roles, and the processes involved in doing their jobs in order to work well together. This understanding of contextual processes and procedures of other team member's roles encourages empathy for co-workers and improves team relationships. But without it, it becomes a constraint to sharing leadership – for example if an account management team member doesn't understand the design process, they place unreasonable demands on the designer (e.g. 'this needs to be finished today'):

> *Lisa (TM, Agency 2): The relationship between account management and studio can be really strained because - I'm sorry - there are people who are in account management who are like 'give a shit, get it done, this is what it needs to be' and they have input on design which is purely subjective and not based on an understanding of the creative process.*

These demands are often not fulfilled which results in a loss of confidence that the person can do their part of the job. Paul from (TM, Agency 1) highlights one of the issues with a lack of understanding:

> *I think sometimes in a larger organisation like this, some of the project teams and account managers don't particularly - or aren't aware of - the work that goes into some jobs and they expect it to be done instantly and then they'll promise something to the client the next day where it physically can't be put into Studio for a week. And I think that is managing expectations…Maybe the account teams aren't simply aware of the work that goes into some stuff here.*

So in Paul's example, the account team member might feel let down because they don't understand how long it takes a creative in the studio to do something. So, they over promise to their clients based on a lack of contextual understanding of another's role. This lack of contextual understanding can also easily become frustration about not being heard, which, in turn, can become entrenched, causing tensions that result in a lack of trust that the job will be done in an effective way.

> *Charlotte (TM, Agency 3): The inter-team working, last year on [client name] specifically, there was a bit of friction between us and the production team, who were trialling new ways of working which we weren't really informed about. They had a couple of more junior members leading what was a really, really big project for us. And in hindsight, it didn't work as well as perhaps they'd have liked it to. So at times it did get quite....not a blame culture...we don't have a blame culture here, but it was harder than usually is.*

Project team members therefore need to understand what other team members do – and that understanding has got to be more than 'that person creates a website, that person builds a stage, that person manages the client' – it's got to have more depth, and to be

more nuanced. Particularly useful therefore is an understanding of the process of each task,

and how long tasks can take in order to collaborate on projects. This helps build empathy

among the interdependent teams.

> *Jenna (TM, Agency 2): Because it's that empathy, because they [the creative team] sit there having to emphasize with the world to then come up with an idea that will speak to them. Whereas we [the account / marketing teams] are more about time constraints, and this is the deadline and so a lot of the time, they're in this land and we're in this land. [moving hands to show two separate places}. It's like they think that you aren't really understanding their space, so they want to reject you and stay somewhere that this is encouraged, and that is a safe space for them.*

Empathy encourages team members to participate in the sharing of leadership. So, for

example, it is useful for the account managers to have clear understanding of the creative

process and how long it takes to do certain creative tasks, and to allow the creative to set

boundaries and deadlines that reflect this, which is an example of leadership emerging from

an effective interactive process.

And on the other hand, this lack of contextual understanding results in frustration

between teams – with team members feeling like other team members are letting the

project team down by not taking on leadership when they should.

> *Dave (LT, Agency 3): I think understanding of other people's job roles and understanding of other people's motivations. And it's really interesting. We've had a couple of projects that the end output was good and client was very happy with it. But the process was terrible - not in that we didn't produce stuff on time etc. But so many personal fallings out and if you were to look at how people felt through that process and in every single team, they all felt the same – 'I didn't get listened to, my view wasn't respected'. And that was the most common theme that went right across that and could have come from any single individual, in any single department - which shows this clearly something wrong with that.*

8.4.2   Open Communication Strategies
"We are all trying to get to the same goal, why isn't he trying to help me?" Jo, Agency 2

The need for good communication between team members became apparent to me

through the observation that communication across interdependent teams gets distorted

very easily if there is a lack of contextual understanding of co-worker's jobs or an

unwillingness to collaborate. Participants at Agency 2, in particular, place a clear focus on

the importance of inter-department communication as can be seen in the quotes in table

8.12 below:

Table 8.12: Participants views of the importance of inter-departmental communication and their individual roles within it

Louise (TM, Agency 2): When you talk about inter-departmental relationships that is one of my passion points because I've done the account side of things and I've also done the creative and quite often in agencies, as I'm sure you are aware, there can be a bit of friction there because the demands that need to happen and maybe people in different roles have different approaches to things or personality types are different, which makes you good at the things you do do but then when you maybe come to communication that's where there can be differences
Tim (TM, Agency 2): There is a lot of cross working with people in different teams; communication is really key so obviously people get busy and that communication drops a bit, and that can cause friction where it wouldn't have had to. I think part of that is knowing the world of events, in that sometimes you've got to respond and there isn't much time, and therefore people get busy and therefore someone doesn't get the sort of notice that everyone would have liked to have given them and they can get a bit miffed.
Phoebe (TL, Agency 2): I mean obviously there are politics and there are challenges with the communication, sometimes between the creative team and our guys [Accounts team] but there is always someone that you can sit down and be like 'right, this is really pissing me off, let's try and sort this out'.

Good communication formed the basis for establishing and maintaining relationships

between the team members. These communications encouraged the flow of information

and the generation of knowledge between team members. During my research, I asked

each participant to tell me what they thought leadership meant – and, whilst there were

commonalities such as being inspiring, motivational, visionary, leading from the front – the

differences were notable. For example, those who felt leadership was all about setting a

vision for the organisation, didn't think that leading by example was important and those

who felt that leaders needed to be hands on and motivational didn't necessarily agree that

the organisations vision was of central important. It is perhaps obvious that leadership

means different things to different people – my research highlighted that this variance in perception of what leadership is resulted in communication becoming critical in order for people to be willing to share in leadership, and accept leadership from others.

However, it became clear that good communication wasn't enough – in order for communication to flow well in these relationships, individual team members needed specific communication strategies. They needed to acknowledge that each project team is different and therefore they need to consider, on a practical level, how they would communicate in order to work well together. This included making decisions about how often they would meet, what their preferred method of communication was, where they would sit when working on the project. This strategizing of communication processes allowed individuals to develop a set of 'common practices' that ensured that they worked well together.

Whilst good open communication was clearly at the heart of the ability to work together, what was clear was that it was also the first thing to break down when team members were under specific pressures. What illuminated this link for me was discussions around how busy periods during project life cycles can cause communication problems between interdependent teams. These life cycle pressure points can create blocks in the way communication happens and, as the pressure mounts, communication breaks down – see table 8.13 for some discussions of this.

Table 8.13: Participants discuss project life cycles and the impact on communication

Andrew (TL, Agency 3): the account team may have an expectation of how they should go about doing something but the culture here is very much more like 'right, I've got a problem - you know, get your problems out and let's work out how to fix it.' And a lot of time freelancers come from a place where they are expected to solve stuff immediately and so it's that problem solving culture and communication culture which can sometimes be a bit of a clash. And a lot of the time most problems are people because people aren't being understood. I think that's one of the - well, not like a personal mantra because

that's a bit trite but probably, if there is an issue, it's because people aren't communicating particularly well. And for us that then translates into managing client expectations. It's hard not to have this conversation without veering into management speak [laughs]. I mean that's a lot of the role, just making sure people are clear on what they're expecting and communicating that well and consistently.

Hayley (TM, Agency 2): I think that, especially in silly season - between April and August, we are just getting stuff out of the door. We lose all awareness of what we are doing, how we are doing it or why we are doing it…I think it is just a case of getting shit out the door and I feel like that's when you can do as much management training as possible [around being good communicators], but it just stops happening

Jo (TL, Agency 3): Yeah, I think everyone feels stressed in this industry. A huge amount. We are always under tight deadlines and things like that. But it's the way that the everyone handles it that is the most important thing. Yes, they'll be a certain frantic pace and everyone will stay later, but it's more about, for me, trying to spread that workload, you know, offering support for team members, looking for other resources elsewhere in the building that can help if they need to. So yeah, it's all about how you deal with those tense times that really makes up the team atmosphere and things like that.

So when under pressure, individuals can easily stop communicating and revert to the transactional relationships described earlier. And when that happens, team members become unwilling to share knowledge or take on leadership of the project.

8.4.3   Willingness to participate

Throughout the data collection and analysis process, it was clear that shared leadership wasn't something that happened to people – it was an active process, in which individuals needed to be willing to participate. As noted throughout this chapter, none of the macro or meso conditions listed here were effective if the individual team members were not willing to participate in them. As a result, many of the conditions presented here come with caveats – participants were clear that, if they didn't feel supported or valued, then they wouldn't take that leap towards ownership, responsibility and thus the sharing of leadership.

During my observations, I noted that power may be evident in the degree of participation available to individuals, and during my interviews, I asked participants if they

felt empowered to participate in the sharing of leadership. Whilst there was recognition

that it was good to empower people, in order for them to participate they needed to be

valued, supported and that they were part of a team – the quotes in table 8.14 below,

demonstrate this:

Table 8.14: What makes you willing to participate in leadership?

Lisa (TM, Agency 2): It's so supportive [in this organisation] - I think it's the kind of place that I've always felt that if something went wrong, if my direct manager, or even if Camilla above her, even if they weren't available and I had to call up someone completely random and just be like 'I really need your help because this is all going wrong' - especially when you are on site. I feel like someone would come, or someone would be like 'right, what can we do to help you. Who can we call in?' It's very much like that, everyone is in it together. But I suppose it's because everyone has probably had their own projects where they have been in that situation. So I think it's the mutual understanding of we've all been there when we need help and ultimately, it's all one team, one dream.
Matt (LT, Agency 2): And I think they go a long way to create a really pleasant environment to work in because I think the smart people of the world know that happy workers are good workers. So there is a lot invested in the social side, the space, the parties, the socials. You know, they are all things that they don't have to do - or to that degree - but do do. So that makes you feel valued. And as we know, purpose and feeling valued is actually above salary for mid weight upwards. The more important factors are value and happiness.

Here we can see then that the conditions at a macro and micro level were impacting on

whether individuals felt able to participate in the sharing of leadership, and that some of the

most persuasive reasons to participate were cultural. Pearce et al. (2010) suggested that

future research should look at potential resistance to shared leadership, one of which may

be cultural. They suggest that the power distance might be important here – if people come

for a culture where the power distance is high then they are less likely to grasp the notion of

shared leadership. The experiential agency teams observed here included members with a

variety of backgrounds and age, experience, and personality, and with traditional

hierarchical structures, including leadership teams and formal team managers. All of these

aspects undoubtably contributed to perceptions of power within these organisations.

Indeed, participation in the sharing of leadership may well be an indicator of power –

however, whilst I note here that the influence power has on relationships at work, it was

beyond the scope of this research to explore the role of power in detail.

8.5   Concluding remarks

This chapter has described the nine antecedent conditions that emerged from the

data analysis process. I have also used this chapter to explore how these labels came about,

and to explain how subsequent data collection sessions facilitated the triangulation of

original conclusions and solidify these concepts into the four macro level, the two meso and

the three micro level conditions described here. This research has identified four macro

conditions that are necessary in order to encourage collective responsibility and the

development of shared leadership within the context of experiential agencies. In order for

leadership to be shared around the organisation, the leadership team act as gatekeepers,

creating the conditions that enable the sharing of leadership within an experiential agency.

This research has identified the need for leadership strategies that include empowering staff

and transparent communication to help employees to understand the goals, values and

visions of the organisation. By doing so, they ensure that the employees understand the

meaningfulness of their work, which increases motivation and engagement. These

conditions, facilitated by the leadership team, create settings in which employees become

willing to participate in leadership processes, despite not always being in formal leadership

positions.

In addition, two interdependent team conditions have been identified as enabling

shared leadership across the cross-functional teams in these organisations. These can be

summarised as a willingness to take a collaborative approach to projects with teams and

team members from other departments; having empathy for co-workers which is derived

from understanding of actual processes and procedures of other team's roles; developing

specific communication strategies for each project team and being an expert, whilst also

recognising and respecting other team members expertise.

Lastly, this chapter has noted that, whilst agency teams are inherently

interdependent, they are ultimately made up of individuals with different job roles and

responsibilities. This research has therefore identified three micro level conditions that

enable the sharing of leadership. At the core of these findings is that, to succeed in the

sharing of leadership, individual team members must be willing to participate in the actions

identified and be prepared to accept and undertake the responsibilities inherent in the

sharing of leadership. In addition, the research indicates that individuals must be willing to

take a collaborative approach to managing projects, and in doing so they must strive to have

an understanding of co-worker's responsibilities, so that their empathy aids collaboration.

As highlighted in chapter 5.5, these findings are the first to consider how shared

leadership emerges in the context of experiential agencies, and they therefore shed new

light onto the way in which project-based conditions influence the sharing of leadership. In

addition, these findings reflect a desire to provide a multi-level perspective of shared

leadership, which stems from both my social constructionist perspective and the belief that

leadership should not be considered through the lens of a single entity. I have sought,

therefore, to gather data that reflects the facilitating conditions at both the organisational

leadership team level, and within interdependent teams. In revealing that shared leadership

requires facilitation from the organisational leadership team and from teams and individual

team members, this research confirms the suggestions of Clarke (2012) and Pearce (2004)

that a multi-level view of shared leadership is necessary in order to fully understand how

shared leadership works.

In the next chapter, I take my findings one step further, through the identification of

two key categories that underpin the nine antecedent conditions identified thus far. In this

way, I continue to work towards giving the reader an understanding of the theory built from

the data.

9   THEORY BUILDING – TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS AND A SENSE OF BELONGING

9.1   Introduction

Over the next two chapters, I present the axial coding process that developed from

the nine antecedent conditions described previously into two distinct, but related,

categories. Both trust and a sense of belonging recurred throughout the dataset and, taken

together, they lead to the development of a theory of relational connections and the

emergence of shared leadership. Table 9.1 illustrates the concept development and

category refinement process and how that led to the development of theory. Strauss and

Corbin's (1998) axial coding was used to ask questions about the codes identified and to

think about the relationships between the codes in order to develop the categories

presented in this chapter (as suggested by Mills, Bonner, & Francis, 2006). I also used

Corbin and Strauss (2008) selective coding to explicate the 'story line' and establish theory

that is related to both the codes and the categories. Here, I was conscious also of Charmaz's

(2000, 2008, 2017) constructionist grounded theory and was reminded to move beyond the

surface level data, and to acknowledge both my influence over the data collection and my

interpretation of the analysis process throughout. The axial coding process and subsequent

category development, plus the selective coding will be explored in the next two chapters,

as I explain the process of developing the theory.

Table 9.1: Phases of data analysis and theory building

Chapter 8	Chapter 9	Chapter 10
Phase 1 – Open coding: establishing concepts	**Phase 2 – Developing categories - axial coding**	**Phase 3 - Theory building**
Macro, Meso and Micro antecedent conditions	**Key relational connections**	

- Transparency - Empowering staff - Collaborative approach - Contextual understanding - Open communication strategies	⇒ **Trusting relationships**	⇒ Shared leadership as a lateral and horizontal influence process. ⇒ Multi-level antecedent conditions contribute to relational connections ⇒ The emergence of shared leadership occurs through trusting relationships and a sense of belonging ⇒ **Relational connections underpin the emergence of shared leadership**
- Maintain the cultural identity - Enhance meaningfulness of work - Networks of expertise - Willingness to participate	⇒ **Sense of belonging to team**	

9.1.1   *Memo-writing and theoretical sampling*

After the open coding processes outlined in the previous chapter, I began to work towards final category development – I started this process with memo-writing which I used in two ways. The first use of memos was as reflective practice – I wrote field notes and a reflective diary about each interview / observation after I had completed them, and then used these notes as aide memoirs as I analysed the transcriptions. This led to memo writing and the first few stages of coding as described in the previous chapter. I also used memo-writing as an intermediate stage between coding and theory development as suggested by Charmaz (1996). For me, memo-writing was particularly useful in considering whether the codes were related to each other, and to elaborate on the assumptions I was making under each of the codes. This allowed me to look for patterns within my data which went across

all three cases (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Once I had established my categories, I did two things – firstly, I continued to use memo-writing as a way of identifying the characteristics of my category (Charmaz, 1996) and charting how the category developed. Secondly, I engaged in theoretical sampling. Theoretical sampling is the process of collecting more data in order to develop the emerging theory (Charmaz, 2014). I intentionally went back to past interviewees to present my findings to them and to ask more focussed questions on the categories I had developed in order to both validate, or refute, my original thoughts and to capture different dimensions. Here, I was following Charmaz's (1996) suggestion that it is better to leave theoretical sampling until later in the research process so that the relevant issues and significant data have already emerged. Both memo writing and theoretical sampling are included in the discussion of the category development below.

In addition to the description of the category development, I have used this opportunity to draw comparisons with the relevant literature. These discussions will enable the reader to see how my findings fit with the wider research landscape and to illustrate how my work contributes to existing knowledge. This chapter therefore answers the following research objective: 'What contextual factors impact and are impacted by the sharing of leadership?'

9.2 Category development - Trusting relationships

"Unlike any other marketing discipline, good experiential agencies put great trust in their people and ask them to take on considerable personal responsibility for the successful outcome of an event. This is achieved in often highly pressurised and dynamic environments." James (LT, Agency 2)

The research revealed that trust was a key factor in the emergence of shared leadership. Without trust, team members are unwilling to participate in the sharing of leadership

responsibilities. I argue that, in this context, trust is related to five of the conditions

described in the previous chapter:

- **Macro (organisational) level:** Empowering staff; transparent communication;

- **Meso (team) level:** collaborative approaches

- **Micro (individual) level:** contextual understanding;. Open communication strategies

Shared leadership suggests that leadership behaviours can be exhibited by any team

members, and the leadership that occurs is an influence process in which members seek to

motivate, share knowledge and support other group members in order to achieve team

goals (Pearce et al., 2007; Scott-Young et al., 2019). It follows, then, that I have found that

the relationships that exist within the team are an essential aspect of enabling shared

leadership to emerge. Specifically, I have found that the relationships in the context of

experiential agencies need to be built on trust in order for members to willingly engage in

shared leadership of a team. Put simply, the relationships in these organisations are

constructed through trust, and without trust there is little evidence of team members'

willingness to influence and direct – to lead - each other. Andrew (TM, Agency 3), was

asked whether trust mattered to him at work – his response to the question demonstrates

this centralisation of trust in an experiential agency:

> *Absolutely – the role, the agency and the industry place great pressures on any individual to go 'above and beyond', time after time. The success of a project and in many cases direct amount of work required from your role is dependent on others delivering how and what they say they will and consistently making the judgement calls within those high pressure situations.*

The concept of trust as a key factor in my research emerged when I considered what each of

the identified concepts actually meant in terms of the ability for shared leadership to occur.

The more analysis that was undertaken, the clearer it became that there were links between

the conditions of enhancing the meaningfulness of work, transparency, open

communication strategies and contextual understanding. I noted that these links were

often related to the employee feeling that the organisation would perform in ways that

were beneficial – or at least not harmful – to them. There were therefore summarised this

as relationships that are based on organisational trust - this theme recurred throughout the

dataset and helps to explain why team members are willing to share leadership.

9.2.1   What is organisational trust?

Organisational trust has long been recognised as an important factor in a successful

business. Defining trust is complex, and there is no universally accepted definition of trust

(Castaldo, Premazzi, & Zerbini, 2010; Dietz & Hartog, 2006). There are, however, two critical

elements that are common across all definitions of organisational trust. These are the

willingness to be vulnerable to another party, and to have positive expectations towards the

behaviours of others (Costa, 2003; Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995; Rousseau, Stikin, Burt,

& Carmerer, 1998). Trust, in an organisational context, is therefore related to the way

individuals attribute other people's intentions and the motives underlying their behaviour

(Castaldo et al., 2010; Costa, 2003; Lewicki & Bunker, 1996).

Shared leadership theory proposes that well connected networks allow shared

leadership to emerge because their connectedness facilitates the awareness of individual

expertise and because they create 'climates of trust' and supportive environments that

allow individuals to take on informal leadership roles (Friedrich et al., 2016; Friedrich et al.,

2009). In work that looks specifically at whether there is a relationship between collective

forms of leadership and trust, scholars have suggested that the act of leadership among

team members improves trust (Drescher et al., 2014). The more members influence each

other, and accept influence from one another, the more they are likely to accept that other

team members are consistently doing their job well. These positive judgements on competency often result in positive social exchanges, and this is likely result in trust (Aime, Humphrey, Derue, & Paul, 2013; Drescher et al., 2014). In a recent meta-analysis, Wu et al. (2020) found that intragroup trust had a moderating role in improving the relationship between shared leadership and team outcomes.

The data in my study suggested that through the development of trusting relationships, team members were willing to engage in extra responsibilities in order to help each other and to achieve both team and organisational goals. As trust spreads throughout the organisation, co-operative and collaborative behaviour increases and these behaviours result in a willingness to participate in the sharing of leadership responsibilities, though there are cross cutting factors and conditions at both levels that either cultivate or disrupt the process. Trust was viewed as necessary at both an organisational level and at an interdependent team level – in other words, trust must flow both between and across an organisation and its members.

9.2.2   *How the identified conditions relate to trusting relationships*

In my research, conditions of transparency and team based collaborative approaches, contextual understanding, empowering staff and individual open communication strategies provided the foundation for trustworthy relationships in these agencies. These identified conditions are viewed as components that contribute to the overarching relational connections of trusting relationships that enables the sharing of leadership. This is contrary to some other definitions of trust (e.g. Rousseau et al., 1998) where co-operative behaviours, for example, are viewed as having an effect of trust, but is consistent with the work of scholars such as Costa (2003) and Ferrin and Dirks (2002) who outline that trust is related to the way individuals attribute other people's intentions.

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In the next section, I briefly discuss each of them in turn to demonstrate how I have

conceptualised these conditions as contributing to the development of trusting

relationships. I then discuss how my data indicated that trust is related to the development

of shared leadership. Throughout, I continue to relate the category development to extant

literature in order to provide the reader with a contextual understanding of my findings.

9.2.3   Open communication – being transparent and open communication strategies

I identified open communication as a factor that affected the sharing of leadership at

macro (organisational), meso (team) and micro (individual) levels. When considering the

concept of open communication, it became clear that participants built their perceptions of

which colleagues they trusted based on how well communication flowed between them. At

the meso and micro level, the participants felt that trust was built through an understanding

of each other's roles and open communication strategies, specific to that team. Here's Paul

discussing why he trusts the people he works with and identifying what he thinks the key

issue is with a lack of trust:

> *Tim, (TM, Agency 2): It's all quite organic and there is a lot of cross working with*
> *people in different teams; communication is really key so obviously people get busy*
> *and that communication drops a bit, and that can cause friction where it wouldn't*
> *have had to. I think part of that is knowing the world of events, in that sometimes*
> *you've got to respond and there isn't much time, and therefore people get busy and*
> *therefore someone doesn't get the sort of notice that everyone would have liked to*
> *have given them and they can get a bit miffed.*

At the macro level, trust was built through the leadership team setting and guiding a vision

that enhanced the meaningfulness of the employee's work, and through transparent

communication and visibility within the business. A trusting environment was described by

the participants as one where employees felt they could communicate with the leadership

team without fear of repercussions, and where employees felt the organisational visions

and values were inclusive.

The development of the relationship between communication and trust became

apparent as much through the negative stories the participants told as through the positive

ones. For example, as noted in the previous chapter, it was apparent that it was important

to employees to feel that the leadership team was visible within the business and that they

could approach them to get support when necessary. But what was really insightful was

what happens without that approachability and visibility from the leadership team. Without

it, participants identified a feeling of disconnection, which created feelings of 'us' and

'them'. Here Phoebe (TL, Agency 2) had just been commenting on why open

communication is so important, and then she said:

> *You would expect to see a disconnect between what the senior people think and*
> *what the junior people, on the ground, think but here it's probably more closely*
> *aligned than in a lot of places.*

Whereas, for some of the employees at Agency 1, that disconnect was really clear, and

expressed in emotive and passionate language. Here's Caroline (TM, Agency 1) talking about

the leadership team:

> *I feel like they don't care about people of my level – I'm a project manager, what I do,*
> *say, anything – doesn't matter to them. There is still a divide.*

And here is Alice, (TM, Agency 1):

> *Interviewer: So, you would never be able to sit in front of somebody on the leadership*
> *team [to ask for help]?*
> *Alice: NO! Because you don't feel that safety in speaking to them. In the knowledge*
> *that you don't know if 1) they'll listen and understand and 2) there is still that thing*
> *where they are the leaders – you daren't say anything.*

So it appears that if there is a lack of transparency from the leadership team, then that

creates issues with trust. As described in the previous chapter, transparency is linked to

openness and is a relational action that encourages accountability in the organisation. What

became apparent was that when employees perceived that there was transparency in the

operational decision-making and processes, there was increased levels of trust. This echoes

the work of previous studies, which have shown that if organisational transparency

increases, then the level of trust and accountability also improves (Jahansoozi, 2006). As

Jahansoozi (2006) points out "For collaboration to occur the parties involved need to be

able to trust each other and know that what was agreed upon is actually happening" (p.

943). Communication behaviours such as feedback exchange and establishing

communication and collaboration norms have also been identified as key to the emergence

of collaborative leadership (Friedrich et al., 2014; Kramer & Crespy, 2011) and

communication has been described as both a prerequisite and the life blood of shared

leadership (Friedrich et al., 2016).

Research into the relationship between communication and shared leadership is still

limited and, whilst my findings echo the handful of studies that have recognised

communication as key to sharing leadership, I have furthered this by connecting

communication to the existence of trusting relationships in organisations. In particular, my

findings are among the first to highlight how important two-way communication is to

shared leadership. My research has highlighted that communication exchanges are

important both between team members and between employees and leadership teams.

This is a critical understanding, given the importance placed on communication by previous

scholars (Friedrich et al., 2016).

9.2.4   Empowering staff

My results have highlighted the need for a multi-level understanding of the

relationships and connections that form within organisations – it important to understand

relationships between the organisation and the individual and the relationships between

individuals. This intersection is demonstrated by the link between organisational trust and

individual trust, where it is important to note that this trust must flow in two directions. The

leadership team must trust and empower the team members to do their work – through

removal of bureaucratic processes and through the provision of supportive, guiding

environments - and the team members must also trust the leadership team. This employee-

based trust emerges from the transparent communication just discussed and the knowledge

that empowerment is offered alongside the necessary support. Martin, MD of Agency 1,

summarises the link between transparency, empowerment and trust:

> *I think what broke down most of all in this business was trust. We got to the point where - well as I said, we were mirroring those other businesses. We'd become very corporate. There was a lot of red tape…And yeah that whole element of trust in our teams to deliver. When you tie people up in red tape, what you're saying is 'I don't trust you and your own instincts here. You've got to abide by my rules' - and that takes away people's creativity. And their ability to think. Also it means that they don't take responsibility for what they're doing.*
>
> Whilst employees reported the changes involved in establishing this Y as unsettling

at first, they now feel that they do have ownership and responsibility – and, ultimately, that

they are trusted to do their work (see table 9.2).

Table 9.2: Employees feeling trusted

Clare (TM, Agency 1): There's a lot of trust in people who work at [Agency 1] to kind of get on with it and do it and which is nice and I think that's something to kind of get your head around begin with. I feel like the changes at [Agency 1] have made me feel valued as an employee and trusted to do my job
Alice (TM, Agency 1): Well personally, like you'll go above and beyond when you need to because you know it's fine because they respect you for doing it. And if you need that half afternoon off, it's just there - the flexibility. You can have it. It does help. Mentally it helps.

And Caroline (TM, Agency 1) explains why it is important to have open communication

within her own team – and how that open communication makes her feel that she can trust

her partners to support her in doing her job well.

> *Yeah. I think trust is a big part of it, and again, it's on my team - is everything's an open conversation. So the way we all sit round the desk. Everyone's always chipping*

in all the time. So it might be that I'm advising someone on something but then actually someone else chips up and I feel like, because my issue personally is always I don't have much confidence in myself, so even though I know what to do, I'll ask people 'is that the right way to do' because I don't trust my own instinct or whatever. But then I actually feel like I can do it because I know if I'm telling someone this is what you should do, I know someone will chip in and wouldn't let me go down the wrong route if that makes sense? So I trust other people to let me make the right decision and stop me doing the wrong one if that makes sense."

My analysis therefore identified that when the organisations allowed employees freedom within their roles, and encouraged them to take responsibility and ownership, then employees used expressions that related to trust and being valued. This suggests that when organisations take steps to empower staff, staff feel trusted by their employers and are willing to take on additional responsibility. In the quote below, Mandy (TM, Agency 2) had been talking about the freedom the organisation had awarded her with, and how she could shape her role as she saw fit. She saw this as an allowance to take risks, and not have those risks come back to haunt her if they went wrong.

Leadership is about just being there for guidance, and have an ear of experience and authority in what they do so that you trust them that they won't leave you in the lurch. Kind of like a good parent I guess, I don't know. They don't want to micro-manage you but you don't want them to disappear either.

In addition, for empowerment to work, staff must be willing to trust the organisation – empowerment will only work if the employee feels that it is safe for them to accept additional responsibilities and that ownership will not be tied to outcomes. In other words, staff need to trust that the organisation will support them when things go wrong. Clare (TL, Agency 1), talked to me about what happened when an event she was running went wrong, and highlighted how important it was that the organisation supported her in a situation in which she had been given responsibility, but had made a mistake:

An example would be that I had a shocker of an event which went horribly wrong. These things happen. I learnt a lot from the leadership team during their reaction, in that the way they approached the problem - yes, they got senior people involved but

there was never any blame and I think that's quite important because it was my fault [laughs a lot] within reason. But there were there was little; there was no blame. It was kind of like 'we're here to support you'. I was thinking 'please don't sack me'. And they were like 'no, it's fine. Don't worry'.

The importance of support from the organisation was echoed at the other agencies too:

Lisa (TM, Agency 2): Oh yeah, it's so supportive at here - I think it's the kind of place that I've always felt that if something went wrong, if my direct manager, or even if [the person] above her, even if they weren't available and I had to call up someone completely random and just be like 'I really need your help because this is all going wrong' - especially when you are on site. I feel like someone would come, or someone would be like 'right, what can we do to help you. Who can we call in?' It's very much like that, everyone is in it together.

It was these discussions around how important it was to feel support from both the team and the organisation that led to the conceptualisation of the idea that empowering staff was related to the concept of trusting relationships in the context of shared leadership.   In line with previous studies such as Pearce et al. (2008) and Clarke (2012), my findings suggest that vertical empowering leadership is essential for developing shared leadership in teams. However, the results presented here go beyond these, and also beyond those of Fausing et al. (2015a) and Wassenaar and Pearce (2012), who suggested that empowering leadership is an antecedent for shared leadership, by highlighting that the relationship between empowerment and shared leadership is one of trust. I have suggested that having an empowering leadership team that implements initiatives that encourage and empower team members to lead themselves and each other is an important element in creating trusting relationships within the workplace.   Further, the findings indicate that trusting relationships, in which employees feel empowered to take on additional responsibilities, will allow shared leadership to emerge.

9.2.5 Contextual understanding and collaborative approaches

In the previous chapter, analysis showed that one of the reasons participants were reluctant to work together, or to accept leadership from other teams was that they associated it with a certain risk – that the other team member might let them down by not doing their job properly. However, it was also evident that when the participants were able to express empathy for each other – based on a contextual understanding of the other person's job role – then they were more willing to support each other and to trust that the other person would get the job done. It was also noted how important collaboration was in building relationships within the teams – a collaborative approach ensured that the teams felt part of one united project team and that this type of approach to working encouraged employees to get to know each other. This quote from Jane (TL, Agency 2) demonstrates the central importance of trust to relationships in the workplace:

> *Trust is one of the most important things in any relationship be it a work colleague, work team, or personal relationship too. You have to trust that your colleagues will deliver what they need to so you don't get exposed, screwed over or end up being left picking up the pieces. Sometimes people don't deliver how you feel they should have, but that's part of learning that individuals have different skills, and just because they do something not in your way, doesn't mean it's the wrong way. If someone doesn't do their part of the deal, then the trust is challenged, and it can take a while to rebuild that – causing some micro-management or be pushing my oar into everything / more than I should have to. At my level, you have to trust you team or you'd end up doing all the work yourself which just isn't humanly possible.*

In research which reached similar conclusions, Small and Rentsch (2010) found that team members must be willing to cooperate with each other in order for shared leadership to exist. They found: "A willingness to cooperate and work interdependently with others and to influence and be influenced by other team members is likely to be associated with engaging in shared leadership" (p.205). This confirmed the earlier conceptual work by Day et al. (2004) who suggested that shared leadership can create a pattern of reciprocal

influence between team members, and this reciprocal influence helps to develop and

enforce existing relationships – so team members share leadership responsibilities when

members actively assist and support each other.

In this research, the importance of team-based relationships, which are formed

through an understanding of the processes of other's roles and a willingness to work

together in a collaborative way, was clear. During the data collection, the theme that the

participants kept returning to was trust – participants suggested that the success of

collaborative relationships was because they trusted their project partners. As the data

collection continued, this concepts of trust and collaboration were explored further to try to

unpick why it matters and how it impacted on participants' willingness to share leadership.

A good example of the way that trust underpinned collaborative working occurred during

my second visit to Agency 3, when participants discussed how they learnt to trust their

colleagues over time. They felt that the more they got to know their colleagues, the more

they understood both them on a personal level and the work they do. Here's a discussion

with Andrew and Jo (Agency 3) that highlights how this familiarity supports the

development of trust:

> *Andrew: "A lot of it is down to trust isn't it? And that I know a lot of the time that only comes about if you have worked with somebody for a long time and you've been delivering work for a long time. In that scenario is easier to trust people, because you are right, a lot of the time you just have to take it as read that they're doing their job properly*
> *Jo: Yeah that is hugely important. It's the most important thing. When you get it, right? We will always have favourite people to work with, because you trust them. And that is that is the biggest word in it for me. It's great when you've got people working on projects with you that you trust and you know will just get on with stuff.*
> *Interviewer: And I guess the main point is exactly that - that came across so strongly in all of the interviews across all of the agencies that you have to trust people. So I guess my point is what creates that trust?*
> *Jo: It's familiarity - for sure, that's a huge part of that."*

So here we can see that working together over a long period of time creates a trusting environment. We might have expected that when these project teams worked together over a long period of time, one person would be awarded a more formal leadership status but actually what participants felt was the opposite of this – the more familiar they were with team members and the more secure and trusted they felt within a team, the more likely it was that they would be willing to share leadership responsibilities.

In related empirical studies, both Wang et al. (2014) and Carson et al. (2007) found that the passage of time led to the emergence of shared leadership because of team members' interactions, mutual influence and negotiation. In their longitudinal study of university student groups Fransen et al. (2015) also found that the longer teams worked together, the more leadership was shared. However, they specifically related the increased sharing of leadership over time to the attributes of competence and warmth. Fransen et al. (2015) postulated that these attributes might develop between team members as they got to know each other. Studies show, therefore, that team members require time to develop an understanding of each other's skills, personality and knowledge, and so it follows that mature teams will be more willing to engage with shared leadership (Avolio, Jung, Murray, & Sivasubramaniam, 1996). The findings reported in this study therefore add to this body of work to the body of work and contributes further by indicating that, as teams mature, feelings of trust develop and it is this trust that forms the foundations for the sharing of leadership.

9.2.6   *Examining the relationship between trust and shared leadership*

My research has shown that when team members trust each other, and trust the organisation that they are working for, they display a willingness to engage in shared leadership. These two exchanges at Agency 1, one with an employee and one with a

member of the leadership team, illuminate the relationship between trust and shared

leadership and show that, in this context, trust is a driver for employees to be willing to take

on shared leadership responsibilities.

> *Clare (TM, Agency 1): "There's a lot of trust in people who work at [Agency 1] to kind of get on with it and do it and which is nice…Trust is a massive part of working here; I feel valued as an employee and trusted to do my job. And that makes me want to do a better job, to take on more responsibility, to be a good team member and to take charge when I need to."*

And the leadership team at Agency 1:

> *Martin: "That whole element of trust in our teams to deliver. When you tie people up in red tape, what you're saying is 'I don't trust you and your own instincts here. You've got to abide by my rules' - and that takes away people's creativity. And their ability to think. Also it means that they don't take responsibility for what they're doing. Because they're in this hierarchical structure of blame, that goes all the way up to the top. It's very easy to do that. But this model of business doesn't work well like that."*

The data in this study showed that through the development of trusting relationships,

individuals were willing to engage in extra responsibilities to help other team members in

order to meet both organisational and team goals.   As trust spread throughout the

organisation, co-operative and collaborative behaviour increased and these behaviours

resulted in a willingness to participate in the sharing of leadership responsibilities. This

expands on the findings by Hoch (2014) who identified employee integrity (which she

equates to responsibility and trustworthiness) as an antecedent of shared leadership. She

concluded that generally the sharing of team members' unique knowledge is more likely in

teams where members are higher in trustworthiness. Hoch's research has highlighted that

integrity is important - my research has furthered this by concluding that trust encourages

additional responsibility within employees. My findings have shown that if participants felt

trusted by team members, they would exhibit different behaviours and be encouraged to

take on further leadership responsibilities. In a conversation with Andrew (agency 3), for example, I noted that he felt constrained by his formal role and would like the freedom to have more input throughout the project, which he does have if he trusts the project partners:

> *A lot of it feels like it's coming back to that 'you as your in-role behaviour' and the behaviour of communications outside of that. And actually at sometimes, there is more trust in the relationships, so you can divert your non-role behaviour. It's almost like I can park being production director, to have a quick chat with Jo about a project that is just saying 'I think we should probably do this, and I know you can't do that' but blah blah blah. And whether or not sometimes those lines were a bit too blurred and some people find it harder and easier to kind of step outside of that. Do you know what I mean? That idea that when you are all in the kick-off, everybody is reverting to form and I am expected to respond in certain ways. But actually outside of that context, I can say 'right guys, come on'.*

A review of the literature has identified that conceptually, scholars such as Bligh et al. (2006); Pearce and Conger (2003) consider trust as an important contributor to motivation to share leadership. Four empirical studies have been identified that focus on the relationship between trust and shared leadership. The findings of Robert Jr and You (2017) indicate that the more a team relies on shared leadership, the more likely its team members have followed through on leadership commitments. Thus, they argue, shared leadership facilitates the creation and sustainment of trust in individual team members. Research by Drescher et al. (2014) also suggests that teams rely less on shared leadership when their members are not fulfilling their leadership roles and responsibilities and therefore that shared leadership contributes to the emergence of trust over time. And lastly, the work of Bergman et al. (2012) suggested that when team members have demonstrated their trustworthiness to their teammates and their willingness to trust their teammates, high levels of shared leadership were identified. Lastly, in research into project teams, Small and Rentsch (2010) found trust to be an antecedent for shared leadership. Their findings

conclude that a high level of trust within a group is positively associated with the team members' willingness to take the risk of engaging in shared leadership.

My findings align with work Drescher et al. (2014) and a meta-analysis by Wu et al. (2020) – both of which found that trust between groups has a positive impact on the sharing of leadership. In my research, participants indicated that by accepting shared leadership, team members are signalling they trust each other. As Rod, (TM, Agency 3), suggests:

> *What comes to mind is probably, erm, vision, philosophy, trust - as in you have to be legitimate, you have to have some sort of embedded trust from other people. You know, there's some sort of self-confidence probably, but also the confidence you are able to put into your team.*

Whilst these studies all indicate that shared leadership and trust develop from interpersonal interactions – as I do in this study - they all look at trust as an outcome of shared leadership. This is confirmed by the recent meta-analysis of Wu et al. (2020), which suggests that intragroup trust is a moderator between shared leadership and positive team outcomes. For these scholars, shared leadership begets trust. My research, whilst not disputing this, follows an alternative perspective. The data from this study suggests that trust facilitates shared leadership and my findings therefore indicate that when there are high levels of trust between team member and between individuals and leadership teams, then team members are more willing to participate in shared leadership. My research therefore adds weight to previous research that identifies trust as important to shared leadership by confirming that - in the context of experiential agencies – familiarity, understanding and a willingness to collaborate were key drivers for the emergence of trusting relationships, and therefore the sharing of leadership.

Jane (TL, Agency 2) summarised some of the key points developed in this chapter in the quote below:

Communication is the MOST important thing. I over communicate to the point of annoyance probably but information sharing is power. You want the junior members of the team to understand the whole project in order to be able to deliver against their areas to the best of their ability. If they are left in the dark, or working in silo, then they won't have the passion or desire to deliver to the standard required. If you understand what the whole team is trying to achieve and how your part fits in, then you can get a sense of achievement from the whole project rather than just your little part / contribution. Sharing information also helps to build up trust. If I am transparent with the team, then they will be so with me. It shows I have nothing to hide and will always be honest with them (sometimes too honest) and that I expect the same in return.

Here, Jane syntheses the importance placed on communication, transparency and collaboration. What was particularly interesting was how Jane connected these conditions with the development of trusting relationships and also with a sense of belonging to the project as a whole – this second point is explored further in the next section, where I present and discuss the second identified category, which relates to the importance of a sense of belonging to enabling shared leadership.

9.3   Category development – sense of belonging

"A sense of belonging to the organisation - and even a team belonging - is important" Rod (TM, Agency 3)

My research revealed that the connective conditions, facilitated by leadership teams and team members, result in a co-constructed sense of belonging, and this sense of belonging is an important factor in the emergence of shared leadership. I argue that in this context, a sense of belonging is related to four of the conditions described in the previous chapter:

- **Macro (organisational) level:** Enhance the meaningfulness of work; Maintain an organisational cultural identity;

- **Meso (team) level:** Networks of expertise;

- **Micro (individual) level:** Willingness to participate.

As already described, it was apparent that trust was a key factor – organisations needed to trust their employees and employees needed to trust the organisations they worked for. However, as I delved deeper, I began to realise that it wasn't just a climate of trust that was needed – the participants all talked about the importance of feeling like part of something, working towards one goal, being one team and even, in lots of examples, being part of a family. This then seemed to amount to more than trust – it appeared that employees wanted to work within trusting environments in order to feel committed to the work, but that the trust between leadership team and employees also influenced feelings of belonging within the organisation.

I first noticed that feeling part of the organisation was important to the employees during my first round of data collection. I wondered, at that stage, whether this amounted to psychological safety – a shared belief held by members of a team that the team is safe and they could talk about whatever they needed to talk about, or take any required risks (Edmondson, 1999). But as my data collection continued, I realised that the employees weren't talking about feeling safe or comfortable at work. Eventually, I began to see that some of the conditions I had identified in the data were helping the employees to feel part of what was going on in the organisation – to have a sense of belonging to both their teams and the organisation. During my second round of data collection, where I went back to each organisation to discuss potential findings, this sense of belonging was an area I explored in more detail. I was able then to ask, 'what makes you feel a sense of belonging to this group and why?' and this helped me to clarify the conditions outlined in this section. It became clear that shared leadership is constructed through a mutual sense of belonging amongst the organisation's members (Edwards 2011:p.304).

In the next section, I'll discuss the conditions that relate to this sense of belonging, and the relationship between a sense of belonging and shared leadership.

9.3.1   How the identified conditions relate to a sense of belonging

My research has indicated that a sense of belonging was important to the sharing of leadership because it helps team members to find meaning in their work – the more that the participants understood that there were links between their own personal goals and values and that of the team and the organisation, the more they were willing to accept additional responsibilities, which included the sharing in leadership. My findings suggest that this sense of belonging is constructed through a commitment to both the organisation and the team. It is fostered through a shared cultural identity in the workplace, inclusion in achieving the organisation's vision and an ability to see how your expertise contributes to the success of both the team and the organisation.

9.3.2   Enhancing the meaningfulness of work

My research has highlighted that an organisational vision helps employees to feel that their work is meaningful and that, when this is communicated well, it builds a sense of belonging between the employee and the leadership team. These feelings of belonging arise when employees are involved in the future direction of the business, and can make a difference – that their input matters, and that the leadership team are listening and responding to that input. A sense of belonging stems from a feeling of inclusion and an understanding of what the organisation is trying to achieve:

> *Charlotte (TM, Agency 3): Leadership means to me...erm...somebody that is inspiring, somebody that I can trust. I think there are a number of attributes that make somebody a great leader but our senior management team and the board here, I view as more the leaders - as opposed to my line manager, for example. They're very open. It's very integrated. It's you know, they lead by example and it's very friendly, down-to-earth - work hard / play hard and very inclusive*

The relationship between understanding why your work matters and trusting your

employees became apparent during discussions about what happens when that vision isn't

clearly expressed, or decisions are made without clear communication to the employees. In

a long discussion with one of the participants, we examined the relationship between the

leadership team's communication of business strategy and how engaged and committed

staff were doing their jobs:

> *Mary (TL, Agency 1): Because, in an agency like this - we are run by our clients and influenced by our clients and how well they're doing, how well the market is doing for the different sectors. Like, you know, we need to be aware of what's happening. So I think from a leadership point of view, for Agency 1 as a business, I think it's important that they stay aware and stay on the button, and adapt and change as needed. I'm not saying change every week, because we wouldn't know what was going on, but to be aware, to see what's happening and to communicate - I think that's a massive thing as well, for everybody. Here and lower down. They have been guilty in the past - they have, and they know they have, been guilty in the past of not communicating, or things happening and everyone knows the real reason why it's happened but they come out with another story and it's obviously not right. And that's when rumours start - people are thinking if they aren't saying this, what else are they not saying. I get they can't tell us every single thing because it's not relevant for everyone to know, but general updates are important- if we know why, or we know what's happening, it makes more sense. You get it. If you don't know, you don't feel engaged and its really like - well what else is changing? So I think especially in agency, in the industry that we in, you need to keep on it. And communicate out to people. And be honest. We are all grown-ups. We aren't daft. We know retail market is not great at the minute, so what are we doing? Don't try and hide the fact and pretend everything is okay, if actually we need to do something else instead"*

The notion of a unifying vision and sense of direction being important to shared leadership

has also been found in earlier research. Carson et al. (2007) examined shared leadership in

the context of a challenging creative task and identified that internal team environment is a

predictor of shared leadership (these findings are confirmed in the research of Serban and

Roberts (2016) and Wang et al. (2017). Carson et al., (2007, p. 1229) found that when a

team has an internal environment that shares "...a clear and unifying direction that is well

understood within the team, a strong sense of interpersonal support whereby team

members feel recognised and encouraged and a high level of voice and involvement within the team" it is able to develop the sharing of leadership responsibilities. The analysis of the data in this study supports this view, in that it clarifies that vision and support are important in terms of willingness to participate in shared leadership. The analysis presented here, however, extends the view beyond the internal environment to indicate that these things matter at an organisational level – a level Carson et al., would describe as external to the team. We can thus conclude that previous findings of the need for teams to have a clearly understood direction and a supportive environment can also apply to the need for organisations to provide clear direction within a supportive, open environment and that the leadership team can have a positive impact by ensuring that employees consider their work meaningful.

This conclusion that the vision set by the organisation matters has been discussed in depth in an exchange of letters during which the scholar Locke critiques Pearce and Conger's conceptualisation of shared leadership (Pearce et al., 2007). In these letters, Locke suggests that whilst leaders might consult on the vision, the CEO has to make the final choice. Pearce and Conger counter this by saying that there is rarely a single leader shaping the vision, and in fact most organisations now have partnerships at the top of the organisation. Here, I believe the scholars are actually agreeing – as Pearce and Conger suggest, the top designated leader of any organisation will have the final say, but what shared leadership implies is that the top leader would not make these decisions in an arbitrary 'commander' role but would instead try to reach a consensus decision. My findings marry the two responses, but ultimately agree with Locke's version of the role of vertical leadership in setting the vision. In the three case studies for my research, all had

leadership teams who collaborated to set the vision, but they also all had a CEO or a MD

who ultimately made the decisions. As James (LT, Agency 2) said:

> *I set the strategy and vision, which is based on a collaborative input from key departments, external insights and specifically the board of directors in each country. It's important to get multiple inputs and have a healthy discussion and collectively believe in the vision. However, one person needs to make the final decision to ensure the vision has clarity and is not a compromise of conflicting opinions.*

In terms of shared leadership theory, this suggests that Carson et al.'s (2007)

conceptualisation of a shared leadership continuum is likely to be evidenced in some

contexts. In my research, the continuum relates to the lower end of shared leadership

within the organisational team, where leadership is still shared, but power is more unevenly

distributed, and the higher end of shared leadership which exists within project teams, and

reflect a much more collaborative approach to leadership responsibilities. The data from

this research indicates, therefore, that when employees understand why their work

matters, they develop a sense of belonging within their organisation. It followed that they

were willing to take on additional responsibility and decision making (i.e. leadership) in

order to achieve organisational and team goals.

9.3.3   Network of expertise

Studies have shown that event organisations are reliant on a complex network of

internal and external stakeholders who are integral to the event success (O'Toole, 2011).

From the event literature it is clear that staging events requires often intense and dynamic

input and collaboration from a number of internal and external stakeholders (Bladen et al.,

2012; Getz, Andersson, & Larson, 2007; Parent, 2008; Tiew et al., 2015). My analysis showed

that highlighting the importance of expertise created a sense of belonging for the experts in

the agency. Emphasising unique skills, acknowledging each other's strengths and accepting

leadership from those with the correct knowledge all allowed employees to feel that their

contributions were valued and therefore that they belonged to the team and the

organisation. My analysis has identified that expertise is not just about an organisation

producing a network of experts, though this is, of course, important. More specifically,

however, it was being the expert and being recognised as the expert by other team

members that created a sense of belonging. My findings suggest, from an employee point

of view, working within a network of experts has two benefits. The first is that you feel

assured that someone with expertise will lead on their areas of knowledge during the

delivery of the project, and second is that you realise that your expertise is valued and

respected. When considered together though, what was apparent was that these networks

of experts fostered a sense of belonging for participants because it gave them a sense of

being part of a wider team, driving towards larger goals. In addition, it also allowed them to

share the burden of delivering the project. Here's Jo (TM, Agency 3) discussing why it's

great to be part of a team of experts:

> *Shared ownership of the problem I think. Shared ownership of knowing that you can*
> *talk to those other people who are mainly outside of your role, your perceived role in*
> *the business. Because everyone has good ideas and come from a different*
> *perspective. So it's almost that it gives you permission to be able to communicate*
> *those ideas to each other.*

My findings have suggested that if employees are recognised as experts and people

respected them, then they felt that they belonged both to the team and to the wider

organisation because they recognised the importance of their place within it. As Rod (TM,

Agency 3) says - "But my role - I hope I am important to the agency. I guess you judge that

by saying 'are my points taken?' are you being involved in key decisions". In this way, a

sense of belonging emerges from the network of experts, because employees feel that their

expertise is needed to deliver the project but that they also need to rely on other's expertise

because they don't have the necessary knowledge to complete all aspects of the project.

Here, Dave (TL, Agency 3) describes trying to create a network of experts and the benefits

that expertise brings to the business:

> *The principle of the X [initiative] was all born out of personal experience, when particularly [leadership team name] and myself and a creative at the time, because I was doing more of a strategic role then, it was all born out of how we thrived in that environment and how we grew things like [client name]. And we always called on that network of people around us, the rest of the agency - when we needed specialists or when we needed skill sets that we just didn't have. But ultimately, we had a very democratic team, you know, where we all took accountability for things. Usually unasked, usually unforced - but we knew what our role was in that process. But we worked as a very quick, dynamic team in those days. And so we just wanted to find a way to try to replicate that within our business.*

When shared leadership was evident, all the employees were considered experts – even the

receptionist, whose expertise might be to manage the reception, welcome important guests

and make room bookings. If he or she didn't do it – the thinking went – then who would.

That person was therefore considered just as important to the organisation's success as the

CEO or the lead sales person, as Mandy (TM, Agency 2) highlighted:

> *M: Yeah! They really do that here [*encourage everyone to take on leadership roles*], they really want people to be able to own something fully and know that thing inside out and say 'yeah I'm the person responsible for that, and I know everything about it. Even down to how the printer works, you know. And yeah, they really do empower people to do that, which is great. And it's more - maybe not leadership - but responsibility for junior staff as well? Because they want you to do it, but they also look to you to take that on.*

9.3.4   *Maintain an organisational cultural identity & individual willingness to participate*

As previous literature has revealed, the internal team environment necessary for

shared leadership is fairly well researched – it has been noted that, for example, a shared

purpose (Carson et al., 2007), team member integrity (Hoch, 2013) and task

interdependence increase the likelihood of teams sharing leadership (Binci et al., 2016; Nicolaides et al., 2014) and the importance of open, transparent communication in motivating employees to take on additional responsibilities (Friedrich et al., 2016; Friedrich et al., 2009). Some of these internal team conditions have also been identified in this research, and highlighted in chapter 8.

The external team environment, however, has had less attention in the extant literature. A number of authors have identified the need for empowering leadership from those in a formal leadership position (Carson et al., 2007; Clarke, 2012; Fausing et al., 2015b; Hoch & Kozlowski, 2012; Zhang et al., 2014) and others have noted that a supportive culture is an important contributor to the emergence of shared leadership (Binci et al., 2016).

The data in my research has suggested that the external team environment is as important to shared leadership as the internal one and that one particular aspect of the external environment has a significant impact on the participation in shared leadership – that of a shared identity within the organisation. In section 8.2.3, I described the importance of an organisational cultural identity in contributing to team members feeling like they belonged to something larger than their immediate teams. I also used the data to demonstrate that, when they had a strong sense of cultural identity, employees expressed a willingness to take on additional responsibilities, such as leadership. I found then, that the more that employees were able to express a commonly shared understanding of the organisation's values and characteristics, the more committed they were to achieving the organisation's goals. And, as I established in chapter 4, one effective way to achieve an organisation's goals is through the sharing of leadership.

I found particularly strong evidence of the importance of a strong organisational identity at Agency 2, where the leadership team explicitly – and regularly – communicated the organisational culture. An example of this expression of the culture can be seen on the 'About us" section of their website, which states: "We are a group of diverse, opiniated, passionate people that support each other unquestionably. A family in every sense" (Agency 2 website – reference withheld to maintain anonymity). All the employees that I talked to in Agency 2 referenced the word 'family' when they were asked about the organisational culture, though when I asked them to list the organisation's formally stated values or behaviours, most of them were unable to do so. This pervasive sense of being part of a family, although not pushed by the organisation, had arisen from a number of factors including the emphasis on social activities and a supporting, caring culture. Agency 2 then demonstrated an exemplifying case as to how a shared culture can create strong feelings of belonging in employees. However, these feelings of family – of a community – were present at all three organisations and my study has therefore highlighted the relationship between organisational identity and a sense of belonging within the organisation, as the quote below demonstrates:

> *Stewart (LT, Agency 3): I think there's an underlying challenge around agencies, who traditionally would have been the space in which there was much greater free rein in terms of the cultural values and identity. In those days there was the process of the timeline of a project which then allowed these sort of energy surges that would come in the delivering of the project. And then there would be a slight lull, and a regroup, and a refocus, and a realignment - and then you'd go on to the next. But because of the macro pressure of the economics and the supply chain being passed down, you are under this continual cycle - that 'quicker, faster, cheaper' cycle. And that does mean that if this cultural identity isn't embedded with a clear focus then things can probably unravel very quickly.*

I also examined the nature of the tasks involved in delivering live events, and whether they contributed to a sense of belonging. Participants felt that the live projects were the reason

that team relationships worked so well, and analysis of the data suggested that being in the

highly pressurised environment of delivering a live event project on site, away from the

wider support of the organisation created particular pressure points. This pressure of

delivery, along with the hours worked and being away from home for periods of time

bonded team members above and beyond what would be usual in a team environment.

This bond allowed people to create friendships, but more than that, it committed the team

members to a strong allegiance to the team, which resulted in team members always trying

to help the team to achieve the best outcomes. Here is Tim (TM, Agency 2) discussing the

particular pressure of on-site delivery and how you are always trying to help each other out:

> *And then there is sort of last minute panic - the curve balls you get dropped, when you are getting close to the wire and you've looked after your own stuff and you are managing, or making sure everyone is where they are meant to be. And then there is the other team members, and seeing if you can assist - so I'll help. For instance, the Cassette guys in the build-up - the client decided that they didn't like the words on something they had approved months before, and we'd printed 2,500 of them. So we had to have it redone. It was 4.30pm and the world cup football match that evening, and the event went live the next morning. So the printers weren't all in (laughs) and it's a four-day event starting tomorrow, it's not good. Just say no! But we got it done - the first batch of 600 arrived by 11am the following morning and then the remainder by the end of the day. I really like that - I enjoy that problem solving when you are helping out team mates and they've got enough to deal with, if you have got capacity then you help them out.*

And here, Jo (TL, Agency 3) describes how this help and support is driven by the pressure of

the live event.

> *And I think that one of the best things about this agency is that when you are in those situations, particularly on live projects - you are all in it together, you are never alone and you never feel like you are dealing with an issue by yourself. Whereas I think that outside of the large project's world, it can probably be a bit more isolating. Because you often don't need a big team to deliver the project….and I miss it. I miss that from live projects. [Despite the fact]..that you were stressed and tired and working really long hours. And on site, the big thing I think, is getting out of the office and spending time together.*

And Andrew (TL, Agency 3) said:

I am just wondering if that plays into that sense of belonging that comes from particular times within the agency that have led to a better sense of belonging. Whether it's particular projects that bred particular ethos and style of work. Because that core group of people were all part of the production team when there was loads of live event work. Everyone would be put on lots of different projects...and that was probably the core of our working relationship. And you have those kind of relationships probably based around a project - and I think that's something specific to events as well - is that the industry is so set up with everybody requiring everybody to go over, above and beyond, what they're necessary paid for [all laughs]. You know, we do a hundred hours a week during that live week. And that does build a certain vibe - it's like that solider / war mentality isn't it, even if it's watered down significantly

The multitude of similar responses about the strength of relationships within the organisations are revealing in several ways. Firstly, there was a sense then that the pressurised environment of live event projects allowed relationships to deepen within the teams, and this created a sense of belonging for all involved. Secondly, a common view amongst the participants of the study was that relationships within the project teams were stronger than any other working relationship, and that they lasted beyond the working day.

As Hayley (TM, Agency 2) said:

My friends are here! They are my mates. Genuinely, I've made friends to life. I've never ever worked somewhere this happens, but we choose to spend our weekends together. That's insane..... So yeah, I've got four best friends – and three of best friends work here, and the other one is coming to work here!

This discussion with Hayley suggested that she definitely felt a sense of belonging to the organisation – it mattered more to her than it just being a job. Her work shaped who she was, and gave her a sense of belonging that extended beyond her day to day tasks of work. Here then we can see that the participants were expressing more than just feeling like they were part of a team - the discussions were often on a much more personal and emotional level than would perhaps be expected in the workplace. For the participants then the notion of a shared organisational identity resulted in feelings of value, and I have equated this to

having a sense of belonging both to the workplace and to the people within the organisation.

9.3.5   *Examining the relationship between sense of belonging and shared leadership*

The data revealed that in experiential agencies, a sense of belonging is bounded by shared values and a common language, which is expressed through a shared cultural and collective identities and visions and values of the organisation. It is further enhanced though the networks of expertise that exist in these organisations, as they allow employees to share their own expertise and knowledge in a way that makes them feel an important part of both team and organisation. A sense of belonging in an organisation creates feelings of value for the employee, and when employees feel valued they express a willingness to take on additional responsibilities, such as leadership, in order to achieve goals. In this way, a sense of belonging can be seen as an essential connection among team members, in order to enable the emergence of shared leadership.

During the search of the literature, no extant empirical research was identified that noted the importance of a sense of belonging in facilitating shared leadership though, in related areas, some studies have highlighted the need for good relationships within the workplace. For example, it has been argued that when teams work interdependently and closely, then shared leadership is more effective (Nicolaides et al., 2014) and that a supportive environment is helpful in encouraging shared leadership because the team have all clearly understood the team's shared purpose and are willing to participate in the team and contribute equally to the team's goals (Carson et al., 2007; Pearce & Conger, 2003). Other researchers have drawn similar conclusions – for example Bligh et al. (2006) suggested that familiarity among team members is an important aspect of shared leadership within teams.

It is clear then that good relationships contribute to a sense of belonging within teams, which has been shown to be an important factor for the emergence of shared leadership - the results from my study corroborate this. My findings have shifted the focus further, however, by discussing how strong relationships within the workplace are associated with a sense of belonging. The data has shown that an individual's sense of belonging is important both in terms of their sense of belonging to their internal teams and also to the wider organisation. When participants demonstrated a sense of belonging in these relationships, they were more willing to engage with extra responsibilities, and the sharing of leadership.

Due to the overly positivistic nature of shared leadership studies and the infancy of the theoretical development, it is not surprising that shared leadership scholars have given little attention to a sense of belonging. However, it has also received very little attention in an organisational context in general, though it is widely covered in psychology and in community studies. A search of literature databases found only a handful of articles that explicitly focussed on a sense of belonging in the workplace and none were from leading journals. Jaitli (2013) suggested that the physical environment of a workplace (such as workspace layouts, on-site amenities) can affect behavioural outcomes and create a sense of belonging. This corroborates my findings relating to the importance placed on physically sitting near team members discussed in the previous chapter. Fernandez and Pappu (2015) suggested that a sense of belonging is a motivational factor for employees (though the study is very poorly expressed and doesn't explain what the authors meant by a sense of belonging). Internet searches resulted in a variety of industry sources that have covered it extensively (see for example Huppert, 2017; Learning, 2018).

9.4   Concluding remarks

This chapter has presented the two key factors that enable the sharing of leadership in experiential agencies. It has demonstrated how trusting relationships within these organisations was identified through close examination of the data and has explored how a sense of belonging influences the sharing of leadership within working groups at experiential agencies. I have presented the reader with data that supports the findings, and have – where possible – noted links to extant literature. The chapter has concluded that, alongside the concept of trusting relationships, a sense of belonging is another key factor needed for shared leadership to emerge in experiential agency teams. Whilst I found that there was some engagement with the notion of trust in teams and shared leadership within the literature, I have also identified that scholars have thus far not engaged in discussions around the relationship between a sense of belonging and shared leadership.

In the next chapter, I will describe the way in which the theory of relational connections and the emergence of shared leadership emerged from the data and will explore in more detail how it relates to the shared leadership literature that was outlined in chapter 4 of this thesis. In this way, I hope to provide the reader with a clear link between this theory and the extant primary research and other contributions to the development of shared leadership. Arriving at the end of the story of this research, I will outline the original contribution that this thesis makes and outline the study's limitation and possibilities for future research.

10 RELATIONAL CONNECTIONS AND THE EMERGENCE OF SHARED LEADERSHIP

10.1 Introduction

From the two refined categories of trust and sense of belonging, a theory of relational connections and the emergence of shared leadership began to emerge. This theory describes how the relational connections that enable the sharing of leadership are constructed through a sense of belonging in the workplace and trust between team members, as described in chapter 9. These two relational factors of trust and sense of belonging are facilitated through nine conditions which occur at three separate levels throughout the organisation, as described in chapter 8. The theory therefore reveals the relational dynamics that underpin shared leadership and gives a clear understanding of how these relational connections are constructed.

The developed theory shows that, for shared leadership to emerge across cross-functional working teams, organisations need to trust their employees and employees need to trust the organisations they work for. In addition, the theory indicates that team members need to feel a sense of belonging to the organisation and to the project team in order to enable the emergence of shared leadership.

- I started my research with a broad research aim: 'To explore how leadership is shared across cross functional teams in experiential agencies"

In turn, this included the following specific questions:

- What contextual factors impact and are impacted by the sharing of leadership?

- What can organisational leadership teams do to facilitate the sharing of leadership among cross-functional, interdependent teams?

- What conditions do interdependent teams need in order for team members to participate in shared leadership?

- What workplace conditions do individual team members need in order to participate in shared leadership?

I have answered the primary research question with the development of the theory of relational connections and the emergence of shared leadership, which includes consideration of firstly, the multi-level conditions as set out in my original objective and secondly, the construction of the relational connections needed for shared leadership to emerge in experiential agencies. In order to fully answer the research questions, I present below a summary of the theory, discussed with reference to the extant literature. I do so in order to provide the reader with a clear understanding of the theory and how it links to existing understandings of leadership and experiential agencies. Lastly, I reflect on how the process of conducting this research has led to a reconsideration of some of the key conceptualisations of shared leadership. I finish the chapter by offering a revised definition, which incorporates all I have learned throughout this process.

10.2 Summary of theory: Relational connections and the emergence of shared leadership

As we have seen in chapter 4, shared leadership is conceptualised by scholars as a collective, social influence process (Hannah, Lord, & Pearce, 2011; Hoch et al., 2010; Pearce & Conger, 2003). And if we accept, as I do, the definition agreed by many leading scholars of leadership as an influence process that emerges from interactions, and resides in the relationships that exist in work groups (Carson et al., 2007; Cullen-Lester et al., 2017; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995b; Northouse, 2017; Uhl-Bien, 2006; Yukl, 2010), then it follows that I have been concerned with the process of how these relationships are created. In particular,

placing relationships at the core of shared leadership implies that different situations and

different working conditions will result in unique relationships. It is problematic, then, that

scholars have thus far failed to engage in exploring the nature of the relationships

underlying shared leadership (Edwards, 2011; Sweeney et al., 2019). Whilst shared

leadership scholars have not yet turned their attention to relational connections, a focus on

the relational dynamics in my data is consistent with the work of other leadership scholars,

such as Uhl-Bien (2006), Chrobot-Mason et al. (2016); Cullen-Lester et al. (2017) Clarke

(2018); Cunliffe and Eriksen (2011).

This research was located within a social constructionist perspective, with a

constructionist grounded theory methodology - this ensured that interactions and the

ensuing relationships were the central object of exploration. The analysis presented in this

thesis has supported my focus on relational aspects of shared leadership, since it

demonstrates the ways that relationships in experiential agencies are fundamental to the

emergence of shared leadership. Over the last two chapters, I have proposed that the

relational factors of trusting relationships and a sense of belonging enable the sharing of

leadership among employees in experiential agency teams. In the developed theory, I am

proposing that these two factors construct connections between team members, and it is

these connections through which shared leadership is able to emerge. Here, my work aligns

with the conceptual thoughts of Edwards (2011), who suggested that any form of shared

leadership must be underpinned by connections, because this form of leadership is found in

the relationships at work. The theory presented here therefore centres the connections

required for shared leadership around trusting relationships and a sense of belonging.

In this theory, I have identified nine conditions that contribute to the two connections

that enable the sharing of leadership specifically in experiential organisations. I have defined

these nine conditions as either macro level (the leadership team of the agency), meso level (the various teams that employees are members of within the agency) or micro level (the individual team members themselves). When in evidence, these nine conditions lead to the development of trusting relationships and a sense of belonging, both to teams and to the organisation - it is through these connections that shared leadership is able to emerge. Visually, the theory can be shown thus:

Figure 10.1: Relational connections and the emergence of shared leadership
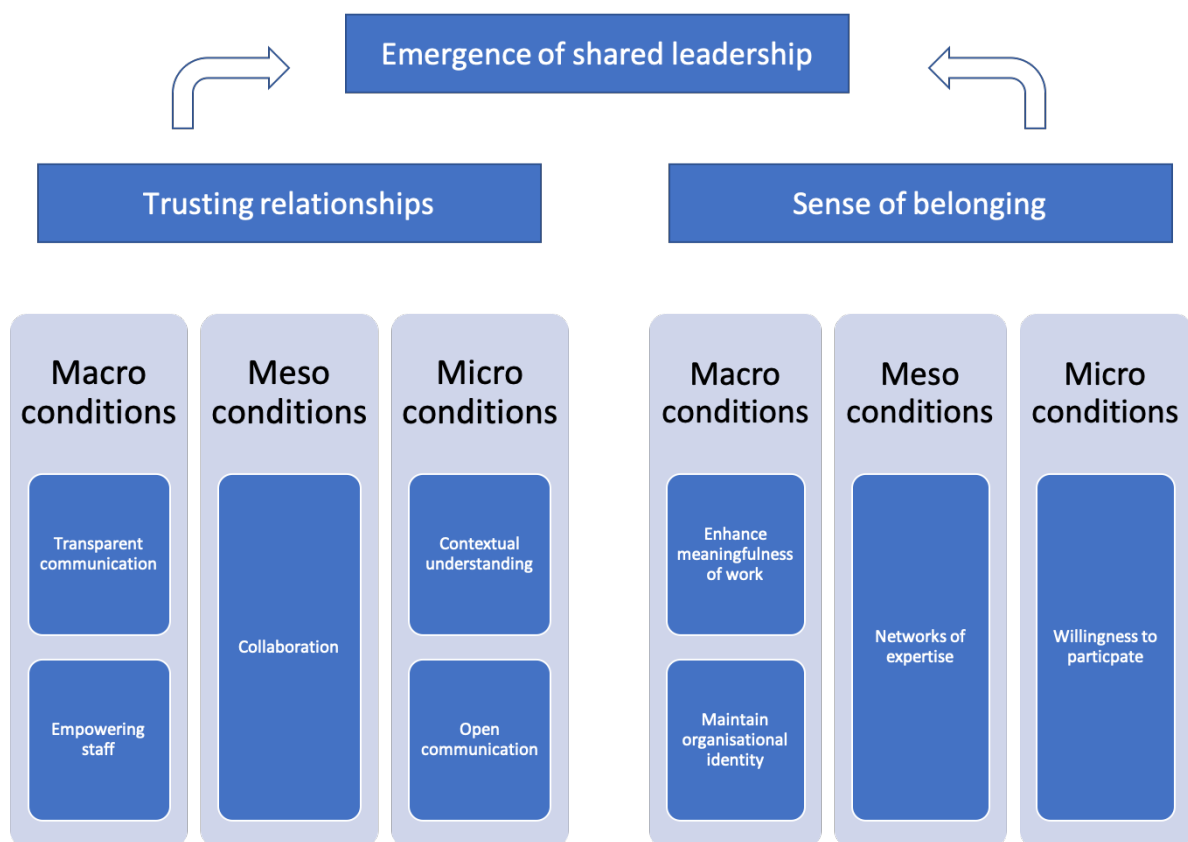
10.3 Trusting relationships

Trusting relationships are constructed through situational conditions that foster a trusting workplace environment, in which employees trust the leadership team to run the business well and the leadership team trust the employees to do their job to the best of their ability. In addition, these trusting relationships are developed through team and

individual level considerations, in that team members must trust each other to communicate well and to have a contextual understanding of other team members' roles.

My findings demonstrated that the relationship between trust and shared leadership is indeed complex and that it ebbs and flows based on various organisational and team actions. However, without trust, team members were unwilling to participate in the sharing of leadership responsibilities. Put simply, the relationships in these organisations are founded on trust, and without trust there is little evidence of team members' willingness to engage in the practice of shared leadership. Trust, and the conditions that create it, is therefore an important antecedent for shared leadership in experiential agencies.

The concept of the importance of trust in workplace relationships is consistent with the work on trust by Dietz and Hartog (2006), Chiocchio, Forgues, Paradis, and Iordanova (2011); Mayer et al. (1995) and with the moderating influence of intragroup trust identified by Wu et al. (2020). It is also similar to the climates of trust needed for shared leadership and identified by Bergman et al. (2012); Drescher et al. (2014); Robert Jr and You (2017) but differs on one significant point – my research identifies that trust has an important role in ensuring that shared leadership can emerge, and not – as these other studies do – as an outcome of shared leadership. There is then, the possibility that trust can be both an antecedent to shared leadership (as I have found) and an outcome of shared leadership (as others have found).

10.4 A sense of belonging

In addition, I propose that a sense of belonging to both the organisation and the project teams is necessary in order to enable the effective sharing of leadership among employees. The data revealed that in experiential agencies, a sense of belonging is

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bounded by shared values and a common language, which is expressed through a shared cultural identity and visions and values of the organisation. It is further enhanced though the networks of expertise that exist in these organisations, as they allow employees to share their own expertise and knowledge in a way that makes them feel an important part of both team and organisation. A sense of belonging in an organisation creates feelings of value for the employee, and when employees feel valued they express a willingness to take on additional responsibilities, such as leadership, in order to achieve goals. In this way, a sense of belonging can be seen as an essential building block for shared leadership.

This sense of belonging is built on a number of distinct factors, all of which have been shown to be important aspects of an environment that enables the sharing of leadership. The concept of a sense of belonging can therefore find its roots in extant literature that focuses on the importance of interdependence for encouraging cooperative social processes. For example, Nicolaides et al. (2014) found that interdependent teams engaged in the effective sharing of leadership, and Carson et al. (2007) and Pearce and Conger (2003) all suggested that a supportive environment is helpful in encouraging shared leadership because the team have all clearly understood the team's shared purpose and are willing to participate in the team and contribute equally to its purpose. My research, whilst making similar conclusions, takes this further by describing this connectedness as based on a shared sense of belonging to both the organisation and the teams within which the participants worked. My findings indicate that there is a perceived link between feelings of trust and a sense of belonging and that, together, these connections support feelings of inclusion. This concept of inclusion was a recurring theme that led to me reflecting on issues of social or collective identities and what links they may have to shared leadership.

10.5 Relational connections and social identity

The key way in which relational connections revealed themselves was through the expression of a co-constructed shared identity with others within the organisation. During my data collection, participants often likened their sense of belonging in the workplace to being part of a family or community. I first noticed this when I asked the participants to discuss the cultural identity of their organisation, and they invariably discussed being part of a family (see chapter 8.2.4 for these findings).

When I returned to each organisation, I discussed this with the participants and asked them to describe the organisational identity in more detail – they then began to describe the importance of social aspects, the collaboration and the bonding that occurs in a highly pressurised environment. In my last visit to the case studies, and in my follow up emails, I specifically asked participants whether they would describe themselves as belonging to a community. The table 10.1 below sets out exemplifying responses:

Table 10.1: Participants describe being part of a community

Donna (LT, Agency 3): Yes I would, although I would say I'm part of a few different communities 1) the Agency as a whole 2) as a member of the Board, and 3) part of Business Support (Finance / HR etc). I feel an attachment to those three groups for different reasons; 1) the Agency has a wider community feel to it and that comes through at events and all agency meetings. 2) My board 'peers' although some board members more senior than others, it still feels like you are part of a community when we meet, and there is support among each other . Then 3) Business Support I'm part of the team providing internal services to the Agency and all the common, relatable challenges that can bring.
Charlotte (TM, Agency 3): Absolutely. Generally, [this agency] has a real community feel to it; we are collaborative and work closely with departments. Aside from work there is a great social programme (sports events, wellbeing initiatives etc) so outside of office hours there is plenty to get stuck into.
Jane (TL, Agency 2): Yes very much so but more of a family than a community really. We all club together to chip in. Common goal. You know people have your back. The only part that falls into the no category is keeping the kitchen tidy. A community tries to keep the streets tidy, and safe, but our kitchen doesn't get the love and respect it deserves. There is definitely a community feel at [agency 2]. You have your own targets and projects that you are responsible for but if you noticed someone struggling, you wouldn't think twice

about getting stuck into theirs or helping them with their specific challenge. Always offering to support each other. If you are not that busy then there will be a blanket email out saying 'anyone want any help' rather than sitting back and enjoying the downtime.

My findings suggest, therefore, that the nature of the employees' relationships in an experiential agency results in a collective social identity, in which employees internalise group values and norms, fulfil social roles and obligations and contribute to the group's welfare (Jackson, Colquitt, Wesson, & Zapata-Phelan, 2006; Venus, Changguo, Lanaj, & Russell E., 2012). As Shipway and Jones (2007, p. 375) suggest, a social identity is important because it provides an individual with "…a sense of belonging, a valued pace within their social environment, a means to connect to others and the opportunity to use valued identities to enhance self-worth and self-esteem".

In recent years, scholars have become interested in how social identities in the workplace might be used to enable (or obstruct) leadership (see chapter 4 for more discussions on this). Existing research has largely focused to what extent individuals see themselves as leaders (Derue & Ashford, 2010; van Knippenberg, 2012). For example, Derue and Ashford (2010) focused on how individuals developed their own leadership identity through a social process – for them, leader identity was not static but was a process of mutual influence in which social interactions caused leader and follower identities to shift over time. Leader identity was constructed through individuals projecting an image as a leader and others reinforcing that image as a legitimate. The issue with this piece of research - and much of the research into identity and leadership in general - is that it neglects aspects of identity that are derived from the working groups and workplace conditions.

Some scholars have therefore tried to shift the focus from how individuals develop their own leadership identity, and instead try to understand the relationship between identification with the organisation and work team and leadership. In this body of work, a collective can be a team, working group or organisation and these studies suggest that individuals who have a stronger identity with these collectives are more inclined to engage in leadership behaviours.   The study by Chrobot-Mason et al. (2016, p. 299) tried to unpick how collective identities in the workplace influence an individual's participation in leadership. Their work focused on leadership that occurs through relationships between individuals who are part of a collective team, and found that identification with that collective was an important predictor as to whether and how members share leadership. They argue that:

> *"Individuals who identify with the collective engage in behaviours to help ensure its success and embody the values and goals of the collective, such that others are likely to view them as a source of leadership. Further, because these individuals are invested in the collective's success they will look to others for leadership to ensure that their actions will help achieve the collective's goals".*

Their research found that it is important for organisations to develop a strong collective identity in order to enable the sharing of leaders. They argue that anyone in the organisation who is able to move beyond their personal identity and identify strongly with their company and team may be more likely to see others across their organisation as sources of leadership. This was echoed by my own research, which indicated that shared leadership was more likely to emerge when the team held a collective identity, rather than when team members were individualised or independent.

The findings presented here therefore add to a growing body of work which suggests that there is a link between identification with a collective and engaging in shared

leadership processes. For example, the meta-analysis by Riketta and Van Dick (2005) found that a strong attachment (e.g. identity and commitment) to a workgroup was related to extra-role behaviour. Similarly, Carson et al. (2007) found that teams with a high collective identity will place value on the overall success of the team, and will therefore be more willing to lead or follow as and when required. Work by Drescher and Garbers (2016) also identified that high commonality (team members' relative similarity) leads to higher team performance and a greater propensity to share in leadership.

In suggesting that team members are more willing to share leadership if they share a common identity, this body of work aligns itself with the argument that team members are less likely to share information with team members whom they perceive to be different to themselves (Devine, 1999; Mesmer-Magnus & DeChurch, 2009). The collective identity in the cases I observed did create issues however, particularly around exclusion of different voices. When feelings of identity arose from social activities outside of work time, which it did in these agencies, then exclusion of people who didn't participate became a risk. In addition, personality was seen as really important to the participants, with a strong suggestion that the participants wanted to work with like-minded people. This in itself creates a lack of diversity within the work force, as those who are different are either not recruited or don't share in the identity, and therefore don't feel a sense of belonging. Table 10.2 shows three quotes that were typical of what I encountered when I asked questions around the diversity and culture at these organisations.

Table 10.2: Describing organisational culture

Interviewer: How would you describe the culture to your friends? Hayley (TM, Agency 2): We've all got really similar - I mean there is an argument of unconscious bias here, where we recruit people because they are like us and we like them, and we understand each other and make each other laugh and whatever. But erm, we just have this dry dry witty sense of humour that everyone just enjoys so much.

Clare (TM, Agency 1): I think the nice thing about [Agency 1] across the board is that we're all quite similar people. To work in an agency you kind of have to be a certain type of person, because we choose the lifestyle that we're in and it's by no means an extreme lifestyle, but we choose to work on site and we choose to be away and kind of do the roles that we are. And [Agency 1] has got quite a nice culture that attracts a certain type of person. So we're lucky that the people we work with are all quite similar to you.

Rod (TM, Agency 3): Well, I think advertising just attract a certain type of people. That's a bit sad…And something Dave upstairs said, which I really buy into, is that you want different people, with the same set of values or principles. You want diversity, but you know, there is an extent where you cannot work together if you don't apply the same type of philosophy to the work. I think that's something I quite enjoy with the strategy team, is that we all are driven in the same direction, but we all have very different background, both personally and professionally and there's like a healthy mix. You know, I mean, obviously if you look at us, we're still like a bunch of white people. And there is not enough diversity in that….and we are still quite a shouty culture – the loudest people get heard….I wonder how an introverted person would cope.

The leadership teams were aware of these issues around lack of diversity, and were finding resolving it difficult:

> *Donna (LT, Agency 3): I don't know that we will...erm...[thinking] - what we're moving away from is making decisions because we like people, or recruiting them because they're like us. So we're having lots of conversations about diversity and inclusion and what that means...Trying to recruit people from different backgrounds into this industry is near on impossible because people of diverse backgrounds are not coming in to marketing generally, let alone into this agency. So that's a challenge.*

This raised some interesting points around the sense of belonging, diversity and shared leadership, which I was not able to explore within the scope of this study, though I note that Kukenberger and D'Innocenzo (2019) have done so in a recent study. However, it did raise awareness for me of related issues, such as the importance placed on the social activities created issues around employees' feelings of belonging. When ideas of what is social or friendly don't match their own ideas, or when demographic issues came into play (e.g. religion, age, marital status, parental status) it is therefore possible that employees will

begin to feel excluded and unable to identify with other team members or to the organisation.

So, whilst existing literature has suggested that shared leadership is built on connections within the workplace (Edwards, 2011; Hannah et al., 2011), it has not adequately explained how organisations can create collective responsibility, or how team members become willing to share in leadership. My findings therefore allow us to understand the connections that underpin shared leadership – it acknowledges that these connections are relational in nature and that these relationships must be built on trust, and create a sense of belonging. The answer to how organisations create collective responsibility and the sharing of leadership may therefore lie in a multi-level perspective in which both organisations and individuals participate. To allow shared leadership to emerge, individuals must create connections with other people within the organisation – they must feel a sense of belonging to the various groups, share in a collective identity and to feel that trust flows throughout an organisation. These findings led to the development of my theory of relational connections and the enactment of shared leadership, which suggests that organisations which encourage trusting relationships at all levels, and whose team members exhibit a sense of belonging, will be more likely to engage in shared leadership.

10.6 The implications for experiential agencies and event studies

The analysis presented in this thesis indicates that leadership processes are heavily dependent on the larger context of the experiential agency in which the leadership is embedded. This echoes the conceptual expectations of Cullen-Lester and Yammarino (2016) and answers the calls to ensure there is a more context rich approach to the theoretical development of shared leadership made by D'Innocenzo et al. (2016); Fitzsimons

et al. (2011); Hoch and Dulebohn (2013); Pearce (2007); Sweeney et al. (2019). I have

proposed that experiential agencies are a useful and insightful context within which to

explore shared leadership because of a number of contextual issues that establish that

experiential agencies are distinct from other related fields. These issues can be summarised

as the fast paced, episodic nature of the industry; the unique, temporary but planned,

nature of the projects and the interdependence of the employees, their clients and other

key stakeholders. Additionally, experiential agencies typify the pre-existing context

established as being necessary for shared leadership – they work within creative, uncertain

and challenging environments and are required to undertake high levels of spontaneous

problem solving, doing tasks that are high pressured, risky and require high levels of

interdependent teamwork (Clarke, 2012; Fransen et al., 2015; Pearce, 2004; Wang et al.,

2017). The context within which experiential agencies work therefore indicate that shared

leadership is more likely to emerge than in organisations that operate under stricter, less

creative, more controlled, contexts. This has made them an ideal lens through which to

develop an understanding of the relational connections that underpin shared leadership.

At the heart of the experiential agency world is human capital – these organisations

cannot run without the knowledge and commitment of their employees. It is essential then

that scholars studying these organisations begin to delve into the relationships that exist

within them. My research has taken one particular aspect of experiential agencies and

explored how the relationships that exist within these organisations enable people to

participate in leadership. In this way, my research adds to a growing body of literature that

tries to understand this expanding industry.

Pearce (2004) suggested, in his conceptual development of shared leadership, that

certain working conditions would make shared leadership more advantageous than others.

Scholars have explored some of the conditions in a range of contexts, though none have focussed specifically on experiential agencies, or made comparisons between contexts that share high levels of similarity. The closest that scholars have come to similar contexts is training and administration teams in service organisations (Hoch, 2013) and IT project teams, though these were dispersed teams (Muethel et al., 2012).

As identified in the review of industry specific literature presented in chapter 5, little is known about the process of leadership in event-based organisations. This research then is the first to focus on leadership in events and specifically within experiential agencies, and it is proposed that the findings will be also useful for organisations that operate in a similar, project based, way (see chapter 7.10 for a discussion on the transferability of the study). This research is the first to offer substantial empirical evidence of how relationships and connections are formed within this type of organisation and it therefore offers a clear insight into how workplaces can be cultivated in order to enable shared participation in leadership.

The theory presented therefore also inform practice, as it provides agencies with an understanding of how to make shared leadership happen and the perceived benefits of encouraging trusting relationships and a sense of belonging within the workplace. This is perhaps evidenced best by returning to the voices of the participants and their feelings about my developed theory.

> *Donna (LT, Agency 3): It's so interesting Emma. It's so good. And then with my very practical pragmatic head, I then go straight into thinking 'How do we get to this point?'*

> *Stewart (LT, Agency 3): I think it's really good. You've done a good job of extracting it. It's very interesting - it's not surprising but it's interesting when you look at it in the context of what we're doing as a business, but also just in having it in a way that you can understand the facets.*

Jane (TL, Agency 2) It's so interesting. I'm not sure if we provided sufficient feedback.
Jenna (TM, Agency 2): I didn't, I definitely took more away (both laughing)
Emma: yes, I just sucked it all up! I think it's all spot on - it's just interesting. There are
a few bits when I thought 'oh that's interesting, we should revisit what we do at
[Agency 2]'

10.7 Revisiting shared leadership definitions

My theoretical contribution to leadership literature adds to the growing body of

collectivistic literature (see chapter 4.2) that recognises that leadership resides in

relationships, and seeks to acknowledge leadership wherever it occurs in an organisation.

The data from this study suggests that leadership in experiential agencies is not restricted to

a small set of formal leaders, but is spread throughout the organisation and that it is

enacted through the connections found in the relationships among team members.

This research was not designed to investigate what shared leadership is specifically, but

rather to focus on how it occurs. However, as I near the end of the study, and come to

reflect on the process of research, and of my increased knowledge of shared leadership

theory and the sharing of leadership in practice, I realise that I have formed my own

conceptualisation of shared leadership. This conceptualisation includes both the empirical

evidence I have found regarding the relational connections that allow it to emerge, and also

some acknowledgement of what shared leadership might look like, and where it might be

found. In order to 'complete the circle' of this research, I provide here my reflections about

my understanding of these last two aspects of the theoretical development of shared

leadership.

During the process of data collection, I was able to observe shared leadership in

action and this led me to reflect on the conceptualisation of shared leadership discussed in

the literature to date. In particular, I have re-examined my position on the sources of

influence in shared leadership. In the literature, some scholars suggest that shared

leadership is only a collective phenomenon (e.g. Avolio et al., 2009; Ensley et al., 2006; Kramer & Crespy, 2011) – in other words, shared leadership is specifically about team members coming together in order to collectively enact the leadership process. For other scholars (e.g. Hannah et al., 2011; Kukenberger & D'Innocenzo, 2019; Mehra et al., 2006; Pearce et al., 2010) it can be both a collective and an individual process, and it is likely to shift between the two, depending on the needs of the team at the time. During my data collection processes, however, I noted how truly dynamic and changeable shared leadership was. My research has led me to view shared leadership as more complex and dynamic than the extant literature has implied. I find myself therefore agreeing with the work of those scholars who suggest that leadership shifts amongst group members depending on the task and necessary expertise and is only occasionally a collective activity. The analysis of the data in this study supports this view, as I observed that leadership tended to rotate to different members to provide leadership at different points in the life cycle (see chapter 9.2.6). My participants demonstrated a willingness to accept a reciprocal form of leadership, in which they sometimes lead themselves and sometimes accept leadership from others in the organisation, depending on the situation. Less in evidence was the leadership enacted as a collective activity, though this did occur occasionally. In experiential agencies then, leadership was dynamic, interactive and it changed over time, depending on the teams they were in and the point they were at in the project life cycle.

In the theory presented here, leadership is defined as situationally developed influence processes that occur within teams (laterally, among peers) and vertically (from the top of the organisation down). This description of a dynamic influence process that moves horizontally and vertically throughout an organisation echoes the viewpoints of Locke (2003), Friedrich et al. (2009) Hannah et al. (2011) and to some extent Pearce and Conger

(2003),who have all suggested that an integrated model of leadership is the one that works best. As I reflect on the process of this study, I realise that I have begun to agree with these scholars. Certainly there is a strong argument to be made that the conditions in the context of experiential agencies create situations in which collaboration is both easier and essential, and that ensures that both shared and vertical leadership can exist in teams at the same time. Those who consider shared leadership as an emergent phenomenon which occurs independently of formal leadership ignore the management paradox that their conceptualisation implies. Shared leadership cannot exist in a silo – in organisations governed by corporate structures, processes and profit margins, shared leadership in teams can only emerge if the organisation sets the conditions to allow it to happen. The findings presented here therefore align with the critical propositions of shared leadership made by Locke, who suggested that a willingness to accept the responsibility that shared leadership requires needs to be pushed from the top down. Certainly, I agree that without organisational actions to encourage strong relationships and to support the development of connections, it becomes difficult for shared leadership to emerge in groups. However, this research has also highlighted that the willingness to engage with shared leadership stems from the relational connections made within teams, which create a commitment to both the organisation and their teams and fosters the motivation required to work together to achieve goals.

These reflections have resulted in my own conceptualisation of the key aspects of shared leadership, which draws on the work of Pearce and Conger (2003), Pearce et al. (2010) Zhou and Vredenburgh (2017) and Carson et al. (2007):

- Shared leadership is a complex, dynamic team phenomenon, in which team members collectively share in leadership processes or actively and intentionally shift

the leadership role to one another when their expertise is needed to achieve team

or organisational goals.

- Shared leadership emerges through relational connections formed within the

    workplace. The conditions that contribute to these connections may vary, depending

    on the context in which leadership takes place.

- Shared leadership does not exist in a silo, and needs both informal and formal

    leadership to support its emergence in organisations.

The next chapter presents the contribution to knowledge made by this study, and offers

final reflections on the overall findings, the process of the PhD and on the limitations

inherent within this research.

11 CONCLUSIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

11.1 Background to the study

This research set out to explore leadership within the context of experiential agencies, with the literature revealing two key issues which focussed the thesis. The first was recognition that the prevailing view within leadership studies in the field of management is that leadership is a top down function, conducted only by those individual entities in formal leadership positions (Yammarino, 2013). This view of leadership, as something one person does, is increasingly being challenged as problematic as it invariably ignores both the context within which leadership takes place and the abilities of others to take on leadership roles (Ensley et al., 2006; Yukl, 2013). Scholars have increasingly begun, therefore, to challenge the orthodox views and develop alternative perspectives on leadership - these 'post-heroic' theories represent leadership as an influence process that emerges from social or relational interactions and in which a multitude of people within an organisation participate (Carroll, Ford, & Taylor, 2019; Crevani et al., 2007; Fletcher, 2004; Fletcher & Kaufer, 2003; Northouse, 2017). This evolving view that leadership can no longer be viewed as happening in a silo, and therefore that the dominant paradigm of the entity perspectives of leadership no longer fits with the working landscape, has been an important underpinning factor in this thesis.

The second key issue that the review of the literature highlighted was the lack of both empirical and conceptual research into leadership within the specific field of event management. This lack of applied understanding about almost all aspects of leadership within events is problematic - given both the nuances of event management (as discussed in section 6.6-6.9), and also that leadership is widely accepted as an essential element of

successful organisational management, as discussed in section 3.2 (Northouse, 2017; Yukl, 2013). Certainly, in events it can be argued that a focus on leadership is particularly important due to the unique nature of delivering an experience (see 6.9 for a summation of this argument). Noting these gaps in discussion and understanding within the events literature, and also drawing on both my own experiences as a practitioner and the knowledge developed through the review of wider leadership literature, the need for a focus on the emerging theories of shared leadership in teams and organisations became clear and justified.

Shared leadership theory suggests that leadership does not exclusively reside in those in formal leadership positions but can also be shared away from the top of the organisation. Leadership is therefore evident in teamwork, social networks and via shared accountability and, importantly, can be shared among those working collaboratively (Day et al., 2006; Pearce et al., 2007; Serban & Roberts, 2016; Turnbull, 2011). The theory of shared leadership suggests, therefore, that leadership is a team property whereby the practice of leadership can be exhibited by any of the team members, and that leadership occurs as an influence process in which members seek to motivate, share knowledge and support other group members in order to achieve team goals. The extant literature also revealed an apparent anomaly that, though shared leadership is a relational theory, little attention has been given to an interpretivist perspective which would allow for a deeper focus upon the nature of relationships that enable the sharing of leadership.

Another apparent anomaly is that, whilst the essential influence of situational context is acknowledged in some research (Petrie, 2014; Thorpe et al., 2011), the theoretical development of shared leadership is, however, still relatively embryonic (Scott-young 2019, Nicolaides 2014, Avolio et al 2009 and Kozlowski, 2016). As such, comparatively little work

has been done to apply the theory to specific contexts and therefore advance the theory through varied empirical investigation. This thesis therefore recognises the opportunity to enrich the developing understanding of shared leadership through its application to the context of events management – and more specifically within an experiential agency setting. Experiential agencies work with high levels of interdependence, creativity and complexity of task, which are the three core antecedents necessary for the emergence of shared leadership - as identified by Pearce (2004), and confirmed by Carson et al. (2007), D'Innocenzo et al. (2016); Lee et al. (2015) and Wang et al. (2017) among others – and therefore make a useful lens through which to study the emergence of shared leadership.

11.2 Summary of findings and resulting theory

The study, therefore, examined how leadership practice is shared among working teams and the influence of the context within which leadership occurs (Carson et al., 2007; Pearce & Conger, 2003; Petrie, 2014). It specifically set out to answer the question 'how is leadership shared in an experiential agency?'. In doing so, it answers the call made by Clarke (2012), but not yet answered by scholars, to identify which contextual variables and conditions of work enable shared leadership to become a useful process. Working with a social constructionist perspective, the investigation took the form of a collective case study, using a constructionist grounded theory approach to guide the data collection, analysis and theory development. Ultimately, the analysis of the data collected from three case studies resulted in the development of a theory of relational connections and the emergence of shared leadership (see figure 10.1 for a summary model). The theory confirms that shared leadership is underpinned by connectedness within organisations, as previously suggested

by Edwards (2011), and has demonstrated that the relationships between individuals within these organisations is the cornerstone of effective participation in shared leadership.

This research is the first to closely examine the nature of these relationships and, going further than others, it has illuminated how this relational connections that enable the sharing of leadership are constructed through a sense of belonging in the workplace and trust between team members. The developed theory shows that, for shared leadership to emerge across cross-functional working teams, organisations need to trust their employees and employees need to trust the organisations they work for. In addition, the theory indicates that team members need to feel a sense of belonging to the organisation and to the project team in order to enable the emergence of shared leadership. These two relational factors of trust and sense of belonging are facilitated through nine conditions which occur at three separate levels. The theory therefore reveals the relational dynamics that underpin shared leadership and gives a clear understanding of how these relational connections are constructed. In doing so, it confirms that shared leadership is an influence process that emerges from interactions, and resides in the relationships that exist in work groups (Carson et al., 2007; Cullen-Lester et al., 2017; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995b; Northouse, 2017; Uhl-Bien, 2006; Yukl, 2010).

In addition to revealing the relational dynamics that underpin shared leadership, the developed theory also clarifies how the sharing of leadership relies on multi-level interactions in which both organisations and individuals participate. The theory shows that the conditions that underpin shared leadership occur at organisational / leadership team (macro) level, team (meso) level and individual (micro) level. This is important as the literature has, thus far, concentrated solely on team based conditions (Zhou & Vredenburgh, 2017). The findings indicate that formal leadership, to some extent, is needed to provide a

pathway to the development of shared leadership. However shared leadership doesn't just happen because the leadership team determines it should happen - in order for shared leadership to emerge, team members must themselves create connections with other people in the organisation. To do this, individuals must feel a sense of belonging to the various teams and believe that trust flows throughout the organisation.

This study is therefore also distinctive because it is the first to offer this multi-level perspective of shared leadership and significant in that it identifies that the emergence of shared leadership requires trust and a sense of belonging between - and within - the leadership team, the project teams and the individual. This study has engaged with the complex problem of how shared leadership emerges and has provided new empirical material, which is important from both theoretical and practical perspectives, therefore making an incremental, and justifiable, contribution to knowledge. In addition, this study makes an important contribution to our understanding of leadership within the experiential agency sector and also to the wider events sector, much of which shares similar conditions. The contributions to knowledge from this thesis are clarified below.

11.3 Contributions to knowledge

This study has provided a valuable description of the phenomenon of shared leadership within experiential agencies and therefore makes an important contribution to understanding leadership within event management. As established in Chapter 5, there is very little literature that focuses on leadership in events and therefore scholarly understanding is both limited and lagging behind other disciplines. In addition to this notable contribution to events knowledge, because the findings provide a rich insight into leadership within creative, complex, team and project-based organisations, the study has

transferability value both within diverse areas of the event industry itself and within sectors with similar characteristics (e.g. marketing, project management, tourism, hospitality and the arts - see chapter 7.10 for discussions on particularisation and transferability). The findings in this study should therefore be seen as an extension of the emerging theoretical development (Benson & Blackman, 2011; Hoch & Dulebohn, 2013; Hu et al., 2017) - by indicating what occurs in a new setting, the findings extend the potential of the theory beyond the original case (VanWynsberghe & Khan, 2007, p. 85).

The study has also contributed to the theoretical understanding of shared leadership through the development of a theory which highlights the significance of relationships in the emergence of shared leadership (see figure 10.1, chapter 10). It is the first empirical study to recognise the importance of relational connections within shared leadership and therefore offers a significant advancement in theoretical understanding. Specifically, this is the first study to suggest that the relational connections of trust and a sense of belonging are important factors in the emergence of shared leadership. This study therefore supports the argument for a greater focus on the relational aspects of the leadership process as proposed by Cunliffe and Eriksen (2011); Uhl-Bien (2006); Clarke (2018) and Reitz (2017), and makes an important contribution to the theory of shared leadership.

The originality of the study also stems from the identification of nine antecedent conditions for shared leadership, an area which is still in its infancy (Zhu et al., 2018) - previous studies have emphasised the outcomes of shared leadership as opposed to the antecedent conditions (as established in section 4.8) and few studies have focussed specifically on the antecedents of shared leadership. These nine identified conditional factors that enable shared leadership to emerge therefore shed light on an area of theory that has not yet received significant scholarly attention.

In addition, and as demonstrated in Chapter 4.10, the extant literature on shared leadership has almost exclusively researched the concept through the lens of single and static teams with clear membership boundaries, with far too little attention paid to other organisational levels (such as the leadership team and the individual team members). Much uncertainty still exists therefore about the nature of relationships within and between teams and with other people within the wider organisation and the impact they have on the emergence of shared leadership. These areas have been indicated as important by scholars such as D'Innocenzo et al. (2016), Zhu et al. (2018) and Derue and Ashford (2010). In order to address this uncertainty, this study took a holistic organisational perspective and, in doing so, it is the first study to expand the focus of shared leadership beyond the immediate team and to identify how leadership is shared throughout organisations and across team boundaries. The resultant examination of shared leadership at macro, meso and micro levels has shown that in organisations where high levels of team interdependence exist, antecedents from across the multiple levels are all important contributors to enabling shared leadership. These findings suggest that a multiple level perspective is an important consideration for the theoretical development of shared leadership; this builds on the discussions by Mathieu et al. (2008); Yammarino et al. (2005) and Sweeney et al. (2019).

Furthermore, this study is among the first to use a qualitative approach to investigate shared leadership. The review of shared leadership literature identified only one other qualitative study; indeed, more generally, leadership studies from a qualitative perspective remain relatively rare (Klenke et al., 2016) - with the majority of studies still using a quantitative approach (Kempster & Parry, 2011). The use of qualitative methods allowed for the exploration of the feelings, emotions and relational dynamics of the participants and this resulted in the key finding about relational connections. Both shared leadership studies

and the wider field of leadership are still largely dominated by positivistic views of leadership (Binci et al., 2016; Sweeney et al., 2019). This study has departed from this perspective, instead challenging the dominant discourse by concluding that the relational connections form the basis of leadership processes, which therefore highlights the importance of qualitative studies within the field of shared leadership. As an exploratory study, it should serve as a foundation for further qualitative studies regarding both shared leadership and leadership within event management.

A final notable contribution of this study is the utility of the developed theory (and the model shown in figure 10.1) to inform the practice of organisations working in the events, experiential and communication sphere - where little empirical research of this nature exists. The findings will support practitioners to understand the importance of relationship connections in an experiential agency, and to consider how the sharing of leadership is encouraged, or limited, by the dynamics within an organisation, the various teams and their individual members. Aligned with this, all three of the case study organisations have specifically requested that I return and present the findings to their board members and to their teams, which underlines the relevance and significance of this study to industry.

11.4 Limitations

Case study research undertaken with a grounded theory approach consists of an inherent strength – the nuanced, deep, rich understanding of the observed but also an inherent weakness – the closeness required by the researcher. This closeness poses both risks of bias and issues with credibility and trustworthiness (Maxwell, 2013; Patton, 2015). While the potential limitations of subjective interpretations of the gathered data and related issues around the selection of cases and participants are acknowledged, I have

nevertheless sought to mitigate this reflectively, and transparently. Taking a grounded

theory approach, and open-minded curiosity, theory has been developed from the data

collected, and not from thoughts on what should happen according to theory developed in

previous literature. I have mitigated my a priori assumptions (as explained in chapter 2) and

set aside my beliefs about what I would find, in order to discover what I did find. In doing so,

I have made use of my prior knowledge of both shared leadership and the events industry

as a useful framework within which to conduct the research. At the same time, I have

acknowledged the inevitability of inherent bias which my own position as a researcher has

brought to this body of work and, whilst I have made attempts to set aside my own views,

my interpretivist stance acknowledges that this will not have been wholly successful.

In particular, the use of constructionist grounded theory methodology relies on the

constructions the researcher makes through inquiry, and limitations therefore lie in the

relativity of the researcher's perspectives (Charmaz, 2014). This is a particular issue for

qualitative case study research, which generates a vast volume of data that is hard to

summarise and even more difficult to interpret (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Langley & Abdallah, 2011).

The qualitative case study researcher is aiming for thick description and thus deeper

understanding of the experience and meaning of the participants, but this rich data can

result in subjective reading of the data, and arbitrary judgements by the researcher. This is

what Flyvbjerg (2006) describes as 'bias towards verification', which suggests a tendency to

confirm the researcher's preconceived notions. In order to address this, reflexivity was used

throughout the study. This reflexivity included the introduction of my three identities in

chapter 2.5, which acknowledged and embraced the effect my own experience has had on

the research (Maxwell, 2013; Peshkin, 1991). To further mitigate the inclusion of my own

bias, and to strengthen the validity of the study, I applied an established coding process and

theoretical sampling. In practice, this meant that the findings - including the concepts, categories and the final articulation of the theory - were presented to participants directly. This member checking, by the participants, allowed them to correct interpretations and clarify their own experiences (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Maxwell, 2013). In this way, construct error and poor validation of concepts, categories and theories was minimised, thus improving the reliability of the findings. The rich data elicited through this process produced an interesting and credible set of findings and provided a full and revealing picture of what was going on (Maxwell, 2013). Finally, acknowledging that the researcher's experience can also enrich the research process, I have undertaken a reflective process on both my new understanding of shared leadership (as in chapter 10.4) and my own development as a researcher (as discussed below in section 11.6).

Another potential limitation relates to the selection of both the case studies and the participants. Firstly, the cases were selected on a convenience basis, though consideration was given to a number of factors in order to limit the bias from this approach (see chapter 7.4 for a full discussion). Secondly, the three cases were small to medium sized enterprises, and gaining access depended on personal relationships and the building of trust with key employees. The interview and observation process represented a significant commitment from all three organisations, and interviewing more people and spending even more time observing interaction in those workplaces was not pragmatically possible. However, it was also not necessary - the findings presented here emerged from the grounded theorist concept of theoretical saturation, involving moving backwards and forwards between data collection and analysis until no new concepts, categories or relationships emerged and the theory had been fully developed (Charmaz, 1996; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This cyclical process was repeated until, finally, the developed theory was presented to participants

from each of the three cases and respondents were able to validate the findings and I was

able to express empirical confidence that the category development for the theory was

saturated (Dey, 1999; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

11.5 Future directions

The sparsity of the contextualised literature on shared leadership, on leadership

within experiential agencies, and in the wider field of event management itself indicates

that the scope for future studies is vast. This section highlights the particular areas in which

I believe the results of this study could lead to further useful and insightful research.

The findings presented here indicate that the relational connections that underpin shared

leadership are vital to its success. As such, there is much more to discover about how and

why these connections form, within an array of contexts. Useful future research would, for

example, explore whether trust and a sense of belonging are key relational conditions that

exist across differing workplace contexts. Also, the view of shared leadership from a multi-

level perspective, although embryonic, is gathering support in leadership studies in general.

Given the nature of shared leadership and the fundamental assertion that anyone can

engage in leadership, if they have the opportunity to do so, studies that explore the nuances

of shared leadership, at different levels within organisations, are needed.

Particularly within event organisations, it would also be useful for scholars to explore

the key questions of who leads and when. This would expand understanding of

participation with the sharing of leadership, and allow for the questioning of why people

might (or indeed might not) participate in shared leadership. While my research has

indicated that the exclusion of 'different' voices limits participation in the emergence of

shared leadership and has taken a multi-level perspective in order to acknowledge some of

the influence power has on relationships at work, it was outside of the scope of this research to explore the role of power in more detail. However, power - or the lack thereof - may well be evident in the degree of participation of shared leadership and the process of shared leadership may well exclude certain people because of, for example, their personality or their cultural heritage. In addition, the implementation of shared leadership strategies may result in potential resistance. An understanding of the power dynamics should therefore be bought to the forefront of research if the relationship between shared leadership and relational connections is to be explored further.

Additionally, and relatedly, scholars should be encouraged to further explore the nuances around concepts such as empathy and understanding. In particular, the findings in this study indicate that there is a strong sense of identity within teams that share leadership – further exploration is therefore needed to discover the extent and scope of this shared identity, and the implications of being excluded from it.

This research also reflects the lack of empirical understanding we have regarding event leadership. It is hoped that by highlighting these significant gaps in knowledge, this thesis will encourage scholars to shift their attention towards leadership as an important aspect of creating and delivering event experiences.   In this thesis, I have argued that shared leadership may be an appropriate and useful model for experiential agencies to adopt on a more formal basis. In exploring one aspect of the vast array of leadership possibilities within one part of the event industry, I have shone a light on the wealth of things we don't know about who leads, when and how. I therefore make the call to other scholars to explore other forms of events leadership that may offer a viable alternative to the traditional, vertical and hierarchical leadership structure that is often seen within event teams. There is so much more to find out.

11.6 A brief reflection on my PhD Experience

In order to bring this thesis to a conclusion, this section provides a personal reflection on what the experience has meant to me. Doing this feels consistent with my epistemological views of social constructionism, in which the central role of the researcher in conducting research is emphasized (See Cunliffe, 2008).

When I think back to the start of my PhD in 2014, or to the process of completing an MRes in 2012-14, I remember mostly long periods of confusion. I knew that leadership was where my interests lay, but I knew also that this was a vast and unwieldy body of work. And where does a PhD student start with this huge body of work?   For me, this study began with a curiosity about leadership in event organisations during my time as a practitioner. When I became an academic, the opportunity to explore this phenomenon was attractive, but as I became familiar with the diverse and fragmented nature of both leadership studies and understanding of the event industry, I began to notice that leadership studies largely seemed to agree that the individual matters more than the whole. This was true in both leadership studies, which still focused on the entity that 'does' leadership, and within event studies, which focused on the skills of the single event manager. Reflecting on what I had seen, both in formal leadership positions and when working as a team member, equipped me with a heightened understanding that the dominant theoretical discourse that leadership in events is something one powerful person 'does', simply did not match my own experiences. Therefore, I began with the conviction that a lot of what I was reading just didn't seem to fit with my understanding of event management. Hence I became engaged in looking beyond the traditional and more widely accepted and trusted theories.

I have sought, therefore, to look beyond the entity perspectives of both leadership and event management, instead taking a perspective of leadership as something that

anyone can 'do'. In the case of experiential agencies it is something that all team members participate in – as long as the conditions are right for them to do so. In event management, leadership practice emanates throughout the organisation – it can been seen in the event assistant, without whom no guests would know when the conference was, how to get to it or where to sit, and in the creative director, who has the vision of what the experience should look and feel like or in the event manager, who guided the client and the internal team through strategic decisions to maximise the success of the event.

When I used my data collection to look more closely at these leadership practices, I realised that leadership was in the way the teams and individuals worked together, and in the relationships that these working processes were based on. Upon reflection, it makes sense that, just as the creation of event experiences cannot happen in a silo, nor can the practice of leadership. And it is this contribution that I am proudest of – to have seen a connection between the importance placed on working relationships in events and the opportunities offered by shared leadership in such organisations.

That said, in taking a relational perspective and a qualitative approach to leadership studies, I took something of a risk. The field of leadership studies is still overwhelmingly positivistic and reliant on quantitative methods. Scholars such as Kempster and Parry (2011) caution that the use of qualitative based research, using grounded theory methods, is still a risk because editors of leadership journals are resistant to non-positivistic views of leadership. Discovering that others felt that Yin took an overtly positivistic, quantitative approach to case study approach was a key moment in my research process - developing arguments to defend my choices of a qualitative study, using a collective case study methodology and social constructionist grounded theory to collect and analyse my data has been one of the most enjoyable aspects of writing this thesis. In this study, I hope to have

added to Kempster and Parry's (2011) argument that it is not only acceptable to study

leadership through a different lens, but that it is appropriate and useful to do so.

In completing this thesis, I have learnt many things about leadership theory, about

philosophical positioning and, above all, about myself. Despite the many twists and turns,

and the considerable challenges it has presented, I am grateful for the opportunity that this

study has provided to learn these lessons.

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13 APPENDICES

13.1 APPENDIX 1 – Table of key empirical studies related to shared leadership

No.	Study	Contextual characteristics	Methodology / method	Findings	Limitations
1.	Pearce and Sims (2002) "Vertical versus shared leadership as predictors of the effectiveness of change management teams: An examination of aversive, directive, transactional, transformational and empowering leader behaviours"	Change management in automobile organisation - Dealing with significant (but one off) change Correlations – shared leadership and team effectiveness	71 change management teams. Self-reported survey - ratings on behavioural scales for 5 leadership strategies – aversive, directive, transactional, transformational and empowering *Quantitative* *Aggregating ratings*	Shared leadership is a more useful predictor of team outcomes than vertical leadership	• Cross sectional • Focused only on one type of team, and they were fairly autonomous and worked on highly complex tasks – problems with generalizability • Sample all from one organisation so no understanding of contextual issues such as organisational culture • Leadership behaviours listed were extensive but not exhaustive. (Binci et al., 2016; Liu et al., 2014)
2.	Pearce et al. (2004) *gives a full breakdown of the shared leader behaviours and team outcomes	Virtual teams in the non-profit sector – Virtual based, different geographical locations. Correlations – shared leadership and team effectiveness	121 responses. Ratings on behavioural scales for four leadership strategies – directive, transactional, transformational and	Shared leadership is a more useful predictor of team outcomes than vertical leadership. They established that there is a positive relationship between shared leadership and team	• Didn't look at other important antecedents of team outcomes such as technology for virtual teams. Also didn't consider

#	Author/Title	Context	Methodology	Findings	Critique
			empowering *Quantitative* *Aggregating ratings*	satisfaction, albeit with distinctions on the type of distributed leadership. Study examined four leader behaviours – directive, transactional, transformational and empowering Shared empowering leadership is speculated to be particularly efficacious because of non-profit work. Asks the question – does engaging in certain vertical leadership behaviours affect the display of certain shared leadership behaviours, or vice versa?	impact of shared leadership • Focused on leadership behaviours – despite leadership being considered a process.
3.	Kramer (2006) "Communication Strategies for sharing leadership within a creative team: LMX in theatre groups"	Theatre – Creative; deadline driven, time-bound; short lived (almost pulsating) teams; formal leader (director); shared vision or goal	Ethnographic study – observation and interviews (qualitative). Data analysed using thematic analysis *Qualitative*	The necessary exchange for a mutually trusting, respecting and committed relationship is the authentic sharing and acceptance of leadership. Three themes were identified for how shared leadership was created for the theatre production – 1. The leader was committed to creating high quality LMX relationships 2. Selection of the right team members	• One case as the sample. No triangulation • Director was committed to (and aware of) the need to share leadership • High quality LMX is equated with shared leadership without evidence that this is the case

				3. Commitment to shared leadership was communicated to the rest of the group Shared leadership was achieved through continual communication and through communications strategies such as 'direct strategy' in which everyone felt able to challenge something that they were not satisfied with, or through 'indirect strategies' which meant raising issues as a question.	
4.	Ensley et al. (2006) "The importance of vertical and shared leadership within new venture top management teams; implications for the performance of start-ups"	New venture top management teams - start-up businesses – entrepreneurial, team based, vision is essential. Lack of operational procedures and organisational structures Correlation – shared leadership and team performance	168 questionnaires form managers within 66 new venture start-ups and 417 executives from 154 new venture start-ups. Ratings on behavioural sales for four leadership strategies – directive, transactional, transformational and empowering *Quantitative*	Both vertical and shared leadership were found to be highly significant predictors of new venture performance. Shared leadership accounted for significant amount of variance in the new venture performance beyond the vertical leadership variables. Vertical leadership is especially important during the early stages of the new venture because of the need to set vision and influence others	• Not able to infer direct causation between vertical / shared leadership and performance. • Might be difficult to generalise (though this wasn't the point of the study)
5.	Mehra et al. (2006) "Distributed leadership in teams: The network of leadership	Sales divisions of large financial services.	28 field based teams Social network analysis - qualitative coding based on visual analysis of	Investigated how the network structure of leadership perceptions considered at the team level	• Cross sectional • No consideration on things like team size or culture

	perceptions and team performance"	Correlation – shared leadership and team performance	leadership network diagrams *Qualitative*	of analysis was related to team performance. We failed to find support for the idea that the more leadership is distributed across the members of a team, the better the teams' performance. Decentralisation of the leadership network across three different operationalization's of network decentralisation) was not significantly related to superior team performance. But we did find support for the idea that certain kinds of decentralised leadership structures are associated with better team performance than others. Distributed leadership needs to make more distinctions between different types of DL. Distinction proposed is distributed –coordinated structures and distributed fragmented structures.	• Small sample • Doesn't consider what it's like to work in these teams.
6.	Carson et al. (2007) "Shared leadership in teams: an investigation of antecedent conditions and performance"	MBA student working in consulting groups Correlation – shared leadership and team performance	Social network analysis - approach with surveys of 59 consulting teams of MBA students. They asked respondents the extent to which team members exerted	Both the internal team environment, consisting of shared purpose, social support, and voice and external coaching were important predictors or precursors of shared	• Cross-sectional study didn't test for causality. • Not a longitudinal study so hard to understand shared

				leadership, rather than about leadership behaviours (As Mehra et al also did) in order to capture the respondents personal and implicit theories of leadership *Quantitative*	leadership emergence. Shared leadership was found to predict team performance as rated by clients. Team size had a strongly positive relationship with shared leadership – potentially indicating that more members have greater potential for resource sharing. Theoretical implications –interesting to look at how team members themselves share leadership responsibilities. High levels of shared leadership can promote team effectiveness by providing teams with intangible, relational resources that facilitate sharing information, expressing diverse opinions and co-ordinating member actions in the face of uncertain and ambiguous situations.	leadership as an emergent property. • MBA students not actual employees. • Lack of definition of leadership or mention of leadership behaviours during data capture so participants could be attributing other meanings.
7.	Rosengren, Bondas, Nordholm, and Nordstrom (2010) "Nurses' view of shared leadership: a case study"	Nurses at an ICU in Sweden Correlations – shared leadership and team performance	Questionnaire – 64 nurses *Quantitative*	Staff reported positive views in relation to the dimensions 'organizational culture' 'social interaction' 'work satisfaction' 'leadership' and 'shared leadership' and 'work motives'	• Weak definition of shared leadership as going from one nurse leader to two nurse leaders – not therefore based on shared leadership theory

					- Data collected in 2003 when understanding of shared leadership was poor - No major use of shared leadership theory to inform study or discussion
8.	Hoch et al. (2010) "Is the most effective team leadership shared?	Sample of 96 individuals in 26 consulting project teams. Consulting company – consulting services and training	Questionnaire	Shared leadership predicted team performance and both age diversity and coordination moderated the impact of shared leadership on team performance. Shared leadership positively related to team performance when age diversity and condition were low.	- Cross sectional - Small sample size - Age range was a little limited
9.	Bergman et al. (2012)	Students. Newly formed teams, that perhaps didn't know each other, given tasks they weren't prepared for Correlations – shared leadership and team effectiveness	45 'ad-hoc' decision making teams – 180 undergrad uni students. Behavioural coding (BARS) of videotapes of team discussion. Simulation of team based decisions *Cluster analysis / Quantitative*	The likelihood of a team experiencing a full range of leadership behaviour increased to the extent that multiple team members shared leadership, and that teams with shared leadership experienced less conflict, greater consensus and higher intragroup trust and cohesion than teams without shared leadership. So shared leadership contributes to overall team functioning	- Students received study credit for participation - Students not work based - Short term project teams - Leadership behaviours very limited - Not using shared leadership theory

| 10. | Muethel et al. (2012) "Socio-demographic and shared leadership behaviours in dispersed teams. Implications for human resource management" *useful for a list of shared leadership behaviours such as all team members asked for advice or proactively instituted new work methods to improve team performance | Geographically dispersed software project teams. Project based Correlations – shared leadership and team effectiveness | Functional approach to shared leadership 96 teams from 36 companies – 337 useable responses. Used Avolio et al 2003 – group level phenomena can be assessed by having each individual rate the group on attributed defined at that level. *Quantitative* | Shared leadership behaviour fosters team performance. Socio-demographic characteristics typical for dispersed teams foster shared leadership | • Context not considered – did project based nature of work make a difference? • Didn't look at whether anything was aiding or preventing shared leadership (i.e. technology?) • Cross sectional |
| 11. | Hoch (2013) "Shared leadership and innovation: the role of vertical leadership and employee integrity" *Useful as it lists the questions she used for her survey – on empowering leadership etc | Two organisations – medium sized training and development provider to manufacturing companies and one administrative public sector organisations. Service organisations. Stable teams involved in interdependent, cognitive, complex and knowledge based work – services to customers or training (Same sample as previous work) Correlations – shared leadership and team effectiveness | 43 work teams, 184 team members. Two different companies | Vertical transformational and empowering leadership and team member integrity as predictors of shared leadership Organisations should facilitate shred leadership as it has a positive association with innovation. Shared leadership has a positive relationship with innovative behaviour She tackles shared leadership through the lens of transformational leadership (my colleagues provide a clear vision of whom and what our team is / are driven by higher purposes or ideas) and by individual empowering leadership (my colleagues encourage me to learn new | • Cross sectional • Broad measure of leadership – both vertical transformational and empowering and shared • Didn't look at process of knowledge sharing for example |

				things / urge me to assume responsibilities on my own)	
12.	Fausing et al. (2013) "Moderators of shared leadership: work function and team autonomy"	81 teams in a manufacturing company, sample consists of 552 employees Correlations- shared leadership and team performance	Hierarchical regression analysis and moderated regression analysis *Quantitative*	Results indicated a non-significant relationship between shared leadership and team performance. Work function significantly moderated this relationship – shared leadership exhibited a negative relationship in manufacturing team performance and a positive one with knowledge team performance Team autonomy also positively related to performance	• Cross sectional, single organisation limits ability to generalise. No ability to infer causation
13.	Liu et al. (2014) "Examining the cross-level relationship between shared leadership and learning in teams: evidence from china" *useful explanation of density as a measure of shared leadership	Four high-technology, large companies based in China. Teams were involved in lots of different functions, from HR to sales and marketing. Correlations - Shared leadership and team performance	Social network approach – density as per Carson. Surveys to 263 members of 50 teams in China *Quantitative*	How does shared leadership influence overall team behaviour outcomes and individual members perceptions, interaction s and learning within the team. Shared leadership has a positive impact on both team and individual learning and this impact was realized through the mediating role of team psychological safety. Job variety may be a potential moderator in the relationship between shared leadership on team and individual learning	• Cross-sectional • Organisational context / culture not considered • Team role and team functions not considered as variable factor • Task interdependence, team characteristics etc. also not tested

				behaviours through team psychological safety.	
14.	Hoch (2014) "Shared leadership, diversity and information sharing in teams" * useful as it lists the items used to measure shared leadership	Two organisations – medium sized training and development provider to manufacturing companies and one administrative public sector organisations. Service organisations. Stable teams involved in interdependent, cognitive, complex and knowledge based work – services to customers or training Correlations – shared leadership and team performance	Field study – 48 teams, 280 members. Survey. Shared leadership was assessed using shared leadership sub-scales from the shared leadership questionnaire as described by Hoch 2012 and built on Pearce and Sims 2002 instrument. Structural equation modelling analysis of data collected. *Quantitative*	Shared leadership is positively associated with team performance, and this association was mediated by information sharing (information sharing supported the positive relationship between shared leadership improved team performance). Demographic diversity moderated the relationship between team shared leadership and team performance, such that shared leadership was more strongly associated with team performance in more diverse teams and less in diverse teams.	• Not context based • Cross sectional • No objective performance measures Team size not considered as to what impact it might have
15.	Drescher et al. (2014) "The dynamics of shared leadership – building trust and enhancing performance"	People forming online groups to complete a strategic game. Computer simulation. Correlation - Shared leadership and team performance	142 groups engaged in strategic simulation game over a 4-month period. Trace data from gaming organisation *Quantitative*	There is a positive change in trust mediating the relationship between positive changes in shared leadership and positive changes in performance. The growth in shared leadership contributes to the emergence of trust and a positive performance trend over time.	• Data was collected for commercial purposes and adapted to this study • Not generalizable • Relationships identified were small
16.	Nicolaides et al. (2014) "The shared leadership of teams: a meta-analysis of	Meta-analysis Correlation - Shared leadership and team performance	Meta-analysis from 1990 to April 2013. Published and	Much as Wang et al. Findings support the view that shared leadership has important effects on	• Meta-analysis has usual methodological issues

| | | proximal, distal and moderating relationships | | unpublished work – 467 studies | performance, which are over and above the effects of vertical leadership.
One way that shared leadership contributes to performance is through the enactment of motivational emergent state – team confidence. Thus, in moments of doubt, team stakeholders can reference team leadership and point out to team members that they clearly have the potential to be successful. Shared leadership is particularly effective when interdependence is high. Team confidence acts as a mediator of the shared leadership-performance relationship (it explains why shared leadership creates performance) and team tenure moderates this relationship (tenure of teams ensures that the relationship holds).
Shared leadership is more effective at the start of the task – perhaps team members cannot sustain shared leadership over time? | • Small sample of primary studies
• Not longitudinal – but shared leadership is a process |

17.	Lee et al. (2015) "An analysis of shared leadership, diversity and team creativity in an e-learning environment"	e-learning at a university Creative environment Knowledge sharing Correlations: Shared leadership and team creativity	Social network perspective – density as per Carson et al. self-reporting surveys 249 useable responses *Quantitative*	Role diversity directly influences team creativity, with shared leadership and knowledge sharing positively contributing to team creativity. Knowledge sharing had a partially mediating role between shared leadership and team creativity – so knowledge sharing can be seen to partially explain why shared leadership creates team creativity	• Students doing an e-learning course, not full time employees • Not longitudinal
18.	Fransen et al. (2015) "Who takes the lead? Social network analysis as a pioneering tool to investigate shared leadership within sports teams"	Sporting teams – hierarchical structure, one formal leader. Visible performance outcomes. Correlation – shared leadership and leading roles	Social network analysis of leadership networks based on leadership structures of task, motivational, social and external leaders. Questionnaires. *Quantitative*	Shared leadership exists in sports teams. Athlete leaders perceived as more motivational and social leaders than their coaches. Team Capitan and athlete leaders shared the lead on the different leadership roles.	• Cross sectional so no long-term view on network development, leadership emergent. • No discussion on the antecedents and outcomes of sharing leadership within the sports teams
19.	Fausing et al. (2015b) "Antecedents of shared leadership – empowering and interdependence"	81 knowledge and manufacturing teams from a Danish company Correlations: shared leadership and team performance	Structural equation modelling	External empowering team leader and interdependence in the team significantly predict the extent of shared leadership. Shared leadership is positively related to team performance	• Cross-sectional in a single organisation, so unable to make causal claims or generalise results • Same data as previous research in 2013
20.	Mendez and Busenbark (2015) "Shared leadership and gender	Social network analysis of 231 members from 28 committees	Social network analysis 2 ANCOVA tests	Significant differences between men and women's leadership influence, as	• Research cannot be applied to other groups. These

	– all members are equal, but some more than others"			rated by their peers, using directive and supportive leadership behaviours. Shared leadership had no significant effect on reducing this gender gap.	committees were very specific in their characteristics
21.	Binci et al. (2016) "Do vertical and shared leadership need each other in change management?" useful for details of quals methods	Change management project in an Italian public utility company - Complex, knowledge based, dealing with significant (but one off) change	Content analysis of 9 semi-structured interviews with top and middle managers. Document analysis of corporate reports and presentations. *Qualitative*	There is a need for both vertical and shared leadership when dealing with change. Leadership behaviours and approaches are complementary sources that shape a constant compromise.	• Not multi-level – didn't extend beyond management to look at team relationships.
22.	Serban and Roberts (2016) "Exploring antecedents and outcomes of shared leadership in a creative context: A mixed methods approach"	Public research university. Correlations - Shared leadership and team creativity	120 undergrad and MA students in 30 teams - an experiment environment. Teams were set a task of either low or high task ambiguity. Mixed methods – quantitative survey via regression based analysis and qualitative (open ended question on survey) using thematic analysis. Used a variety of scales including Carson's internal team environment Likert scale and Carson's shared leadership scale to calculate density of shared leadership *Mixed methods*	Examine shared leadership in the context of a challenging creative task. Antecedents- task cohesion and task ambiguity and internal team environment Outcomes – task satisfaction, team satisfaction and team performance Findings – in the context of a creative task, internal team environment is a predictor of shared leadership – consistent with the findings of Carson et al. Didn't find support for the mediating effects of shared leadership Under challenging conditions, task characteristics can be more	• Very context driven but only looks at team – not at wider network. Nor does it consider the organisational culture or the stakeholders • Students as subjects • Students paid to participate

			meaningful to analyse that team characteristic as they can have a higher impact on team and organizational outcomes Findings suggest it is better to analyse shared leadership via task than via team (so task characteristics, task cohesion, task performance and task satisfaction). Indicates that autocratic style doesn't necessarily need to be used in order to achieve task objectives.	
23. D'Innocenzo et al. (2016) "A meta-analysis of different forms of shared leadership-team performance relations"	Meta-analysis of published and non-published empirical research	Meta-analysis – random effect study, using 43 research studies.	Firstly – a definition drawn from the meta-analysis. Identified five salient themes throughout: (a) locus of leadership, (b) formality of leadership, (c) equal and non-equal distribution, (d) temporal dynamics, and (e) the involvement of multiple roles and functions. Meta-analytic support for the positive relationship between shared leadership and team performance. Network measures evidenced higher effect sizes – i.e. social network approaches may be a more informed way of studying shared leadership dynamics.	• Meta-analysis is always limited by the number of studies available – in this case, not a lot. • Looked only at shared leadership and team performance • They didn't include team size

				Lower-effect sizes occurred when sample was in classroom or lap. Field work was better. Task complexity significantly moderated the shared leadership, with lower effect sizes observed with more complex tasks. No significant influence of task interdependence was observed.	
24.	Drescher and Garbers (2016) "Shared leadership and commonality: a policy-capturing study"	Students and employees from a range of universities and organisations Context really not considered so no shared characteristics available. Correlations – shared leadership and commonality	Experimental policy-capturing design – 262 students from universities in USA and Germany and 99 employees evaluated their performance and satisfaction. Online survey at two different points in time. Scenario setting and responses *Quantitative*	Focused on shared leadership and team variables such as commonality and communication. – examined the effects of shared leadership, commonality (shared beliefs, feelings or attitudes) and communication mode on work performance and satisfaction. Shared leadership and commonality had positive effects on team members intended performance and predicted satisfaction. Commonality and communication had interactive effects – commonality was more important for face to face teams than virtual ones.	• Although it says its benefit is that it isn't cross sectional, it only captured data at two different points and therefore isn't longitudinal (which requires a minimum of 3). • Employees were from a range of organisations (not specified) and students from a range of courses
25.	Wu and Cormican (2016a)	22 Engineering design teams – creative teams	Social network analysis – 4 key elements of	Density of a shared leadership network is	• Conceptual work

	"Shared leadership and team creativity – a social network analysis in engineering design teams	Correlations – shared leadership and team creativity	shared leadership networks (network density, centralisation, efficiency and strength).	positively related to team creativity. Centralisation exerts a negative influence on creativity. No evidence to support a positive correlation between efficiency and team creativity, we demonstrate an inverted U-shaped relationship between strength and team creativity in a shared leadership network.	
26.	Friedrich et al. (2016) "Collective leadership behaviours: evaluating the leader, team network and problem situation characteristics that influence their use"	Lab test – student groups. Used in order to control variables and to offer insight into whether contextual issues affect leadership behaviours	153 valid responses. Students were asked to complete a simulation of problem solving four different scenarios. They were asked to draw the networks, write a response to the problems and answer general questions to establish their individual differences (intelligence, experience and personality). Written answers were assessed by 'independent' panel and judged on Likert scale which were then analysed quantitatively.	Looked at three dimensions of leadership behaviour from Friedrich et al 2009 – communication, network development and leader-team exchange. Tested these with regards to how individual differences of leaders, the given problem domain (strategic change or innovation) and problem focus (task or relationship focussed) influence the use of each collective leadership dimension.

"the findings indicate that there are in fact several ways in which leaders may promote collective leadership in their team, and that these forms of collective leadership are | • Lab results – hypothetical teams, with made up people so not realistic and the 'leaders' were not in real leadership positions and nor did they know the teams
• No measure of performance outcomes so judgements cannot be made on whether differential use of the three forms of collective leadership behaviours were tied to leader or team performance. |

				related to different leader characteristics and are used at different rates depending on team and task characteristics" Leader-team exchange was used more in innovation scenario and in task focused problems (so not when resolving relationship issues). Communication and network development were used for strategic change scenario, more than the innovation scenario.	
27.	Hoegl and Muethel (2016) "Enabling shared leadership in virtual project teams: A practitioners guide"	96 globally dispersed software development project teams	See Muethel 2012 – same data	Team leaders tend to underestimate the team members' capacity to lead themselves. Leaders therefore monopolize decision-making authority and prevent members from having autonomy.	• Data from a 2012 study
28.	Hu et al. (2017) "Conflict and creativity in inter-organisational teams – the moderating role of shared leadership"	Inter-organisational teams in china involved in product development. Teams of employees from collaborated organisations brought together to conduct an initiative. Rife for conflict. Diverse membership. Very creative. Correlations – shared leadership and team creativity	Questionnaire - 54 team managers, 276 team members. Ratings scales that assessed (among other things) the extent the whole team shows shared leadership behaviours. *Quantitative*	Relationship conflict has a negative relationship with team creativity, whereas task conflict has an inverted U-shaped relationship with team creativity. When shared leadership is stronger, the negative relationship with team creativity is weaker for relationship conflict.	• Cross-sectional so no causality. • Team size may have been impactful but wasn't considered. • Relatively small sample size. • No contextual discussions so no insight into impact of culture, or

					structural governance
29.	Wang et al. (2017) "Learning to Share: exploring temporality in Shared leadership and team learning	MBA students running business simulation projects Self-managed teams Correlations - Shared leadership and team learning / temporality	310 MBA students in 66 teams running business simulation projects Survey with rankings based on Carson et al., 2007 network density. *Quantitative*	Shared leadership stimulated team learning behaviours in a manner consistent with previous research at the early stages of teamwork but not at the middle or later stages of the task. So shared leadership was weaker at later stages of task. Teams engaged in more learning behaviours early in the task were more likely to keep their leadership network structure stable.	• Small, specific sample • Simulation rather than real work teams • Used exploratory questions and quantitative methods – so propositions weren't tested • Self-reporting was required and is problematic (particularly on team learning behaviours) • Network measure of shared leadership requires on similar perceptions of leadership and does not account for individual meanings attached to the word
30.	Choi et al. (2017) "Effects of transformational and shared leadership styles on employee's perception of team effectiveness"	Korean financial and insurance firms. Correlations – shared leadership and team effectiveness	Multiple regression models. 424 employees – survey. Measured shared leadership using the 13 items developed by Small 2007 (not widely recognised…)	Transformational leadership contributed to team output effectiveness, whereas shared leadership improved the team's organising and planning effectiveness.	• Views shared leadership as a leadership style • Looked at only one type of team • Individual level analysis not team

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			Quantitative		and individual analysis • Only looked at two leadership 'styles'
31.	Zhou and Vredenburgh (2017) "Dispositional antecedents of shared leadership emergent states on entrepreneurial teams"	200 entrepreneurial teams in a technology incubator in China Correlations – shared leadership and team effectiveness	Online survey Quantitative	Team conscientiousness level and team openness to experience diversity were found to interact with shared leadership to influence team effectiveness in a supplementary way, such that the relationship between shared leadership and team effectiveness will be stronger when the team's mean score on conscientiousness level Is high and diversity score on openness to experience is low. Team diversity scores on emotional stability and agreeableness interact with shared leadership in a complementary way.	• Some variables not investigated, including the business sector in which the teams were working within • Other things not investigated include how team personality level, team personality diversity and shared leadership might co-exist
32.	Hsu et al. (2017) "Exploring the interaction between vertical and shared leadership in information systems development project"	90 ISD teams – graduates working in these project teams	Questionnaire	Shared leadership partially mediates the negative impact of value diversity on system quality. Effective vertical leadership can mitigate the adverse impacts of value diversity and stabilise teamwork when SL is absent	• No longitudinal data • Projects had already passed, were not ongoing • Potential of bias

33.	Wang, L., Jiang, W., Liu "Shared leadership and team effectiveness: The examination of LMX differentiation and servant leadership on emergency and consequence of shared leadership"	336 salespersons in 110 sales teams in China	Group engagement model	Shared leadership mediated the relationships between LM differentiation with both team performance and team organisational citizenship behaviour. Servant leadership moderated the relationship between LMX differentiation and SL	• Variety of leadership processes included. • Source of data unclear
34.	Jeoung Han, Lee, Beyerlein, and Kolb (2018) "Shared leadership in teams: The role of coordination, goal commitment and knowledge sharing on perceived team performance"	Student project teams – 158 PG / UG students	Questionnaire	Shared leadership positively affected coordination activities, goal commitment and knowledge sharing, which in turn positively affected team performance.	• Student teams
35.	Gu et al. (2018) "A multilevel analysis of the relationship between shared leadership and creativity in inter-organisational teams"	53 inter-organisational teams in China – 53 team supervisors and 270 team members Correlations – shared leadership and team creativity / knowledge sharing	Questionnaire – scales adopted from a variety of sources *Quantitative*	Shared leadership is positively related to both team creativity and individual creativity via knowledge sharing. Task interdependence positively moderates the relationship between shared leadership and knowledge sharing	• Managers agreed to participate if they were given results • Self-reporting on items such as team and individual creativity
36.	Sweeney et al. (2019) "Shared leadership in commercial organisations: A systematic review of definitions, theoretical frameworks and organisational outcomes"	Systematic literature review	Literature review of 40 empirical research papers on shared leadership	Critical review of definitions, theoretical dispositions and measurement approaches adopted in the last 20 years of shared leadership in settings of both commercial and non-commercial organisations. Provides evidence of difference of	• Systematic literature reviews are always subjective, and the authors select what is included and how it is interpreted. • However, the authors outline a

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				conceptualisation of shared leadership in these two distinct settings. Framework developed that shows gaps in current understanding within the literature; in particular it calls for longitudinal and qualitative research into the subject in a variety of organisational contexts	strict protocol, adding validity to their work.
37.	Kukenberger and D'Innocenzo (2019) "The building blocks of shared leadership: the interactive effects of diversity types, team climate, and time"	267 undergraduate students in 73 teams and 142 MBA students in 41 teams	Online survey distributed at multiple points throughout a 10 week study. Various measures used from different literature sources	Functional diversity results in higher levels of shared leadership, but only when teams functioned within a cooperative climate. Gender diversity evidenced a negative impact on shared leadership when team cooperative climate was low in one or two samples. Time played critical role in these effects – the influence of functional diversity strengthened over time and the negative impact of gender dissipated as teams gained more experience.	• Use of student samples – though mitigated by replication study and careful design of study to replicate work placed studies.
38.	Scott-Young et al. (2019) "Shared leadership in project teams: An integrative multi-level conceptual model and research agenda	Systematic literature review	Conceptual	Shared leadership has rarely been studied in the context of project management, but should be considered as it broadens the options for leading project teams	• Conceptual not empirical, though evidence based due to systematic review • Difficulties with applying constructs

				identified in other settings to project management one.

13.2 APPENDIX 2 – List of semi-structured interviews

Case study	Interviewee's anonymised name	Job title	Core team	Level of management	Date of interview	1st interview time	2nd interview time
Agency 1	Kate	Head of Engagement	Leadership team	Leadership team	23rd July 2018	36.19	
Agency 1	Martin	Managing Director	Leadership team	Leadership team	27th July 2018	62.29	
Agency 1	Mary	Project Director	Account / client team	Project team leader	27th July 2018	41.08	
Agency 1	Clare	Project Manager	Account / client team	Project team member	27th July 2018	26.08	
Agency 1	Caroline	Project Manager	Account / client team	Project team member	27th July 2018	32.43	
Agency 1	Hazel	Deputy Design Director	Creative team	Project team leader	28th August 2018	22.38	
Agency 1	Alice	Exhibition Designer	Exhibition team	Project team member	28th August 2018	22.41	
Agency 1	Paul	Creative Artworker	Creative team	Project team member	28th August 2018	23.16	
Agency 2	Hayley	Comms & PR manager	Communication / PR	Project team member	24th July 2018	40.55	
Agency 2	Jane	Senior Account Director	Account / client team	Project team leader	24th July 2018 & 25th April 2019 & 21st June 2019 (last via email)	27	54.39 (with Jenna)

Agency 2	Phoebe	Account Director	Account / client team	Project team leader	24th July 2018 & 24th June 2019 (last via email)	69	Emailed responses to further questions June 2019
Agency 2	Sophia	Strategy Director	Strategy team	Leadership team	25th July 2018	38.14	
Agency 2	Tim	Design Director	Creative team	Project team member	25th July 2018	38.51	
Agency 2	Mandy	Senior Account Executive	Account / client team	Project team member	25th July 2018	34.06	
Agency 2	Louise	Traffic Manager / heads up studio and management across the creative team	Creative team	Project team leader	25th July 2018	25.54	
Agency 2	Lisa	Senior Account Manager	Account / client team	Project team member	25th July 2018	38.13	
Agency 2	Matt	Creative Director	Creative team	Leadership team	26th July 2018	52.1	
Agency 2	James	CEO	Leadership team	Leadership team	26th July 2018	Via email	
Agency 2	Jenna	Marketing & PR manager	Communication / PR	Project team member	25th April 2019		Interviewed once, but during 2nd round of data collection, with Jane. Interview 54.39 minutes
Agency 3	Jo	Account Director	Account / client team	Project team leader	15th January 2019 & 21st March 2019	26.25	53 minutes (with Andrew)
Agency 3	Rod	Strategy Director	Strategy team	Project team member	15th January 2019	46	
Agency 3	Donna	Director - People	HR	Leadership team	15th January 2019 & 21st March 2019	53	51 minutes (with Stewart)

Agency 3	Andrew	Senior Production Director	Production team	Project team leader	15th January 2019 & 21st March 2019 & 24th June 2019 (last via email)	30.2	53 minutes (with Jo) Also emailed responses to further clarification questions June 2016
Agency 3	Charlie	Strategy Director	Strategy team	Project team member	16th January 2019	34	
Agency 3	Stewart	Founding Partner & CEO	Leadership team	Leadership team	16th January 2019 & 21st March 2019	34.46	51 minutes (with Donna)
Agency 3	Charlotte	Senior Account Manager	Account / client team	Project team member	16th January 2019 & 21st June 2019 (last via email)	17.1	Emailed responses to further questions - June 2016
Agency 3	Mark	Senior Designer	Creative team	Project team member	16th January 2019	18.7	
Agency 3	Susie	Group Design Head	Creative team	Project team	16th January 2019	28.24	
Agency 3	Robert	Creative Director	Creative team	Project team leader	16th January 2019	30.01	
Agency 3	Dave	Director - Creative and Strategy	Strategy team	Leadership team	16th January 2019	38	

13.3 APPENDIX 3 – Participant information sheet and consent form

Sheffield Hallam University

EXPLORING SHARED LEADERSHIP IN AN AGENCY CONTEXT

You are being invited to take part in a research study to assist with the completion of a PhD. Before you decide if you would like to take part, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it involves. Take time to read the following information and if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information, please ask.

1. What is the purpose of the study?

The aim of my PhD is to critically examine the opportunities and suitability of sharing leadership practices across brand / experiential agency teams. I will be examining how the organisational, team and task conditions impact on who does what within the teams. I will also be looking for what helps people to take on leadership practices as well as what hinders them from doing so. My key question is 'Why – and when – are team members leaders?'

2. Why have you asked me to take part and what are you hoping to find out?

I am particularly interested in experiential agencies because of the complexity of the work that you do, and the particular challenges that working with clients brings to the role of running events. By examining your organisation, and your job within that, I hope to be able to understand the varied and complex nature of what you do. Research suggests that each of your team members undertakes leadership practices and behaviours, even though they may

not be in formal managerial positions. By spending time talking to you and observing your team, I hope to be able to provide a full picture of when each of your team members becomes a leader, and why they are able to do so. This will, I hope, help organisations like yours to improve the performance of the team, and allow team members the opportunity to develop their leadership skills and have their existing leadership practices recognised.

3. Do I have to take part?

No. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do you will be given a consent form to sign. You are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

4. What will I be required to do?

If you agree to take part in the study, you will be asked to:

- *Participate in an interview that would last approximately 30-45 minutes. The interview will take place at a place and a time that is convenient time for you. You will be asked questions about your experience of working in teams within your organisation, and also about working with other key stakeholders such as client and other agencies. We'll be discussing your roles and responsibilities and who does what, and when within these teams. The interview will be audio recorded to enable me to transcribe what was discussed and analyse the results. All data used from these interviews will be anonymous, and may include the use of anonymised quotes.*

- *Allow the researcher to visit your place of work and observe the normal routine of your day to day activities.*

- *Allow the researcher to observe and video record team meetings. The data captured during these observations will be fully anonymised.*

5. Are there any risks / benefits involved?

There are no anticipated risks to taking part in the research. There are also no immediate benefits, although the findings from the study will suggest some areas of best practice which you may find useful.

6. Will my involvement in the study be kept confidential?

All names and references to your organisation will be removed from the final report and from any published research. Any identifiable information about each participant will also be removed. Some direct quotes may be included from participants, but these will be fully anonymised. The project has been through the ethical approval system at Sheffield Hallam University.

7. **What will happen to the data when this study is over?**

All the data collected will be stored securely at Sheffield Hallam University and will be completely confidential. I will be responsible for the data once the study is over and will keep it in a password protected file. I will keep a copy of the raw data indefinitely and may use it for other studies on similar topics if it is appropriate to do so.

8. Summary of the planned research

I will be working with three experiential agencies to gather the data for this project. I will interview a range of people working on the content, strategy and delivery (including CEO / Board level, managerial level, team leader level, team level and administrator level participants). Once I have visited all three organisations, I will analyse the data I have

collected via interviews and observations, in order to explore who is leading within your

organisations, and why that is happening.

9. **How will you use what you find out?**

It is intended that the results of this study will be used to complete my PhD. It is also

intended that the results will be published in academic literature and presented and national

and international conferences. Results may also be publicised through industry press and

may be used in a book on Event Leadership.

10. **How long is the whole study likely to last?**

I hope to complete the study by 2020.

11. **Who is organising and funding the research?**

This research forms the basis of a PhD project by Emma Abson through Sheffield Hallam

University. The study is self-funded by Emma.

12. **How can I find out about the results of the study?**

If you wish to be informed about the results of the study, please let me know and I will

happily share these once I have finished the study and submitted my PhD!

13. **Legal basis for research for studies**.

The University undertakes research as part of its function for the community under its legal

status. Data protection allows us to use personal data for research with appropriate

*safeguards in place under the legal basis of **public tasks that are in the public interest.** A full*

statement of your rights can be found at

https://www.shu.ac.uk/About%20this%20website/Privacy%20policy/Privacy%20Notices/Privacy%20notice%20for%20research

However, all University research is reviewed to ensure that participants are treated appropriately, and their rights respected. This study was approved by UREC with Converis number. Further information at https://www.shu.ac.uk/research/ethics-integrity-and-practice

14. Contact details

If you require any further details about the project, please contact:

	Researcher	Supervisor
Title	Ms	Dr
Surname	Abson	Crowther
First name	Emma	Phil
Post	Senior lecturer	Principal Lecturer
Qualifications	BA, MRes, PGCert in HE	Doctoral qualification
School/Unit	Business School	Business School
Contact Address	Sheffield Hallam University, Howard Street, Sheffield S1 1WBT Telephone: 0114 225 5555	Sheffield Hallam University, Howard Street, Sheffield S1 1WBT Telephone: 0114 225 5555
Email address	e.abson@shu.ac.uk	p.crowther@shu.ac.uk

You should contact the Data Protection Officer if:	You should contact the Head of Research Ethics (Professor Ann Macaskill) if
- you have a query about how your data is used by the University - you would like to report a data security breach (e.g. if you think your personal data has been lost or disclosed inappropriately) - you would like to complain about how the University has used your personal data DPO@shu.ac.uk	you have concerns with how the research was undertaken or how you were treated a.macaskill@shu.ac.uk

Postal address: Sheffield Hallam University, Howard Street, Sheffield S1 1WBT Telephone: 0114 225 5555

Project Consent Form

TITLE OF STUDY: EXPLORING SHARED LEADERSHIP IN AN AGENCY CONTEXT

Please answer the following questions by circling your responses:

Have you read and understood the background information provided on this study? YES NO

Have you received enough information about this study? YES / NO

Have you been able to ask questions about this study? YES / NO

Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from this study at any time, without giving a

reason for your withdrawal, and any responses that you have given will not be used? YES / NO

Data will be anonymised before being presented.

Do you give permission for your anonymised responses to be used for this undergraduate study? YES

/ NO

Do you understand that the study is part of a PhD project, the results of which may be published

externally in a number of different ways (i.e. journal articles, book, industry press)? YES / NO

Do you agree to take part in this study? YES NO

Your signature will certify that you have voluntarily decided to take part in this research study having

read and understood the information provided for participants. It will also certify that you have had

adequate opportunity to discuss the study with the researcher and that all questions have been

answered to your satisfaction.

Signature of participant:…………………..……………………….**Date:**……………

Name (block letters):……………………………………………….

Signature of researcher:……………………………………… **Date:**……………

Please keep your copy of the consent form and the background information about the study

together.

Emma Abson, Senior Lecturer

Sheffield Hallam University

e.abson@shu.ac.uk

13.4 APPENDIX 4 – Example of interview guide

**Theme 1: Intro**
Topic	**Specific questions / areas**	**Space for notes**
1. **Agreement to participate**	**Ensure they have read participant information form** **Signing of consent form**	

2. **My research**	**Shared leadership definition:**
	To critically examine the conditions that enable the sharing of leadership in intra and inter-organisational event agency teams.
	Research questions:
	- How do the situational and contextual (organisational, team and task) conditions in intra and inter-organisational teams underpin shared leadership?
	- How is leadership shared in event agencies?
	   o What are the drivers that enable shared leadership in event agencies?
	   o What are the constraints that challenge shared leadership in event agencies?
	- Why – and when – are team members leaders?	

**Theme 2: Organisation and role**
3. **Can you tell me about your organisation and its work?**	**What best describes your organisation - what sort of organisation is it?** **What is it like to work here?** Culture Benefits of working there Drawbacks of working there	
4. **About you and your role here?**	How long have your worked her? Responsibilities Who do you work with?	
**Theme 3:Team**
5. **Can you spend a few minutes describing**	**How big is the team?** **How long have you all worked together?** **How well would you say you know each other? Relationships**	

the team you work in to me?	What helps for a good relationship with colleagues? What hinders it? (Support / trust / integrity / sense of belonging) How close are you to other team members? Do you have to interact with them daily? More / less? Do you work together on some tasks? **Who does what and when?** **How is this decided?** **How are decisions made in the team?** (Strategic planning, missions / vision and goal setting. Dealing with client and project design / development) **What are some specific ways that various members use their expertise and interests?** (strengths and weaknesses – including self) **Sense of purpose / shared goal** Does it have a clearly understood direction or goal or sense of purpose? What is it? Who creates the vision? How is it created? How are collaborative goals determined? Are the group committed to the goal? Client? (Who determines the goals and objectives and strategies? Are the team members involved? If so, how)	
6. **Can you give me an example of a time when the team has faced a difficult problem and has come together to resolve it? What happened?**	**How would you describe the process members use to work together?** **What happens when there is conflict within the teams? How does communication happen?** **Is there a collaborative culture?**	
Theme 4: Leadership		

7.	**Can you talk to me about what leadership means to you?**	**What is leadership?** **What is leadership like at your organisation?** **Give me an example of good / bad leadership** Vertical leadership Delegation? Relationships **What sort of leader is your formal leader of the team?** Vertical leadership (Team dynamics / team leadership / decision making / delegation / autonomy / relationship with your manager? encouraged to share leadership?) **What about the CEO**	
8.	**My research is based on the sharing of leadership in teams - can you tell me whether you think leadership is shared in your team?**	*"Dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals whose objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organizational goals" (Pearce & Conger, 2003, p. 1).* If so, how? When? Does it work? If not, why not? What stops it happening? Could it work? **Do you think anyone else leads in your team?** Shared leadership. How do they do it? What helps them and hinders them? When do they do it? **Why might others not take leadership roles?** (Fear / dynamics / relationships / risk / disadvantages / boundaries / formal roles)	
9.	**Would you describe yourself as a leader?**	**If so, When? How and Why?** What makes it happen? **If not, why not?** What prevents it from happening? **What would you need in order to develop your leadership practice?**	
10.	**How do you think team dynamics and leadership**	**What happens at different stages of the project life cycle?** **What happens when things become urgent / near to delivery?** Do roles change?	

changes at different stages in your event planning life cycle?	**What happens when the team experiences stress** – for example, if the event is at risk? Or there is a sudden time pressure? *How does that make you feel?*	
Theme 5: Client		
11. Could you describe the relationship you have with the client?	**How do you and your team work with the client?** **How well does it work?** **How do you communicate?** **What helps to create a good relationship? What hinders it?**	
Theme 6: Finally and thanks		
12. Finally	**Is there anything that was left out that I should have included about shared leadership in your team and with the client?** **Any final comments that you would like to make?**	

13.5 APPENDIX 5 – Observational guide

Participant observation guide

General

Description of what I am observing – who and what the office looks like / seating structures

/ meeting spaces / informal meeting areas etc

Is it a creative environment?

Who works where?

How do I feel?

General atmosphere – climate of trust / sense of urgency or calmness?

Team size / member maturity / familiarity

Verbal behaviours:

Who speaks to who / who initiates it / language / tone of voice:

Casual conversations / informal chats – between team members

Casual conversations / informal chats – with me

Giving work / delegation

Problem solving conversations

Empathy

Decision making processes

Support – business and / or personal

Interactions – who / when / where and why

Physical behaviours

What people do / who does what / who is or isn't interacting

Human traffic – how often do people move around / enter space / leave the space

Communication processes

How do they communicate – face to face? Email? Telephone?

Interdependence? Tasks appear to be interconnected, integrated, co-ordination and

requiring joint action?

Levels of team communication and cohesiveness

All team members having a voice?

13.6 APPENDIX 6 – Extract from research diary

Observation 1: 11am on 23rd

Description of setting:

I am sitting in main office on 1st floor, but not at a desk (sitting near reception area so I can observe all the areas). I am not seated close enough to the teams to hear details of discussions / talks though I will move late.

Around 25 staff members present.

Organisation is spread over two floors, but most happening on first floor where around 20-25 staff members sit. Open plan but senior figures do have offices with doors.

Buzz of chatter but mostly around working pods of between 4 and 6 people

Formal training happening at desk, but others carry on as 'normal'

Most aged under 30, a handful older than this

Music playing quietly (music not radio)

Small touches like people allowed deliveries at work (and they come constantly) and the free food / drink - seems to be drinks and breakfast stuff in the kitchen. I asked, and was told it's all free and they also have Friday beers.

Some movement between banks of desks to casually chat but much of this happened in kitchen (on same floor).

Atmosphere does not feel creative – though I am sitting with the client managers rather than the design teams (who sit downstairs). Atmosphere definitely feels like an office. I feel comfortable to be here, but also not totally relaxed – there feels like a definite edge here, and there aren't high levels of banter or engagement communication across teams. It's quiet, and people appear to be getting on with their work.

People are not working in isolation though – they ask each other questions, and get up to look at screens, find documents for each other and make drinks for each other frequently. There seems to be a high level of involvement in problem solving -I heard, on at least three occasions, someone ask someone else for help, or to discuss ideas.

The kitchen is an important social area. Staff feel relaxed in there and engage in informal conversations about TV and their weekends. The MD and other 'higher ups' use the kitchen, and engage in general chatter when there.

Telephones ring frequently, and are used frequently. Telephones are used to arrange meetings with other teams (are emails used also? Follow up).

Difficult to establish who the formal leaders of each team were, as they didn't sit in specific seats (i.e. at the top of their pod). There were a number of occasions in which people were asked 'can you do this for me?' or 'do you know about this, can you do it?' – though establishing the hierarchy was difficult, and it often appeared that those who were asking were on the same level.

I saw no friction between teams or individuals – explore in interviews.

It was unclear whether each pod represented a different team (later clarified that they did) – there was some interconnectedness between them though; I saw at least two occasions were people from one pod wheeled their chair to another to collaborate for longer than 5 minutes.

All staff members were late for meetings with me and all rescheduled at least once

Initial interview with Kate (LT)– key point was that she values staff over client, and tries to ensure that this is the organisational culture. She is v critical I think because she has been with the organisation since the start and sees herself as both a founding member and responsible for the entire workforce. Her role does not necessarily indicate this level of authority, though it is clear she has direct access to the MD on a daily basis. Particularly interesting discussion on the importance of culture and the different perceptions of leadership from the MD and those working on the ground.

When lines of communication break down between the cross-functional teams, the junior team members lose confidence and revert to vertical leadership to solve issues