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Shared Leadership in Top Teams. A Study of Nonprofit Federated Board Leadership

By

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Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

This study explores the complex nature of nonprofit board leadership in two boards in one UK charitable federation. It employs a constructionist epistemology and a hybrid analytical approach of thematic analysis, positioning, and leadership differentiated in the interplay between individual action and interdependent leadership. Analysis of three data sources (18 trustee interviews, observation of 3 board meetings, and 39 archival documents) reveal three themes: ‘applying accountability’, ‘engaging with team tensions’, and ‘managing resources’. Two storylines also emerge: ‘seizing a commercial opportunity’ and ‘developing a new service’. External to these boards, 15 interviews and 3 meetings inform an analytical description of the ‘case organisation’.

Findings from this ‘interpretive sensemaking’ case study (Welch et al., 2011) show multiple ways in which leadership occurs. Trustees’ experience of leadership in talk and in their interactions in negotiation illustrate the kind of leadership agency they adopt when taking responsibility for multiple forms of accountability to clients, tasks, and external entities. Human agency is illuminated in trustees experience of leadership as they act as ‘innovative agents’ and ‘constructive integrators’. In particular how they balance between innovation and integration. The proposed board leadership framework integrates the individual and team aspects. It conceptually relates the elements of agency as a discursive presentation and the practice of accountability with positioning through which insights make visible the ‘shared’ leadership of two teams that constitute trustee boards. This study departs from the positivist orientation of much nonprofit board research to contribute insights of everyday leadership from a rare interpretive perspective. It further contributes to studies and increasing

interest in positioning theory, position-oriented analysis, and innovative methodological hybrid analytical approaches. Finally, it contributes to empirical studies of shared leadership (Pearce and Conger, 2003). In particular, the dynamic, temporal, and temporary nature of the concept in ‘real’ life settings.

While extant literature of nonprofit board leadership from a positivist orientation offers an important body of work, little attention has been given to how leadership actually occurs in practice. To this end, the theoretical focus of positioning theory helps to illuminate the everyday interactions and discourses through which leadership is enacted.

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Chapter I Introduction

This introductory chapter is organised in the following order (1) introduction to the thesis, (2) background to the important topic of nonprofit board leadership, (3) the aims and objectives of the thesis together with the research questions and the methodological perspective. The chapter closes with an outline of the thesis.

1.1. Introduction

This thesis explores nonprofit board leadership. It is an exploratory study in two federated boards in one UK charitable federation. An ‘interpretive sensemaking’ case study in the idiographic tradition of social science (Welch et al. 2011) is employed in order to understand the complex nature of nonprofit federated board leadership as opposed to ‘law-like explanations’ (p. 747). To this end, the theoretical focus of positioning theory makes visible the everyday interactions and discourses through which boards construct leadership.

Through analysis of three data sources (semi-structured interview, observation and archival documents) this case study explores how leadership happens in a horizontal authority structure where trustees hold equal rights and responsibility. The purpose being to gain knowledge and further understanding of nonprofit board leadership from an interpretive perspective of how trustees a) ascribe meaning to their leadership experience in talk in interview; b) negotiate different positions in decision-making episodes in the boardroom; and c) navigate board relations through discursive practices. In so doing, the thesis presents ‘an analysis of the context and processes which illuminate the theoretical issues’ (Hartley, 2004, p. 344) leading to a rare interpretivist perspective on nonprofit board leadership.

1.2. On the need to revisit nonprofit board leadership

Nonprofit board leadership is an important topic as persistent cases of failure in the governance of charities apparently linked to how their boards function, or fail to function, have not only resulted in blaming the leadership behaviour of those at the top but also in a ‘decrease in public trust in nonprofit organisations’ (Liket and Maas, 2015, p. 270). Persistent failure also subjects boards to censure for their inability to effectively govern (Watson, et al., 2021). For example, Kids Company (UK Parliamentary Committee 2016); and Oxfam (UK Parliamentary Report 2018). This apparent failure is further complicated by a lack of understanding among scholars, as there is little empirical evidence in relation to ‘what it is boards actually do’ (Watson, et al., 2021, p. 190). Consequently, this keeps the public focus on the governance of charities, although the processes that shape nonprofit board functioning remain poorly understood.

Watson et al. (2021) scope the field highlighting Cadbury (2000) and the need for research to focus on actual board activity for our scholarly understanding of how such organisations operate rather than organisational structure. These scholars point to others who have taken up the invitation to study board action (e.g. Bezemer et al., 2014; Van Puyvelde et al., 2018) and highlight increasing qualitative studies of corporate governance citing McNulty et al. (2013) and research on board performance. Notably they comment that such studies represent a fraction of published work.

Cadbury’s view resonates with Cornforth, who for several decades has been at the vanguard of research about multi-level governance, contextual influences, and concerns around effective board management (Cornforth, 2001; Cornforth, 1998). Cornforth argues that a

previous research focus from a positivist orientation has led to a narrow range of theoretical perspectives which have not illuminated how boards actually function. As little attention has been given to the processes and practices of leadership, this has led to gaps in our understanding about how boards govern in practice (Cornforth, 2014); a view echoed by Watson et al. (2021). As accountability is a central concern for nonprofit boards, the lack of empirical work about how boards actually function in practice (Cornforth, 2014; Cornforth, 2012) masks the different ways in which accountability might occur (Liket and Maas, 2015) aside from accountability to funders (Thompson and Williams, 2014). This deficit of knowledge about the processes and practices of leadership has an important impact on how we understand board accountability. This is the gap in literature in which this study seeks to make a contribution.

1.3. Purpose of the research

The research topic and the initial idea for this study originate with Cornforth (2012). This research departs from the positivist orientation adopted in much of the literature to study board leadership by employing a constructionist-interpretivist perspective on nonprofit federated board leadership by using a qualitative methodology and employing an ‘interpretive sensemaking’ case study strategy (Welch et al., 2011, p. 747) combined with a hybrid analytical approach of thematic analysis; positioning and leadership differentiated in the interplay between individual action and interdependent leadership. Positioning theory (Harre and Van Langenhove, 1991) is employed to the study of themes generated from everyday conversations with trustees and the storylines emerging from their interactions in board meetings. In this research, meetings are viewed as ‘orderly sequences of meaningful

actions ... which seem to have some measure of coherence and structure' (Harre, 1993, p. 56 in Hirvonen, 2016) that create an arena for positioning that is unlike everyday conversations. This research draws on the idea of trustees presenting themselves as agents through actions embedded in an 'agentic framework' (Harre, 1995). According to Harre there are two main ways of presenting ourselves as agents. Actions taken in an 'agentic framework' are set out below:

1. '...[T]he taking and assigning, accepting and repudiating of responsibility for actions'
2. '... [T]he demonstration that what has happened was an action satisfying some appropriate rule, convention or norm, or was not an action but the effect of some causal process' (p. 123).

Human agency in this research is 'not a psychology of choosing but one of executing a choice once made'. Thus, taking a common-sense view to think about an agent being someone capable of 'bringing something about' (Harre, 1995, p. 120).

To conclude this section, the research purpose is first to explore trustees' experience of leadership having assigned themselves 'agentic powers' to take up leadership responsibility on certain tasks (Harre, 1995, p. 122) either as individuals or dyads. Second, to develop a deeper understanding of how trustees construct individual narratives of leadership which they then negotiate in actual board decision-making episodes.

Positioning theory arguably has the potential to bridge the analytical gap between micro, meso, and macro levels of analysis (Zelle, 2009). In this research, positioning theory makes it possible to connect the gap between individual and board levels of analysis.

1.4. The research objectives

There are five objectives which underpin the above stated purposes. These are set out below followed by the research questions.

1. The first objective of this exploratory study is to advance understanding of nonprofit board leadership from a constructionist-interpretivist perspective in order to diminish the gap in literature about how leadership actually works in practice (Cornforth, 2014; Cornforth, 2012; Widmer, 1993).
2. The second objective is to explore the multiple ways in which accountability might occur (Liket and Maas, 2015) aside from accountability to funders (Thompson and Williams, 2014).
3. The third objective is to advance our understanding of the dynamic nature of ‘shared leadership’ (Pearce and Conger, 2003) from an empirical study that employs positioning theory (Harre and Van Langenhove 1999; 1991) to address the gaps in literature resulting from studies which employed student populations and simulation games (He and Hu, 2021; Drescher et al., 2014).
4. The fourth objective is to extend positioning literature of how position-oriented analysis proceeds at individual and board level by applying positioning theory to

empirical analyses (Korobov, 2010). First, in relation to interview data; second, in relation to sequential analysis of social interactions in the boardroom and by illuminating the strategies that trustees employ to negotiate positions (Deppermann, 2013).

5. The fifth objective is to contribute to innovative methodological and analytical studies by combining an interpretive sense-making case study (Welch et al., 2011, p. 747) combined with a hybrid analytical approach (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006) that employs thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2019), positioning theory (Harre and Van Langenhove, 1999; 1991), and a framework of leadership differentiated by independent action and interdependent leadership.

1.5. The research questions

The overarching research question: how do individuals in the context of two nonprofit federated boards take up and make sense of leadership and enact accountability? rests on the following sub-questions:

Sub-question 1

What are the individual and shared processes through which leadership is enacted?

Sub-question 2

What are the forms of accountability that trustees draw on to enact independent and interdependent leadership?

Sub-question 3 (two parts)

How can positioning theory help to illuminate the dynamic nature of shared leadership? How does position-oriented analysis proceed at individual and board level?

The overarching research question is based on the underlying assumption that uncovering micro processes of board leadership through a hybrid analytical approach will a) produce transferable knowledge of how boards function and b) provide a basis for sharing this learning not only with other nonprofit board teams but also top teams in other settings. The methodology adopted here aims to lead to a plausible interpretation and understanding of board leadership that moves outside constitutional roles to draw our attention to the dynamic nature of leadership.

Board structure has featured prominently in previous research both in the voluntary sector (Cornforth, 2001) and in the corporate sector (Vandewaerde et al., 2011). This study is interested in the horizontal authority structure of the participating boards in which the chair is characterised as *primus inter pares* (first among equals) (Gabrielsson, Huse and Minichilli, 2007) and does not hold instruction authority over the other trustees. It is this design that creates an environment of teamwork where differences in authority are softened and shared leadership (Pearce and Conger, 2003) is both desirable and more likely. Furthermore, teams with diverse skills that represent role disciplines and professions can create work domains and associated accountability for individuals. This makes them ideal for this study which assumes boards can be considered teams as they are interdependent individuals who can self-regulate their behaviour as they work on relatively whole tasks (Vandewaerde et al., 2011).

The following section briefly introduces the case organisation, in which this research is carried out. It is the focus of chapter IV where it is analytically described.

1.6. Case organisation

The case organisation is an established UK federation with circa 460 member groups at the time of data collection in 2019. It is a charitable company limited by guarantee, registered as a charity in October 1969 and incorporated in January 2004. It provides equine assisted therapy to children and adults with disability. The federation provides support, advice, and training for member groups delivered through their regional and county structures and sometimes directly by national office. The federation is managed by the senior management team (SMT) of 1 CEO and 3 functional directors supported by circa 28 employees. While the SMT reports to the federation board through the CEO, each director has a ‘dotted reporting line’ to the trustee responsible for their function.

Member groups are separately registered charities. They are accountable to the federation in terms of their membership agreement, particularly in relation to training, safeguarding, and regulatory standards. In this study the participating boards of two groups with incorporated (CIO) legal identity – registered with Companies House as a charitable company limited by guarantee and the Charity Commission – (hereafter referred to as ‘board 1’ and ‘board 2’) are located in different federation regions in England. These boards have constitutional roles of ‘group chair,’ ‘group treasurer’, and ‘group secretary’ and are responsible for the governance of the charity and implementation of financial management, fundraising, and publicity services. The trustees who may also be known as ‘directors’ in these incorporated

charities have ultimate responsibility for the charity through general control of its management and administration.

This study is interested in the horizontal authority structure of the participating boards in which the chair is characterised as *primus inter pares* (first among equals) (Gabrielsson, Huse and Minichilli, 2007) and does not hold instruction authority over the other trustees. It is this design that creates an environment of teamwork where differences in authority are softened and shared leadership (Pearce and Conger, 2003) is both desirable and more likely. This makes them ideal for this study which assumes boards can be considered teams as they are interdependent individuals who can self-regulate their behaviour as they work on relatively whole tasks (Vandewaerde et al., 2011).

1.7. Structure of thesis

The remainder of the thesis contains six chapters. The contents of each chapter are briefly set out below.

Chapter II, 'literature review' offers a narrative literature review of nonprofit board leadership contextualised in the 'third sector'. There are three main sections to the review; Section 2.2 explains the research context of third sector leadership. Section 2.3 focuses on nonprofit board leadership and accountability an ongoing concern for boards; Section 2.4 focuses on the concepts of interest; specifically 2.4.1 shared leadership (Pearce and Conger, 2003), 2.4.2 self-leadership (Manz, 1986), 2.4.3 teamwork (Katzenbach and Smith, 1993), 2.4.4 positioning theory (Harre and Van Langenhove, 1999; 1991), and 2.4.5 agency as a discursive presentation (Harre, 1995).

Chapter III, ‘methodology’ gives a full account in four sections. Section 1 sets out the interpretive framework that influenced the choices of how knowledge is created. Section 2 starts with the theoretical foundations of the analytical approach before introducing the hybrid analytical process followed by a summary of the analytical activities carried out set against the Braun and Clarke (2019) framework. Section 3 gives a full account of how analysis is applied in practice. Section 4 provides a summary bringing together themes arising from analysis of interview data in stage 1, together with the unfolding storylines of different forms of leadership observed in decision-making episodes in stage 2. This is followed by an overview of the integrated analytical process. The chapter closes with a reflection on the role of the researcher.

Chapter IV introduces the ‘case organisation’ its federated structure, and organisationally situates the participating boards in an organogram of the national organisation. It provides a historical context to the UK organisation and its purpose to provide equine assisted therapy to children and adults with disability. This is followed by a contemporary structure and situates the organisation in relation to its membership of the British Equestrian Foundation. Thereafter, this chapter justifies this single case study of two similar but different boards in one nonprofit UK federation. Notably the horizontal authority structure of these boards and the absence of a chief executive officer, or other employees at the time of data collection, offer an ideal case design to study shared leadership (Pearce and Conger, 2003) in top teams.

Chapter V, ‘findings’ presents the empirical findings of this study in three sections following the introduction. Section 5.2 presents findings from interviews carried out in stage 1, focussing on trustees’ experience of leadership having assigned themselves ‘agentive

powers' to take leadership responsibility on certain tasks (Harre, 1995, p. 122) either as individuals or dyads outside the boardroom. Section 5.3 presents findings from observation of actual board decision-making episodes in stage 2, focussing on developing a deeper understanding of how trustees construct individual narratives of leadership which they then negotiate in meetings. As a conclusion, section 5.4 summarises findings from three perspectives employed by trustees: first, the forms of leadership experienced by trustees in stages 1 and 2; second, the forms of accountability that trustees draw on to enact both independent action and interdependent leadership; third, the forms of positioning adopted by trustees in different stages and their implications, and the orders of positioning employed by trustees in constructing leadership in unfolding storylines.

Chapter VI, 'discussion' builds on the findings, detailed in some depth in the previous chapter (V). Following this introduction there are three sections. Section 6.2 introduces the proposed 'board leadership framework' developed in this study by explaining the different elements and how they interact with one another. It conceptually relates agency as a discursive presentation; the practice of accountability and positioning through which insights of board leadership are made visible. Section 6.3 focuses on leadership outside the boardroom. It sets out the puzzle that has emerged from this research which needs to be explained drawing on selected exemplars from trustees talk in interview. It integrates empirical findings with knowledge from different aspects based on the concepts of interest reviewed in Chapter (II); Section 6.4 focuses on leadership inside the boardroom. It introduces the three-stage negotiation process by which individual and collective leadership are negotiated in decision-making episodes of emerging storylines from observation of three

meetings These reflect both strategic and operational agenda items on which decisions were reached.

Chapter VII, ‘conclusions’ concludes the thesis with eight sections. Following the introduction, section 7.2 sets out how the research questions have been addressed as posed in the introduction (chapter I). Section 7.3 sets out the contribution to knowledge of this empirical study from four perspectives:

1. The thesis provides an empirical study of nonprofit board leadership from a rare constructionist-interpretivist perspective.
2. The second contribution adds evidence to studies of multiple forms of accountability by trustees in ‘real-life’ contexts of two nonprofit boards.
3. The third contribution adds evidence to studies of shared leadership in ‘real-life’ contexts. In particular, the temporal and temporary nature of the concept uncovered in the board processes through the lens of positioning theory.
4. The fourth contribution of this empirical study is to extend positioning literature. Applying positioning theory to the analysis of empirical data in a board context adds evidence to empirical studies of how position-oriented analysis proceeds.
5. The fifth contribution offers an innovative methodological approach: the combination of an ‘interpretive sensemaking’ case study in the idiographic tradition of social science (Welch et al., 2011) with a hybrid analytical approach of thematic

coding, positioning, and a typology of leadership categorised as ‘independent action’ and ‘interdependent leadership’. Further it adds evidence to studies that combine.

Section 7.4 then sets out some practical implications of the study. This is followed by section 7.5 which reflects on the research process, followed by section 7.6 which evaluates the study in terms of three criteria: credibility, transferability, and trustworthiness. Section 7.7 identifies some limitations of the study which could be addressed by future research. Finally, section 7.8 makes some suggestions as to how this might be approached.

Chapter II Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

The chapter discusses extant literature relevant to this empirical study in three sections. Section 1 focuses on the research context in terms of the nonprofit sector. Section 2 focuses on the topic of nonprofit board leadership and the research gap identified by Cornforth (2014; 2012). Cornforth challenges researchers to move away from a) a narrow conceptualization of ‘governance’ to one that recognises boards as situated in a wider governance system of multiple stakeholders; and b) to employ ‘in-depth qualitative case study research’ (2012, p. 1128) rather than the established positivist approach of studying board characteristics and behaviours. Section 3 focuses on the theoretical perspectives which seem to offer the best way to make sense of the phenomenon of nonprofit board leadership at individual and board levels in practice.

In the early period the review focused first on the topic of nonprofit board leadership followed by three concepts of interest which might support studying board leadership from a constructionist-interpretivist perspective. These are shared leadership (Pearce and Conger, 2003) and its relational nature; self-leadership (Manz, 1986) and its adaptivity and proactivity; and teams (Katzenbach and Smith, 1993) and their mutual accountability, interdependence, and sharing responsibility for outcomes. As the study progressed, the review was expanded to include other key sensitizing concepts arising from the data. In particular, positioning (Harre and Van Langenhove, 1991), the associated concept of ‘agentive powers’ (Harre, 1995), and pluralist accountability (Coule, 2015). While not

assuming a linear model of cumulative development of studies (Hammersley, 2018), the review also identified important historical literature for context. To make sense of findings, the study relies on inductive and abductive reasoning for an interpretation that is balanced on empirical evidence and authorities in literature.

Notwithstanding the different paradigmatic backgrounds of the above concepts, this research will evidence that these perspectives can reveal different aspects of board leadership. Despite their different perspectives there are crossing points where these concepts interface. For example, self-leadership and individuals assigning ‘agentive powers’ to ‘self’ and others (Harre, 1995). In shared leadership individuals are empowered to decide on everyday situations that they handle (Pearce and Conger, 2003). Similarly interdependent responsibility of teams occurs as members interpret and manage their work on more or less whole tasks and have authority and autonomy to decide the how, when, and by whom work is done (Cohen and Bailey, 1997). These concepts (shared leadership and teamwork) are acknowledged as different research streams in literature (Avolio et al., 2009, p. 431); however, what is relevant to this research is that both are considered dynamic processes. Consequently, this research draws on insights from both streams when helpful.

Understanding nonprofit board leadership from a non-positivist epistemology is the research focus. Consequently, the review started with the 1980s onwards when scholars’ reasoning about leadership ideas moved towards thinking ‘it all depends’ (Parry and Bryman in Mielonen, 2011, p. 30) which was illustrated in the interactional ideas of contingency and situational theories. The study focus subsequently narrowed to the period from 2003 when Pearce and Conger (2003) introduced the promising concept of ‘shared leadership’.

Contemporary conversation about literature searches is wide ranging. For example, concerns for reporting standards (Atkinson et al., 2014), incomplete description of methods (King et al., 2020), and methods that recognise interaction in context (Paparini et al., 2021).

There are two widely accepted approaches to conducting a literature review and creating a knowledge summary of a specific topic. First, the traditional narrative literature review (NLR) takes a fairly unstructured approach to produce a synthesis of past research, highlighting what we know about the topic, gaps, and tensions in the field, focussing on empirical data that is current. Opposite to the narrative review is the highly structured systematic (meta-analytic) literature review (SLR). This approach applies precise criteria for determining which studies will be included/excluded from the analysis (Kuhberger et al., 2016).

A narrative literature review has been chosen for this study because it is appropriate for an exploratory case study that can develop and integrate concepts and theories view. Further it is a method which arguably serves as an ‘act of reflexivity’ where the interpretation of findings is shaped by the researcher’s training and experience (Karpelis, 2018, pp.598). It is also theoretically grounded in the analysis of data (Dixon-Woods et al., 2006) and capable of being strengthened by systematic techniques such as transparency in reporting (Maxwell et al., 2012), and enables different concepts relevant to this research to be connected.

2.2. Research context

Before introducing the research context of two federated boards in different shires of England in one UK charitable federation, the wider context of third sector leadership

literature is explored in order to put the case organisation into context (see chapter IV for details about the ‘case organisation’).

2.2.1. Pressures on third sector leadership

Third sector (TS) is a term used to characterise organisations that do not fall into the public or private sectors. Defining it is challenging because the idea of a homogenous sector is elusive due to different perspectives from academics: policy makers and practitioners (Alcock, 2010). The majority of third sector organisations (TSOs), like the case study examined in this thesis, do not receive funding from government (NCVO, 2021) but draw on charitable donations and grants to support their delivery of services to and for the public.

The UK TS includes voluntary organisations as well as registered and non-registered charities, associations, informal groups, and social enterprises (Macmillan and McLaren, 2012). However, Rochester (2013) in stating his preference for the term ‘the voluntary and community sector’ (p. 2) argues that terms such as non-profit sector, third sector, and civil society employed by other authors are, broadly identical. Hudson (2017), however, differentiates these terms. For example, TS ‘includes the voluntary sector and is used to incorporate social enterprise; housing associations, and arts and sports organisations’ (p. 8). In contrast ‘civil society’ is used ‘to refer to all the non-profit institutions that exist in modern democratic societies’ and the ‘non-profit sector’ includes independent and non-profit universities and hospitals, trades unions, and professional associations (p. 8).

Third sector organisations are independent of government and formed to achieve diverse social goals including public welfare and economic well-being. Critically there is no profit

motive and any surplus gained in pursuit of goals is reinvested for sustainability, thus defining these organisations ‘not-for-personal profit’ (National Audit Office, 2023). Over the last two decades various governments and charitable foundations have invested in developing the capacity and capability of TSOs to deliver services (and goods) funded by the public sector (Chapman, 2017). The central focus of this investment was to enhance the governance of TSOs through ‘principles of effective strategic planning, people and financial management’ (p. 3). However, evidence of successful organisational performance practices is not so persuasive, as performance measurement seems geared to monitor and satisfy funders, rather than improvement of services (Moxham, 2010).

Macmillan and McLaren (2012) argue that following the recessionary climate of 2008 and the results of the General Election in 2010 that brought about a change in the political and ideological environment, TSOs today are focussed on survival, collaboration/merger, and demonstrating impact and value for money (p. 2). More recently this focus is echoed by Green et al., (2021). While it is not the purpose of this research to compare US and UK nonprofit sectors, it is worth noting that Hodge and Piccolo (2011) comment that the role of US nonprofit boards, like the UK, is focussed on ‘shaping organisational survival’ (p. 526) and being accountable in a more public way.

Concerns of academics and policy papers over the last decade seem shaped around issues of leadership, legitimacy, who speaks for the sector (Buckingham et al., 2014), and accountability (Tacon et al., 2017; Coule, 2015). These views are shaped by contextual influences from blurred boundaries between public, private, and third sectors (Cornforth, 2012, p. 1120; Cornforth and Macmillan, 2016) and ‘what the sector is in the process of

becoming'; specifically, its role outside austerity politics (Macmillan and McLaren, 2012, p. 2). Therefore, while the Wolfenden Committee (1978) and the Deaken Commission (1996) reports are credited with shaping the sector's past agenda, the focus is now on attempts to 'demonstrate impact and value for money' (p. 2).

The issue of accountability is of interest in this study, given the impact of reported cases of failed governance and the loss of public trust in the management of charities. There are implications that exist for accountability in different 'governance theories and practices' (Coule, 2015, p. 83). Specifically, the argument that while a unitary logic of agency and stewardship theory lead to narrow compliance-based accountability, the pluralist logic of democratic and stakeholder theories create space to include broader perspectives on accountability. This seems to chime with Cornforth's (2012) strong claim of a narrow research focus and agency theory as the dominant perspective in the sector literature. In practice, however, funders' emphasis on accountability and transparency across the third sector has been increasing (Thompson and Williams, 2014).

In this research how accountability is demonstrated, and to whom, is discussed in this chapter under the heading 'pluralist accountability' Newman (2001) argues accountability in the public sector is a cultural and social process, rooted in formal structures and roles, driven by participants' responsiveness to the 'modernisation agenda' towards accountability to users (p. 25). However, the argument needs to be made about how this process emerges when the organisation being researched is a flat horizontal team in a small voluntary organisation with no structural hierarchy of roles and clear accountabilities in terms of job descriptions and competencies, typical of the public sector. Proper accountability, however, also includes

mechanisms such as good standards written out in policies (Lee, 2016), greater contact between board chairs and their communities (Freiwirth, 2017), and practices that relate to nonprofit effectiveness (Liket and Maas, 2015).

In relation to leadership, Macmillan and McLaren (2012) argue that research on leadership in the third sector is ‘embryonic’ (p. 5) and typically focussed on individuals. Kirchner (2007) is cited as providing one such leadership model of the third sector that is ‘always context dependent’ and dependent on leaders reading different situations and ‘choosing appropriate tools to influence others’ (p. 50). This model is developed from the ‘Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations’(ACEVO) model of leadership around CEO core skills (Kirchner, 2007, p. 52). More recently Terry et al. 2018) argue that the different interconnected processes proposed by Kirchner (2007), for example, governance and the board, representation to stakeholders, and management of people and resources suggest a move away from leadership grounded in an individual’s characteristics or traits to an approach that is ‘dynamic’ and ‘relational’ (p. 8). This is Kirchner’s perspective; however, while this is implicit in the model it is not expressly illustrated outside of the central positioning of the CEO and is opaque in the model. It is more than ten years since Kirchner (2007) published this model of a single leader as the source of leadership and arguably leadership ideas had already moved on particularly around non-traditional leadership approaches, such as the concept of ‘shared leadership’ (Pearce and Conger, 2003). This development is well illustrated by Jacklin-Jarvis et al. (2018) and Jacklin-Jarvis and Rees (2021) in relation to formalised and informal leadership, and shared responsibility of volunteer-led trustee boards. Finally, the empirical study of Mumbi (2014) adds insights in

relation to the conceptualisation of shared leadership characterised by ‘collaborative decision making and shared responsibility for outcomes (p. 223).

In closing this section, not surprisingly the current conversation in the nonprofit literature focuses on the macro event of the Covid 19 pandemic which has created much added uncertainty for the third sector (Macmillan, 2020). In relation to the future, given that Covid 19 variations continue to shroud Macmillan’s ‘rainbow’ in mist, it seems that we will likely continue to rely on the ‘apparent gentleness’ that characterises UK charities (p. 129). However, that is not to say that those involved in social movements are not already planning how to navigate the next decade (Jackson and Lamb, 2021).

2.2.2. Developments in charity governance and implications for leadership

The case study organisation in this research takes the form of a registered charity. Charities are TSOs that exist to provide ‘public benefit’ sometimes characterised as an ‘intermediary between donors and beneficiaries’ (Hyndman and McDonnell, 2009, p. 5). The Charities Commission is the regulator of charities in England and Wales. In October 2018 it defined a new purpose for the Commission to ‘ensure charity can thrive and inspire trust so that people can improve their lives and strengthen society’ (Charity Commission 2019, p. 12). There are 168,000 registered charities which is an increase on the figure of 166,000 reported by the Commission in 2017. Importantly charities continue to represent a significant contribution to the UK economy. It is reported that the sector accounts for almost 900,000 jobs and over £15bn in GDP (NCVO’s Civil Society Almanac, 2018). The 2 billion hours of volunteering in the UK each year equate to 1.25 million full-time employees. In other words, this equals the combined employment figures of manufacturing, construction, and real estate

sectors. While only 1% of charities enjoy an income greater than £5m per annum, 75% depend on less than £100.000 per annum to deliver services (Charity Commission, 2019).

Contemporary conversation in academic literature is wide ranging. First, it relates to uncertainty, sustainability, and financial resilience in understanding how different sources of income affect survival (Green et al., 2021). Second, it is concerned with public trust and confidence in charities achieving their mission (Hyndman and McConville, 2018). It is also about moving away from economic metrics to ‘social value’ as a more inclusive assessment of charities (Charity Commission, 2019), and about volunteer management in the area of expert practice where strong performance in meeting targets is a proxy for altruism (Read, 2021).

In charities governance is defined as ‘controlling, directing and regulating’ (Hyndman and McDonnell, 2009, p. 5). However, in reality, scholars acknowledge the term governance has a wider connotation which includes different stakeholders interacting within an organisation and there is no ‘single or ideal model of governance’ for the nonprofit sector (Bradshaw, Hayday, and Armstrong 2007, p. 4) notwithstanding the legal provisions for registered charities which include a volunteer board.

In recent years conversation about nonprofit board governance in the UK has shifted towards how boards govern as part of a wider system of governance and ‘getting inside the boardroom’ to develop better understanding of board processes and behaviours (Cornforth, 2014, p. 2). Expressed another way, the ‘domain of governance has moved outside the domain of the board’ to new modes of governance systems of organised influence and engagement where entities are accountable to ‘larger governance systems’ (Renz, 2018, p.

3). Despite this recognition, literature has neglected the importance of wider governance systems (Cornforth, 2012). This unfulfilled interest in the nonprofit board as part of a wider system of governance and organised influence is important. It is this gap in literature where this research seeks to make a contribution from the perspective of two federated boards.

The boards studied here operate within a wider system that includes the federation and significant external stakeholders such as ‘companies house’ clients and their carers, accountants, riding establishments, and schools. However, before it is possible to understand these boards through a wider system, it is argued that it is first essential to understand how trustees take up and enact leadership within their own boards and how these boards interact with a larger system of governance actors. Section 1 closes with an exploration of federation literature. The federation, in which these two federated boards are members, could arguably claim to be considered such a wider governance system.

2.2.2.1. Federation

The case organisation introduced in section 1.6 is a federation of circa 460 groups where each group is an independent charity. The participating boards are federated charities. The Charities Act 2011 makes provision for 13 charitable purposes (Hudson, 2017, p. 7) of which ‘the advancement of amateur sport; and the relief of those in need by reason of youth, age, ill health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage’ apply to this organisation. Importantly the national CEO adds the words ‘and therapy’ to the legal definition of the organisation’s charitable purpose. Thus, including the advancement of both health and education as central aims.

There is no prevailing definition of a federated charity and the terms ‘federation’, ‘confederation’, ‘network’, and ‘association’ are at times used interchangeably. Federations can be structured in a variety of ways such as control by the central organisation, greater control by members of the federation, or a hybrid in between (Hudson, 2017). A federated or network model of governance is argued to be common in nonprofit organisations, usually formed to regulate activity, mobilize resources and action, often in relation to ‘problematic issues’ (Selsky, 1998, p. 284). Whether this idea still holds today is less clear, particularly as literature suggests a lack of understanding of structures in federated charities by those in unitary organisations (Van Vliet and Wharton, 2014).

In this study a federated charity is defined as ‘two or more local organisations that operate under a single identity’ (Van Vliet and Wharton, 2014, p. 1). Each membership group has one vote at the AGM (interview July 2019). The literature recognises that federations are ‘paradoxical, complex and political’ and often ‘tension filled and in need of balancing rather than managing’ (Bradshaw and Toubiana, 2014, p. 232). A view echoed in Van Vliet and Wharton (2014) in relation to trustee boards and the dilemmas of delivering social mission using key assets of localism and brand, and managing complexity to achieve social impact. The relevance of traditional unitary models is also questioned (Bradshaw and Toubiana, 2014). These scholars focus on the idea of nested governance (dispersal of power) from a systems perspective, focussing on ‘hierarchical’ relationships. Other contemporary scholars explore a ‘working conceptualisation’ of collective leadership in a federal nonprofit sport context to argue the position that the challenge facing federated boards of national sports organisations is connecting separate actors in interconnected groups (Ferkins, Shilbury, and O’Boyle, 2018). This is interesting for this study which employs a qualitative case study

approach. However, unlike Bradshaw and Toubiana, (2014), this study does not presume that a hierarchical relationship exists between the federated boards and their UK federation.

2.3. Nonprofit board leadership

This section reviews existing literature of nonprofit board leadership in relation to the research question of this study: How do individuals in the context of two nonprofit federated boards take up and make sense of leadership and enact accountability? The review mainly focuses on the period from 2000 to 2021 for a more contemporary understanding of leadership. However, studies outside of this timeframe which have particular resonance with this research have been included. For example, Widmer's (1993) study of how board members actually 'play' different roles to those described in the literature. Furthermore, while this research is not intended to be a comparative study of nonprofit/corporate board leadership, empirical studies from the corporate sector have been included where ideas or methodology resonate with this research. For example, Pugliese, Nicholson and Bezemer, (2015) employ similar methods to this research. While this literature review reveals a diverse body of knowledge from research over the previous two decades, there is a dearth of research about nonprofit board leadership from a non-positivist orientation (Cornforth, 2014). Consequently, after backgrounding the board literature, the focus is on empirical studies.

The section starts by contextualising the nonprofit model of board leadership. The board model for 'governing public, private and third sector institutions is widely prevalent cross the UK' separating the act of governing from those responsible for daily operations (Connolly, Farrell and James, 2017, p. 5). However, knowledge about how well boards lead organisations remains opaque. Herman and Renz (1999) argue for a better understanding of

what is going on inside the ‘black box’ (of leadership) to connect boards and organisational performance. Findings from previous reviews of nonprofit board research chart and illustrate the changing nature of research into board leadership. For example, Cornforth and Edwards (1999) focus on board roles nested in board inputs, processes, contextual factors, and strategic contribution, conditional on the selection of board members’ skills and experience. Ostrower and Stone (2006) focus on composition, roles and responsibilities, and board relationships with managers and staff. Others, while still focussing on board roles linked to board composition, work on the underlying assumption that those on the board make a difference (Stone and Ostrower, 2007) and board development practices of recruitment and orientation facilitate competent board members and impact board performance (Brown 2007). Brown and Guo’s (2010) survey shows that of 13 ranked roles of the board, ‘fund development’, ‘strategic planning’, and ‘financial oversight’ are the most important.

Moi, Monteduro, and Gnan (2014) scope board leadership across the three sectors. Findings suggest input-output studies continue to dominate the private sector (a view echoed by Vandewaerde et al., 2011), contingency studies dominate the public sector, and behavioural studies dominate the nonprofit sector. A behavioural approach toward board effectiveness focuses on the task performance of boards as opposed to the actual performance of the organisation (Heemskerk, Heemskerk, and Wats, 2015). The idea is that the board can perform well at times when the organization cannot because of external factors. In reverse, boards may perform poorly by not capitalising on their own task performance when their organization is performing (Pugliese, Nicholson and Bezemer, 2015). In this literature review board effectiveness is a preoccupation that is often viewed as forecasting the financial

health of an organisation (Hodge and Piccolo, 2011). However, in this research effectiveness is more closely aligned to accountability.

It is a decade since Cornforth (2012) drew our attention to the need to better understand board processes and dynamics from within the boardroom. Yet such studies remain rare and gaps remain in our understanding. Cornforth has been at the vanguard of understanding board leadership in both the nonprofit and public sectors since 2001. First, through his focus on board effectiveness through the relationship with board inputs, structure, and processes (Cornforth, 2001). Second, through evaluating the balance of representation and expertise in recruitment (Cornforth, 2003). Cornforth (2004) then identified the paradox for board members who have assumed roles of ‘representative’ and ‘expert’ and balancing the tension between driving forward organisational performance and conformance which may conflict with board positions. Subsequently, he drew attention to the limitations of a narrow focus on boards and the need for a new approach (2012). Harrison, Murray, and Cornforth (2012) argue for further research on the board chair and CEO perceived relationship and the impact of changing contextual conditions such as funding patterns and other events on the relationship. In Cornforth and Macmillan (2016) findings highlight the impact of the negotiation context on the chair’s relationship with senior staff and tactics to ensure board support for the chair’s organisational assessment. Most recently in Baxter and Cornforth (2021) findings highlight a lack of fundamental processes implemented by trustee boards leading to fragmentation in multi-academy trusts.

2.3.1. Contemporary conversation

Contemporary conversation about nonprofit board leadership suggests that interest in ‘getting inside the boardroom’ to develop a better understanding of board processes and behaviour (Cornforth, 2014, p. 2) remains a topic of interest. Other topics include empirical research on boardroom interactions (Pugliese, Nicholson and Bezemer, 2015; Reid, 2014). More recently Van Puyvelde et al., (2018) conducted a research survey of chairs and CEOs in relation to board practices, processes, and effectiveness on perceived interactions in the boardroom. They argue that while chairs view group dynamics and meeting processes as associated with board performance, CEOs disagree. Further they both agree that group dynamics had no impact on fundraising. The main limitation of this research acknowledged by the authors is that they are relying on self-report data.

The importance of group dynamics and meeting practices points to the earlier study of Pugliese, Nicholson and Bezemer (2015). Findings here draw on data from interviews with directors and video observation of three board meeting in the corporate sector to suggest directors’ interactions are multidimensional and dynamic. These authors further argue that ‘directors’ inclusiveness and evenness of participation are associated with perceptions of board effectiveness’ (p. 2) and affected by the exchange of information and discussion inside the boardroom. However, a limitation (acknowledged by the authors) of the research design of observation and interview is that it did not cater for the impact of directors’ leadership activity and contacts on decision making outside the boardroom. This study is of particular interest in this research, given that the present study adopts similar methods.

In summary, previous research while contributing an important body of knowledge, is limited in what it tells us about how boards lead organisations in ‘complex systems of accountability’ (Cornforth, 2012, p. 1117). Although the contemporary research introduced above illustrates a new direction for board research, it is embryonic. Before closing this section, it is useful to return to Widmer (1993), whose empirical study of how board members carry out their roles remains insightful 20 years later, especially the role that conflict plays in the board. Therefore, while the literature is prescriptive of what board members should do, in practice Widmer argues that there are three roles being played out and sometimes in combinations: policy maker, legal advisor, and minority representative. Cadbury (2000, p. 12) argues for research in unfolding decision making in meetings and focussing on process in preference to structure in order to generate findings that are operationally relevant (Watson et al., 2021). Thus, the idea of observing board decision-making episodes has been around for two decades yet few studies of this genre exist. Keeping in mind what is important to charities, aside from board effectiveness, Green et al. (2021) remind us survival is about diversified revenue streams to increase financial resilience.

Vandewaerde et al., (2011) recommend the concept of shared leadership (Pearce and Conger, 2003) as ‘highly applicable’ to study a board context. The board is also recommended as the ‘place where most organisations have the greatest need for an effective team’ (Conger and Lawler, 2009, p. 184). Evidence suggests shared purpose, social support, and the opportunity for different voices to be heard not only enable shared leadership but also support an organisational environment where individual contribution is valued (Carson, Tesluk and Marrone, 2007; Serban and Roberts, 2016). This seems to be an ideal leadership concept for

understanding volunteer-led boards, which is discussed in section 3. The next section examines the concept of accountability and its importance for this study.

2.3.2. Accountability

Accountability is a central concern in nonprofit boards, yet it is more complex and ambiguous than a straightforward account of charity board accountability might suggest. While it is acknowledged that it is driven by the need to demonstrate transparent accountability to funders (Thompson and Williams, 2014), there is a lack of empirical work about how boards actually function in practice (Cornforth, 2014; Cornforth, 2012). Consequently, the different ways in which accountability might occur are masked. Liket and Maas (2015) argue that questions about good governance result in increasing pressure on nonprofit organisations to demonstrate and evaluate effectiveness and accountability. Since then, reported cases of failed governance such as Kids Company (UK Parliamentary Committee, 2016) and Oxfam (UK Parliamentary Report, 2018) continue to keep the public focus on the governance of charities. Although the public who experienced the ‘apparent gentleness’ of UK charities (Macmillan, 2020, p.129) made visible during the Covid-19 pandemic may have revised any negative opinions.

UK charities, as in other countries, are bound by company law as well as regulatory constraints of the non-profit sector. Norberg (2021) argues that this creates responsibilities of ownership which unlike corporate share ownership does not carry material benefits. Contrastingly, psychological ownership may pre-date appointment as a charity director, thus, facilitating stewardship and accountability. Nordberg (2021, p .472) having posed the question – ‘what should charities do to ensure their boards work better?’ and ‘in whose

interest?’ – argues for stewardship theory which sees individuals enacting the organisation’s goals to the benefit of the beneficiaries. He draws on Davis et al. (1997) to illustrate a collectivist, social approach, seeking to satisfy higher needs of self-esteem and personal fulfilment, stressing the importance of letting people get on with the job. This accountability is interpersonal, horizontal, and enacted through peers, unlike agency theory which ‘predicts a self-interested struggle over who controls resources’ (Nordberg, 2021, p. 467). In other words, this illustrates a key theoretical governance debate (Bernstein et al., 2016) as to whether executive and board behaviour is better explained by agency theory or the opposing idea of stewardship. Coule (2015) observes that principal-agent assumptions can drive narrow views of accountability. Contrastingly, Fama (1980) navigates around agency problems by viewing corporations as firms viewed as a team, arguing that while team members act from self-interest they recognise that their purpose depends to a degree on the survival of the team’s success in competing with other teams. Thus, the agent who characterises the ‘firm’ is ‘the entrepreneur who is taken to be both manager and residual risk bearer’ (p. 289). These ideas resonate with the present study.

Previous research considered accountability in the context of stakeholder theory (Hyndman and McMahon, 2011), defining a ‘stakeholder’ as a group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization’s objectives. These scholars argue that engaging with stakeholders builds legitimacy and reputation, organizational survival, and stakeholder support. Subsequently, research identified different stakeholders to whom a charity should account. For example, donors, the accounting profession, regulators, beneficiaries, government, and the public (Connolly and Hyndman, 2017). These scholars draw on Mitchell et al.’s (1997) idea that once stakeholders are identified, organizations rank

competing claims, with preference given to those perceived to have power, legitimacy, and urgency. According to Mitchell, et al. (1997) power reflects the extent to which a stakeholder can impose its will on an organization, while urgency is the degree to which stakeholder claims take priority. Therefore, legitimate stakeholders are those who contract with an organization, donors, and beneficiaries who hold moral legitimacy. Connolly and Hyndman also draw attention to accountability mechanisms and their implementation, in particular taking responsibility for actions (Ebrahim, 2003). In bringing these ideas together, Coule (2015) answers the question ‘what implications exist for accountability in various governance theories and practices’ in TSOs (p. 83) by proposing a typology of nonprofit governance and accountability that arguably accommodates diverse views. Table 1 which follows, sets out the typology proposed by Coule (2015).

Table 1: Logic, governance, and accountability

Governance theory	Organising principles	Scope of accountability	Nature of accountability
Agency (unitary logic) Stewardship (unitary logic)	Systems control	Principal-agent	Instrumental – based on explicit standards or rules. Expressed through the law, monitoring, and accounting
Democratic (pluralist logic) Stakeholder (pluralist logic)	Process-relational	Stakeholder/organizational and societal members	Instrumental and expressive. Based on explicit rules/implicit subjective standards Negotiation based on self-perception of community roles. Expressed through the law, monitoring and accounting

Author’s own elaboration of Coule (2015).

Therefore, this promotes the idea that unitary logic perpetuates narrow compliance-based accountability through the theoretical perspectives of agency and stewardship, and pluralist logic offers space to create broad accountability in stakeholder and democratic perspectives. However, with increasing demand for greater accountability, the practices to achieve this may have lagged behind (Morrison and Salipante, 2007). The descriptive ideas of ‘multiple forms of accountability’ in nonprofit boards and organisations, has been the subject of much interest in recent years since Kearns (1994) proposed an accountability framework of strategic and tactical choices for nonprofit organisations. Subsequently, Morrison and Salipante (2007) developed the idea of ‘negotiable accountability’ by combining implicit and subjective standards of assessment, democratic 360 degree accountability, board effectiveness being socially constructed, and employing serious engagement with those being served by the organisation. This is combined with ‘rule-based accountability’ in relation to legal and financial accountability.

More recently the ideas of Knutsen and Brower (2010) are relevant and theoretically significant for nonprofit organisations in addressing the dynamic nature of accountability. These scholars categorise multiple accountability based on the tension between what they term instrumental resource, seeking dimensions as opposed to the expressive, value-oriented and resource consuming dimension. In scoping the historical literature these scholars cite Gordon and Babchuck (1959) (who introduced the expressive-instrumental distinction in voluntary associations) and Mason’s study (1996) of expressive energy, together with Frumkin’s (2002) typology elaborating these dynamics and the distinction between these dimensions as fundamental to NPVOs. Knutsen and Brower (2010) summarise his typology, as actions related to service delivery and social entrepreneurship based on an instrumental

rationale, and actions involving civic and political engagement or articulating values and beliefs as of the expressive rationale. These scholars argue that all organisations sometimes employ both expressive and instrumental dimensions. However, when compared to public and for-profit organizations, NPVOs are likely to reflect a more balanced presence of the two. Therefore, while for-profits and public organizations can be considered interest-based, their activities are instrumentally related to pursuing these interests. In contrast, NPVOs dedicated to pursuing values, such as religious and advocacy organizations, involve a discernible expressive dimension that is not self-interested.

In summary, Knutsen and Brower (2010) potentially offer different concepts of accountability to accommodate board leadership that is dynamic in nature, viewed through a wider governance lens. Table 2 which follows, illustrates the characteristics of expressive and instrumental forms of accountability.

Table 2: Selected characteristics of expressive and instrumental accountability

Characteristic	Instrumental accountability External, mandatory, and coercive toward the organization Outcome oriented	Expressive accountability Internal and voluntary for the organization Process oriented
Control mechanism	Reporting, supervising, and monitoring Indicators: outcome measures Punitive: funding withdrawal.	Values and beliefs Shared mission (e.g., with members) Shared ownership (e.g., with the community)
Beneficiary	External resource providers Internal resource providers	Community Organizational mission Patrons or constituency: members/clients
Accountability relationship	Transactional Rational Principal–agent relationships Upward and vertical	Immeasurable Transformational, unilateral Voluntary Non-hierarchical Downward and horizontal

Author's own elaboration of Knutsen and Brower (2010).

2.4. Concepts of interest

The following section summarises the key concepts employed in order to address the research question and the gaps identified in extant literature. There are five concepts of interest that contribute to making sense of trustees' individual leadership action and interdependent leadership in the participating boards in this study.

2.4.1. Shared leadership

The concept of shared leadership (Pearce and Conger, 2003) is useful for this study because it focuses on how individuals take up leadership, individually and jointly in board teams that are interdependent and share responsibility. The locus of leadership (Hernandez et al., 2011) is an important and longstanding debate in leadership research that is relevant to this study. First, traditional leadership theories focus on the leader's downward influence on their followers by means of formal authority and power (Pearce and Conger, 2003; Pearce, 2004). The underlying assumption is that the locus of leadership is vested in a single individual, exercising top-down influence and control, and rooted in the concept of 'leader as commander' model of the 1900s (Ensley et al., 2006, p. 218).

In contrast other leadership scholars are less persuaded by the virtues of hierarchical leadership. They argue that it is 'ever more difficult for any leader from above to have all the knowledge, skills, and abilities to lead all aspects of knowledge work' (Pearce and Manz, 2005, p. 132). The increasingly well received idea of shared leadership is described in literature as a 'new-genre' theory (Avolio et al., 2009, p. 421) in the form of 'an emergent state where team members collectively lead each other' (p. 431). Pearce and Conger (2003) first drew attention to the concept of 'shared leadership' arguing that it is rooted in two theories. The first relates to Follet's (1924) law to take guidance from the individual with the best knowledge of a situation. The second relates to the four-factor theory of leadership of Bowers and Seashore (1966) articulated in the four dimensions of leadership: support, goal emphasis, interaction facilitation, and work facilitation. However, contradictory views about the construct and what it entails (Carson, Tesluk and Marrone, 2007; Bergman et al.,

2012) not only present challenges in advancing knowledge, but also result in a body of literature that is difficult to navigate and fragmented (Barnett and Weidenfeller, 2016).

D’Innocenzo, Mathieu and Kukenberger (2016) illustrate the range of ideas in extant literature in their meta-analysis of 43 studies of 3,198 teams. Here nine definitions summarised for the period 1998 – 2012 differentiate shared leadership by the concepts of aggregation (collective process and influence), centralization (shared phenomenon not owned by a particular team member), and density (emergent team property across team members). Prior to their time frame, there are two unsuccessful studies (Berkowitz, 1953; Bowers and Seashore, 1966). However, these scholars argue that our understanding is advanced by over 100 theoretical models and ‘dozens of qualitative studies’ (D’Innocenzo, Mathieu and Kukenberger 2016, p. 1968). However, there are no examples of qualitative studies provided.

The meta-analyses studies of D’Innocenzo, Mathieu and Kukenberger (2016), Wang et al. (2014), and Nicolaides et al. (2014) can be helpful in understanding the diversity of empirical studies of shared leadership and the way in which the concept has been operationalised and theoretically differentiated (e.g. aggregation theory: centralisation and density) (D’Innocenzo, Mathieu and Kukenberger, 2016, p.1967). For example, accumulated evidence in support of shared leadership and how it relates to team performance is persuasive as it draws on diverse contexts. The following studies report positive results: new venture top management teams (Ensley et al., 2006); change management (Pearce and Sims, 2002), consulting (Carson, Tesluk and Marrone, 2007), military teams (Ramthun and Matkin,

2014), ad hoc student decision-making teams (Bergman et al., 2012), and knowledge and manufacturing teams (Fausing et al., (2015).

According to Lorinkova and Bartol. (2020) there is an overall positive role of shared leadership in teams from a static perspective which is revealed in the meta-analyses of D'Innocenzo et al. (2016), Nicolaides et al. (2014), and Wang et al. (2014). Arguably, this continues in more contemporary studies such as Sato and Makabe (2021). Findings here, drawing on Sweeney, Clarke, and Higgs (2019) reveal measurements of shared leadership continue to follow two approaches. Out of 34 studies between 1996 and 2021, 16 followed an aggregation approach and 18 followed a social network approach enabling these scholars to claim that a social network approach offers a stronger relationship with team performance as opposed to studies that take the aggregation approach. However, despite this important body of knowledge the contemporary challenge is to advance knowledge about the dynamic nature of the concept, notwithstanding contested consensus around an integrated definition of shared leadership (Barnett and Weidenfeller, 2016; Carson, Tesluk and Marrone, 2007). A further complication to the contested definition is the lack of theorising about the dynamic nature of shared leadership (Drescher et al., 2014) and its connection to team outcomes (Lorinkova and Bartol, 2020), even though its dynamic nature is clearly expressed in well-cited definitions such as that of Pearce and Conger (2003) – a ‘dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals in groups’ – and how it emerges over time (Contractor, et al., 2012). Consequently, there are gaps in our knowledge about the relationship of dynamic changes of shared leadership to team outcomes and the impact of team tenure on team development and performance. On the question of tenure, Nicolaides et al. (2014) found that tenure negatively impacts on the relationship of shared leadership with team performance

while Wang et al. (2014) argue time enriches the relationship. Scholars, however, agree that the role of ‘time’ is important in developing shared leadership and requires further research. (Lorinkova and Bartol, 2020).

In this research, one of the aims is to add detail to the dynamic nature of shared leadership. Empirical studies, however, from a non-positivist epistemology are rare. For example, Tran and Vu (2021) reported that transformational leadership was more robust than shared leadership in dimensions of team effectiveness, performance, and quality team experience when applied to a team of Vietnamese MBA students. The rare longitudinal study of He and Hu (2021) on the relationship between shared leadership and team performance offers valuable insights from seven waves of data collection throughout the whole life cycle of a work team. While there are four interesting findings reported here, two are of particular interest to the present study. First, that shared leadership influences changes in the team’s transactive memory system (the distribution, retrieval, and sharing of team members’ knowledge, as well as collective learning) (De Church and Mesmer-Magnus, 2010). This is insightful for board teams who meet at protracted intervals, yet the team can be well-established over years with a few core trustees. Conversely, it is also interesting for newly formed boards who do not have this collective learning. Second, while the dynamic impact of shared leadership happens throughout the team life cycle, it is in the early stage that it is most significant.

While acknowledging that leadership influence can come from any direction, critics of the concept of shared leadership argue that creating a vision for the organisation is the top leader’s job and the ‘CEO has to make the final choice’ to avoid chaos. Edwin Locke argues

what shared leadership can and should look like at the top of organizations in a letter exchange with Pearce and Conger. (Pearce, Conger and Locke, 2008, p. 282). An idea that these scholars rebut on the grounds that reliance on a single individual at the top carries risk and ‘heavy use of positional power’ (p. 286). Others argue that while shared leadership has merit as a ‘conveyor of practical trends in work life’ (Crevani et al., 2010, p. 78) the current focus in the literature does not generate new perspectives on how to do leadership research. While a conceptual model of shared leadership applied to the board team is suggested (Vandewaerde et al., 2011) it appears that no empirical studies have yet applied this model to a board.

In this study the concept of shared leadership is applied to explore independent action in trustees’ talk about their experience of leadership in interview, and interdependent leadership as they negotiate individual narratives of leadership in their interactions in board decision-making episodes. Thus, the emphasis is on actual leadership at individual and board levels as it occurs in practice.

As discussed in section 2.3, previous research, from a static orientation, is limited in what it can tell us about the nature of board leadership. Importantly, empirical studies of how board leadership actually occurs are rare. The dynamic nature of shared leadership (He and Hu, 2021; Drescher et al., 2014; Carson, Tesluk and Marrone, 2007; see 2.4.1 for review) has the potential to illuminate board processes notwithstanding that much of previous research is based on studies employing student populations and simulation games to advance our understanding.

This lack of theorisation of the dynamic nature of shared leadership in ‘real-life’ contexts limits our understanding of leadership in action. This thesis argues that this gap can be addressed by positioning theory (Harre and Van Langenhove, 1999; 1991) which has the potential to address the current deficiencies in shared leadership research (see section 2.4.4 below). In particular, it addresses the gap relating to the dynamics of interactions and authorisation, how accountability moves, and how agency moves and is negotiated. Therefore, we can examine the big issues that haven’t been looked at sufficiently well in shared leadership e.g. how negotiations happen as to who leads on what and how.

2.4.2. Self-leadership

Over forty years ago, Manz and Sims (1980) introduced an alternative leadership approach that moved away from how leaders influenced followers to one which was focussed on how individuals manage and lead themselves (Stewart et al., 2011). Subsequently, Manz (1986) proposed the theoretical framework for self-leadership anchored in the wider concept of control theory (Carver and Scheier, 1982). This framework is illustrated in figure 1 which follows.

Figure 1: Manz (1986) theoretical framework



Author's own elaboration of Manz (1986).

Self-leadership is a non-traditional view of leadership that argues individuals have the potential to influence and lead themselves (Knotts et al., 2022; Stewart et al., 2011). It is in contrast to traditional leadership and the idea of a specific individual initiating influence. While similar to traditional leadership in that it seeks to identify proactive strategies of influence in order to change behaviours, attitudes, and outcomes, it is unique in that the influence process involves only the 'self' and not others (Knotts et al., 2022).

Self-leadership is conceptualized as a multidimensional construct drawing on theoretical foundations in social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1991), control theory (Carver and Scheier, 1998), and intrinsic motivation theory (Deci, 1975; Deci and Ryan, 1985). Self-leadership theory 'provides guidelines for effective self-regulation and is thus a normative theory' (Neck and Houghton, 2006, p. 271). There are three secondary factors: behaviour-focused

strategies, constructive thought pattern strategies, and natural reward strategies which relate to self-management strategies (Houghton and Neck, 2002; Hauschildt and Konradt, 2012).

Self-leadership is a normative concept that is commonly applied in business. The emphasis is on how something ought to be done. Knotts et al. (2022) argue that contemporary organisations which put less emphasis on top-down leadership ‘facilitate internal self-influence processes’ (p. 274). However, identifying proactive strategies of self-leadership are elusive at both individual and team levels. Hauschildt and Konradt (2012) argue that the relationship between self-leadership and proactivity demonstrated at individual level has now been extended to team level. However, this view is not uniformly accepted. Stewart et al. (2011), while acknowledging that empirical research of self-leadership outcomes are favourable at an individual level, are less persuaded of such influence at team level, arguing that this is context dependent. Stewart et al. (2019) make the case for more future multilevel research of self-leadership drawing on Langfred (2007). In particular, the idea that team self-leadership undermines individual autonomy as team members refrain from monitoring each other in order to keep high individual autonomy. Consequently, individual and team self-leadership can be out of step with each other, and ideally a mixture of both forms are needed.

Shared leadership depends on the features of the situation, as leadership shifts to different individuals with the appropriate experience and capabilities required at the time. In this way, it has access to the benefits of teamwork. Therefore, choosing to facilitate and participate in shared leadership processes is in itself a form self-leadership (Manz, 2015). However, self-leadership is not without its critics (Neck and Houghton, 2006). In particular, few empirical studies in organisational settings have been carried out and the most challenging criticism

yet to be addressed, that it is ‘conceptually indistinct from classic theories of motivation such as self-regulation’ (p. 274).

Self-leadership has been examined in this study because of an interest in empirical data in relation to proactivity which is suitable for research on a volunteer-led board where the chair is first among equals and trustees themselves take up leadership of ‘naturally motivating tasks as well as work that must be done, but is not naturally motivating’ (Manz (1986, p. 589). Additionally, the boards in this study have influence over ‘what; how and why’ work must be done (Stewart et al., 2011, p. 190).

In summary, self-leadership in this study draws on the concept as established by Manz in figure 1, particularly the idea of proactivity (Hauschildt and Konradt, 2012). It is a process by which individuals influence themselves to achieve self-direction and the self-motivation needed to perform (Bligh et al., 2006). Finally, given that both boards in this research are navigating a period of change, it offers potential to better understand how self-leadership might occur at both individual and board levels and if so, in what situations is it favourable to shared leadership in terms of assisting with intermediary processes.

2.4.3. Teamwork

Teams share leadership roles and hold individual and mutual accountability for the team purpose they are required to deliver (Katzenbach and Smith, 1993). Unlike groups where members work on individual tasks, teams typically work on comparatively whole tasks and possess diverse skills amongst their membership (Mielonen, 2011). They have the remit to not only determine what tasks are to be done, but also how they ought to be carried out, as

well why they should be done in the first place (Manz, 1992). As mentioned in section 2.3.2, Vandewaerde et al., (2011) recommend the concept of shared leadership (Pearce and Conger, 2003) as ‘highly applicable’ to study a board team. The board is also recommended as the ‘place where most organisations have the greatest need for an effective team’ (Conger and Lawler, 2009, p. 184). Mielonen (2011) argues that historically there are four approaches to leadership which have led the field with different effects on teams and organisations and dominant at different times: 1) the trait approach of the 1940s; 2) the behavioural approach of the 1960s; 3) the contingency approach of the 1960s and 1970s; and 4) the situational approach of the 1980s (Parry and Bryman, 2006). Of these, the most relevant for the present study is the situational approach.

The association between shared leadership and teams is often focussed on team performance and how it is mediated. For example, Hoch (2014) demonstrates that information sharing mediated team performance and demographic diversity moderates this relationship to reflect a stronger association between shared leadership and more diverse teams. A further association between shared leadership and teams is that of the relationship between shared leadership and team processes, such as conflict and consensus building and emergent states such as trust and cohesion (Bergman et al., 2012). Findings here from a study of ad hoc student teams reveal (1) shared leadership as a predictor of team processes and intermediate outcomes; (2) multiple leaders experienced better emergent states; and (3) teams reported less conflict and overall ‘positive team functioning’ (p. 34).

Katzenbach and Smith (1993) define a team as having four elements: common commitment and purpose, performance goals, complementary skills, and mutual accountability that

makes the team function. This study adds the amalgam that team members are interdependent in their tasks and share responsibility for outcomes. These scholars view the team concept as a ‘small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose and set of goals’ (p. 162). This interdependence, shared purpose and use of individual skills is significant for this study, as is the idea that each team member is severally and jointly accountable.

The team is differentiated from work groups whose members are individually accountable and the group’s purpose is aligned to the wider organisational mission. Group members perform the same tasks jointly but are not required to integrate or coordinate their efforts to perform tasks (Forsyth, 2010). The term team often replaces ‘group’ in literature. However, the term ‘group’ tends to be retained in literature within the context of group dynamics.

Team leadership is a combination of two elements: the knowledge, skills, and behaviours that each individual brings to the team, and how these are employed to influence processes and performance to the advantage of the team (Day, Gronn and Salas, 2004). For some time, teams have been recognised as having an increasingly central role to play in the functioning of organisations (Kozlowski and Bell, 2003). Contemporary conversation suggests (a) teamwork continues to be a strong feature of modern organisations (Morgeson et al., 2010); (b) organisations are increasingly relying on teams including those in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors (Chin, 2015, p. 200); and (c) new ways of doing leadership that aid the ‘flow of shared influential acts’ are welcomed (Karriker et al., 2017, p. 507). Mesmer-Magnus et al. (2016) take a conceptual approach to argue for seven inherent teamwork complexities that are understudied, two of which are of particular interest. Specifically, the

ideas that ‘teams are embedded in larger interdependent systems’ and that ‘teamwork is a moving target’ (p. 600). These ideas resonate with Cohen and Bailey (1997), Morgeson et al. (2010), and the present study of federated board teams. This study is also shaped by the ideas of (Kozlowski and Ilgen, 2006) who view teams as ‘complex dynamic systems that exist in a context, develop as members interact over time, and evolve and adapt as situational demands unfold’ and embedded in a multi-level system of individual, team, and organisational elements (pp. 78–80).

It is recognised that not all leadership functions are capable of being distributed across team members (Drescher et al., 2014). Thus, while it is argued that leadership emergence is a ‘product of social interaction’ with ‘consensus among group members that one or more individuals can better achieve group goals’ (Paunova, 2015, p. 937), how it might work in the boardroom is unclear. For example, board literature questions whether individual board members are capable of working as a team given the ‘dominant working mode of all directors’ and the consequential question ‘does this group need to be a team?’ (Casey, 1985, p. 3). Additionally, while executives say that they believe in teamwork, it seems that few make it a reality in their organisations. This is despite acknowledging that teams that address difficult decisions, confront peers about behavioural issues, and have ‘unwavering commitment’ can make accountability a reality (Lencioni, 2003, p. 39). A further challenge here is the advances in internet-mediated communication technology brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic; thus, giving virtual teams unique advantages for organisations. However, it is acknowledged that this presents substantial challenges for team leaders related to recognisable challenges of ensuring technological fluency, building shared knowledge, and socializing new members (Kozlowski et al., 2021).

Teamwork, however, is not always plain sailing. Morton Deutsch is widely accredited with laying most of the foundation stones for research into group conflict from early works (Deutsch, 1949 in O'Neill and McLarnon, 2018), in particular his theory of moving from 'differentiation' to 'integration' where the focus is on the concepts of competition versus cooperation. Deutsch (1994) characterises conflict as a tension between individuals or groups about real or perceived differences or incompatibilities. In turn, Jehn (1995) also well cited, argues that conflict is inevitable in work groups.

O'Neill, Allen, and Hastings (2013) clearly set out the origins of cooperative, competitive, and avoidance team behaviours that originate with the social interdependence theory of conflict management of Deutsch (1949). They specifically draw out the idea that while interdependence naturally leads to conflict it is individuals' responses to that conflict, in the form of cooperation, competition, or avoidance that is important for team effectiveness. Teams that generally practise a cooperative motivational orientation to sort out perceived incompatibilities are considered likely to be more successful than those that are competitive or avoiding in relation to communication, friendliness, and combining efforts. This is based on the idea of a positive interest in the welfare of the other individual as well as their own interests (Deutsch, 1994). On the other hand, a competitive motivational orientation leans more towards exploitation, withholding information, and win-lose actions (Chen, Liu, and Tjosvold, 2005). This is based on the idea of doing better than the other. Finally, Tjosvold, Law, and Sun (2006) highlight avoidance in a team setting as something that can limit access to resources available to individual team members thus diminishing the team's potential. It is worth noting here that while interdependence is a central feature of team design, there has been a lack of clarity relating to the meaning and use of its different forms such as task

interdependence and how individual contributions connect to resources and influence workflows for other team members (Courtright et al., 2015).

While leadership theory and research recognise implicitly that leadership is an important factor affecting team process (Kozlowski and Ilgen, 2006), one of the obstacles in progressing theoretical understanding is that team leadership theory is anchored in the traditional view of leadership vested in a single individual. The empirical study of Klasmeier and Rowold (2021) progresses understanding of team leadership. Arguably, findings reported from a time-lagged online survey of 697 team members and 160 team leaders suggest shared purpose enables shared leadership to emerge in a trustful environment and different sources of leadership can satisfy team needs. Furthermore over time there are short term changes in formal leadership (team leader) and long-term changes in shared leadership (Drescher et al., 2014). These findings counter the static perspectives of much previous research.

In summary, there are different issues emerging from team literature relevant to the present study. First, the lack of theorisation of the dynamic nature of teams in ‘real-life’ contexts. Second, the lack of understanding of leadership emergence as a ‘product of social interaction’. Third, the need to better understand the team emergent property of shared leadership arising out of the distribution of leadership influence across ‘multiple team members’ (Ramthun and Matkin, 2014, p. 244; Carson, Tesluk and Marrone, 2007).

Keeping in mind the research question of how leadership occurs in nonprofit boards – conceptualised here as teams and contemporary conversation about ‘leadership functions being distributed equally’ (Barnett and Weidenfeller, 2016, p. 339) – like Drescher et al.

(2014), this thesis questions the idea of equal distribution. If one of the roots of ‘shared leadership’ (Pearce and Conger, 2003) is accepted as anchored in Follet’s (1924) theory of the law of the situation, then leadership is not required to be distributed equally. It is the team member with the most appropriate knowledge who assumes the leadership role.

2.4.4. Positioning theory (PT)

The lack of theorisation of the dynamic nature of shared leadership in ‘real-life’ contexts is a limitation that can be addressed by positioning theory (Harre and Van Langenhove, 1999; 1991). Positioning theory has the potential to illuminate the current deficiencies in shared leadership research identified in section 2.4.1. In particular, this thesis addresses the gap relating to the dynamics of interactions and authorisation, how accountability moves, and how leadership is negotiated. PT shapes this research by navigating around board roles; it does this by prepositioning the board, its constitutional roles and mechanisms, and actors with their own rights and duties (Hirvonen, 2016; Harre, 2012). Thus, it facilitates a more dynamic picture of leadership. The theory originates with Davies and Harre (1990) in their idea of ‘the adoption of ‘position’ as the appropriate expression with which to talk about the discursive production of a diversity of selves’ (p. 264).

The concept of positioning is defined in three ways: 1) as a dynamic alternative to the static concept of role; 2) as the discursive construction of personal stories that make someone’s actions intelligible and within which other members of a conversation have available places; 3) that individuals take up places within a moral order defined as the cluster of rights and duties associated with particular positions embedded in a storyline (Harré and Van

Langenhove, 1991). McVee et al. (2018) cite Davies and Harre (1990) to illustrate what it means to take up a position:

Once having taken up a particular position as one's own, a person inevitably sees the world from the vantage point of the position and in terms of the particular images, metaphors, storylines and concepts which are made relevant within the particular discursive practice in which they are positioned (Davies and Harre, 1990, p. 262).

In other words, PT explores the rights and duties to speak and act in particular ways among participants in face-to-face interaction or intra-group relations. These interactions then form the foundations for the discursive constructions of positions and positioning (Hirvonen, 2016).

McVee et al., (2021; 2018) scope the development of positioning theory around different ideas anchored in linguistics and speech-act theory (e.g. Searle, 1979), philosophy of language (e.g. Bakhtin, 1981; Wittgenstein, 1953), and social psychology (e.g. Vygotsky, 1978). However, despite the range and increasing number of empirical studies employing this theory, the analytical focus of previous research going back two decades has been mainly concerned with discursive identity construction and interpersonal relations, individual narratives, and inter-institutional positioning (Harre and Moghaddam, 2003; Harre and Van Langenhove, 1999). This is not surprising, given that the theory offers one of several approaches to discursive identity construction and interpersonal relations (Deppermann, 2013).

Contemporary research, however, has seen this focus reflect growing interest in positioning theory across different research fields. Thus, it provides an important body of empirical work in education (Meschitti, 2019; Aitken et al., 2017), small group interaction (Hirvonen, 2016), business (Clifton, 2014; Bisel and Barge, 2011), and discursive psychology (Korobov, 2010). These diverse applications of PT in extant literature support the idea that positioning theory continues to emerge as a theory in its own right (Van Langenhove, 2017). This points to the potential for the application of PT to address the gap in the board literature that this study of board teams seeks to address.

This review of literature identified two criticisms of Harre's approach of a dynamic form of social interaction replacing static, nondiscursive cognitive concepts of 'role' and 'role theory' that are relevant to this research. First, the argument that PT does not sufficiently take account of action and agency and is hardly ever applied to actual empirical analyses of talk. Rather, it is preoccupied with a 'conceptual refutation of traditional psychology' (Korobov, 2010, p. 264). While Korobov acknowledges that Harré's approach to positioning has been helpful in drawing our attention to the dynamic nature of social interactions and the collective construction of sociality, he argues constructionist assumptions overlook the action orientation of positioning, and therefore fail to advance a noncognitive approach to discursive action (pp. 263–264 and 272). Korobov argues for a discursive psychological orientation to positioning that is 'not tethered to ethnogenic or ontological constructionist assumptions' (p. 263).

The second criticism is that distinguishing between roles and positions particularly in relation to interaction can be problematic. Deppermann (2015; 2013) makes two central

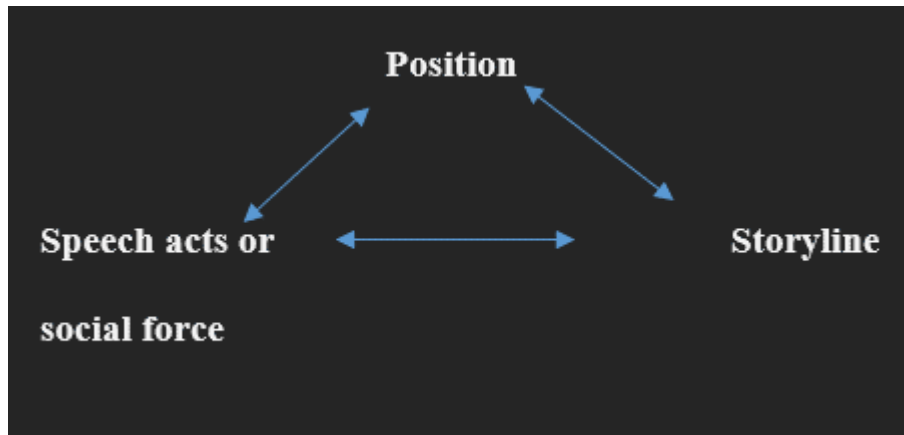
points. First, that roles can be regarded as the basis of positions and positioning. Second, Harre's reliance on fictional examples with no detailed sequential analysis of empirical data and unclear empirical basis do not fit well with a typical approach of fine-grained interactional and linguistic analysis of narrative and social interaction. Furthermore, the lack of clarification around strategies that people employ to negotiate positions is problematic.

McVee et al. (2018) counter these views arguing four points. First, a lack of appreciation of how PT has been applied in different disciplines in recent years fails to take account of its continuing theoretical development. Second, Korobov's (2010) assertion that PT is rarely applied to empirical data is not supported in a review of 50 cross-disciplinary studies. Third, the critique that Harre's PT does not advance a noncognitive approach to discursive action (agency and action) is challenged on the basis that these concepts are present and pivotal in the work of Davies from the beginning (Davies and Harre, 1990). Furthermore, that while Harre and his writing cohorts 'make clear they see PT as a 'challenge to traditional experimental psychology but constructing theoretical arguments, against theoretical perspectives in psychology is not the zenith of their work' (McVee, et al., 2018, p. 392) which has a grander agenda of developing PT'. Fourth, Deppermann's (2013) critique is challenged on the basis that a review of over 130 education-related studies (employing PT published across disciplines by 2013) found many studies not only employed video and audio analyses but also engaged in detailed analysis of authentic discourse (McVee et al., 2018). However, these scholars acknowledge that much of this work was related to classroom discourse, placing limitations on its value across other disciplines.

PT offers a promising concept which makes visible how individuals can take up positions within discourses and discursively present themselves and others in conversations in a particular context or situation. The value of position-oriented analysis of talk can be seen when expressing the experience of taking up leadership in interaction with others, bringing out the fluid interplay of subtle changes in position of the actors involved as they encounter tensions and contradictions in what they are trying to achieve and seek to explain or justify their next move. In this study, its value is that it has the potential to act as a bridge between position-oriented analysis of individual interviews and board level interactions where trustees negotiate leadership in decision-making episodes.

The application of positioning theory to data in this study is explained in chapter III section 3.4, 'analysis in practice'. In particular, this study employs the analytical tool of the 'positioning triangle' (sometimes referred to as triad) which draws on the mutually influential ideas of position, storyline, and speech acts, which constitute the theoretical foundation on which positioning theory sits (Zelle, 2009; Van Langenhove and Harre, 1999). It is introduced in figure 2 which follows.

Figure 2: The positioning triangle



Author's own elaboration of Van Langenhove and Harre (1999).

Methodologically speaking, the potential value of the positioning triangle is to enable a deeper understanding of a) how trustees talk about their experience of leadership in interview; b) construct individual narratives of leadership which they then negotiate in actual board decision-making episodes; and c) how they enact complex interactions and leadership activity observed in board meetings. Importantly, it is also about contributing deeper and targeted analysis which has the potential for additional theory building. The triangle can be engaged from any one of the apexes of 'position', 'speech acts' or 'storyline' (McVee et al., 2018; Hirvonen, 2016; Harre and Moghaddam, 2003; see section 3.4, 'analysis in practice', for details of how it is applied in practice in this study). It is a conceptual undertaking not to be confused with a metaphorical representation of position that is used in everyday life (McVee et al., 2018).

Three fundamental perspectives emerge from this literature review. First, there is growing interest in PT across different disciplines and extant literature is becoming more expansive. Second, the above critiques suggest that overall, there is a lingering credibility issue and that

contemporary studies, irrespective of discipline, need to present good empirical data from ‘real-life’ contexts for peer review. Third, the theoretical focus of positioning theory (Harre and Van Langenhove, 1999; 1991) is useful for this research in that it has the potential to illuminate the everyday interactions and discourses through which boards construct leadership from several perspectives. Notably, there have not been studies from an interpretivist perspective which apply positioning to leadership in board teams.

In concluding this sub-section, two points arise from this review. First, that clear empirical data from this study should add to studies of positioning theory from a ‘real-life’ context. Second, as set out in section 2.4.4, positioning theory has the potential to diminish the lack of theorisation of the dynamic nature of shared leadership (Pearce and Conger, 2003) in ‘real-life’ contexts. In particular, the gap relating to the dynamics of interactions and authorisation, how accountability moves, and how agency moves and is negotiated.

2.4.5. Agency as a discursive presentation

Agency is anchored in the idea of ‘agentive discourse’ (Harre, 1995, p. 120). In this view, reasons for action such as subjectivity, intentions, agency, participation, and decision making belong to what Harré has described as ‘agentive discourse’ (Brockmeier, 2009). More specifically, the idea that human agency cannot be detached from the study of the language of agency. In other words, ‘the discursive practices in which our agentive powers are manifested or, to put it more candidly, in which we present ourselves as agents’ (Harre, 1995, p. 122). Brockmeier (2009) elaborates on this:

‘Whenever we are in one of these two situations, we assign agentive power to people, and we do this for the most part by either positioning ourselves or others in an agentive fashion or interpreting an event or “non-event” (e.g., the absence of an expected event) in agentive terms (p. 226).

In the present study, human agency ascribed through ‘agentive powers’ (Harre, 1995) is ‘not a psychology of choosing but one of executing a choice once made’ (p. 120). Employing agency as a discursive presentation accepts the idea that agency and actions have been central to positioning theory as originally conceived by (Davies and Harre, 1990). Further that Davies’ work makes this clear from inception (McVee, et al., 2018, p. 386). In order to situate agency and its importance in this study, Harre (1999) is drawn on for background. According to Harre, there are two well established ways to understand representations of human beings and their ways of life. These are the causal picture and the agentive picture, illustrated in the different roles assigned to ‘persons’ in each paradigm. In the causal picture, the concept of ‘person’ is secondary (p. 43). Human beings are conceived of as hierarchically organized clusters of cognitive mechanisms. Contrastingly, in the agentive picture the concept of ‘person’ is fundamental. People are taken to be ‘active beings using all sorts of tools, including their own brains, for carrying on their life projects according to local norms and standards’ (p. 43).

This kind of view of agency is closely bound up with the application of positioning theory. In Harre’s view, discursive psychology is about the language of meanings, intentions, plans, and rules that reflect the agentive powers of people to act intentionally. An agentive picture of human life is one where ‘people work together to fulfil their intentions and achieve their

projects according to local rules and norms' (pp. 43–44). Harre's alignment of connecting his discursive psychological view with positioning contrasts with Korobov (2010) discussed above, whose view of discursive psychology is aligned to that of Derek Edwards and Jonathan Potter.

2.5. Chapter conclusion

The traditional view of leadership associated with the idea of 'some form of hierarchy' and a 'concentration of power' in a single individual (Grint, 2005, pp. 138–139) is becoming less useful for understanding leadership in contemporary contexts which are increasingly open to team work. Emerging evidence suggests that hierarchical leadership does not chime with the aspirations of many contemporary organisations (Chin, 2015), nor meet the needs of organisations that are open to removing layers of supervision (Karriker et al., 2017) and already feature a shared approach to leadership, such as UK voluntary organisations (Jacklin-Jarvis et al., 2018). Scholars are less persuaded by a top-down leader centric process (Wang et al., 2014) arguing that it is 'ever more difficult for any leader from above to have all of the knowledge, skills and abilities' (Pearce and Manz, 2005, p. 132) and that leadership effectiveness happens from ideas of participative decision making, empowerment, and self-leadership (Barnett and Weidenfeller, 2016).

As set out in 2.3.1, contemporary conversation about nonprofit board leadership suggests that interest in 'getting inside the boardroom' to develop a better understanding of board processes and behaviour remains a topic of interest. However, while this literature review reveals a diverse body of knowledge from research over the previous two decades, there is a dearth of research from a non-positivist orientation (Cornforth, 2014, p. 2). Other

contemporary topics include empirical research on boardroom interactions (Pugliese, Nicholson and Bezemer, 2015; Reid, 2014). However, such studies are rare, and gaps remain in our understanding. This study seeks to address this gap by taking an interpretivist approach to study leadership in two nonprofit federated boards. In concluding this chapter, the conceptual framework together with gaps identified in literature are summarised below.

The concepts of interest set out in sections 2.3.3 and 2.4 – 2.4.5 of accountability (Knutsen and Brower, 2010), shared leadership (Pearce and Conger, 2003), self-leadership (Manz, 1986), teamwork (Katzenbach and Smith, 1993), positioning (Harre and Van Langenhove, 1999; 1991), and agency as a discursive presentation (Harre, 1995) constitute the key concepts for this study to address the research question: How do individuals in the context of two nonprofit federated boards take up and make sense of leadership and enact accountability?

The conceptual framework is set out in figure 3. The mesh that holds these different concepts together is the apparent lack of theorisation from empirical studies in ‘real-life’ contexts. This is followed by a summary of the research gaps identified in literature.

Figure 3: Conceptual framework



Author's conceptual framework 11/2022.

2.5.1. Summary of gaps identified in literature

The research gaps are set out below.

1. Research still hasn't uncovered the everyday processes and interactions of trustee boards.

As set out in 2.3.2, Cornforth (2014; 2012) has made the case for studying nonprofit board leadership from inside the boardroom, taking a non-positivist orientation. Contemporary empirical research on boardroom interactions (Pugliese, Nicholson and Bezemer, 2015; Reid, 2014) are rare and while this topic has been of longstanding interest to scholars, it remains under researched. This interpretivist study seeks to diminish this gap identified in literature.

2. Similarly, studies of shared leadership have not yet uncovered the interactions through which a group of people share leadership acting both independently and interdependently.

It is apparent from the literature review in section 2.4.1 that while there is a positive role of shared leadership in teams from a static perspective revealed in meta-analyses studies (Lorinkova and Bartol, 2021), there have not been studies that conceptualise how shared leadership works in ‘real life’ contexts. The lack of theorisation of the concept of shared leadership (Pearce and Conger, 2003) in ‘real-life’ contexts (He and Hu, 2021; Drescher, 2014) is the gap identified in literature. This interpretivist perspective seeks to make a contribution to studies that conceptualise how shared leadership works in ‘real life’ contexts. As such studies are rare, the notion of shared leadership remains a rather vague one, and the task, or contemporary challenge, is one of understanding the tensions and processes that are involved in achieving it.

3. Positioning theory and Harre’s (1995) particular conceptualisation of agency has the potential to illuminate the interactions through which people construct leadership in board teams but has not yet been applied in that way.

The concept of positioning is considered a dynamic alternative opposed to the static concept of role (Harré and van Langenhove, 1991). It is apparent from 2.4.4 of the literature review that while there is a widespread picture of extant literature and growing diverse interest in positioning theory, it also highlights the gap in literature where this study can make a contribution. Specifically, that there have not been studies which apply positioning to leadership in board teams from an interpretive perspective. This interpretivist study seeks to

address two gaps identified in the literature. First, to illuminate interactions as they occur in decision-making episodes observed in the boardroom by focussing on the positions adopted by trustees. Second, methodologically to provide empirical analyses of data relating to how position-oriented analysis proceeds at individual and board levels. In particular, the sequential forms of interactions that suggest temporal leadership, and the strategies trustees' employ as they negotiate leadership.

4. Little attention has been given to how processes of self-leadership might be linked to shared leadership, both theoretically and empirically (Bligh et al., 2006), and multi-level research in relation to proactivity at team level (Stewart et al., 2019).

The gaps identified in literature are a) lack of empirical studies in organisational settings (Neck and Houghton, 2006), and b) the need for further multilevel research to identify proactive strategies employed by individuals at team level (Stewart et al., 2019). The central debate between Hauschildt and Konradt (2012) and Stewart et al. (2019) appears to relate to the tensions between self-leadership based on individual autonomy and shared leadership at team level, and the view that there is lack of evidence that takes account of context at team level (Stewart et al., 2019). Thus, there is a need to understand how people negotiate moving between the two kinds of leadership. These are the gaps in the literature that this study seeks to diminish. First, by offering empirical data from two top teams in context, analysed by an analytical approach which bridges analyses of self-leadership at individual and board levels. Second, by differentiating leadership as independent action or interdependent leadership and the interplay between the two.

The following methodology chapter III provides a detailed account of how trustees' experience of leadership was analysed and interpreted with the purpose of answering the overarching research question: How do individuals in the context of two nonprofit federated boards take up and make sense of leadership and enact accountability?

Chapter III Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This research departs from the positivist orientation adopted in much of the literature to study board leadership. It adopts a constructionist epistemology, an interpretivist theoretical perspective, and a qualitative methodology employing a case study strategy. This chapter offers justification for the research approach and provides an in-depth account of the methods employed.

The chapter has four sections. Section 1 sets out the interpretive framework that influenced the choices of how knowledge is created together with the case selection and concluding with data collection and reduction. Section 2 provides an overview of the process setting out the theoretical foundations and hybrid analytical process. It starts with the theoretical foundations of the analytical approach before introducing the three elements of the hybrid analytical process followed by a summary of the analytical activities carried out set against the Braun and Clarke (2019) framework. Section 3 gives an account of how theory has been applied in two stages in practice, following a brief explanation of these stages. In stage 1, trustees were interviewed about their experience of leadership. Transcripts were analysed a) thematically; b) using positioning theory for a second level of analysis; and c) leadership type differentiated by independent leadership action and interdependent leadership. In stage 2, observations of trustees' negotiations in the context of board decision-making episodes were analysed using 'the positioning triangle' (Van Langenhove and Harre, 1999) to interpret shifts of leadership in unfolding storylines.

The analytical activity in each phase of the Braun and Clarke framework was then detailed. To do this, examples were provided of worksheets employed to code and connect categories to develop themes, together with summaries of coding and connecting strategies and their authors. An extract was then provided from observation of one trustee's negotiation together with examples of positioning linked to leadership type and a summary of the storyline structure. Section 4 provides a summary of the integrated process and concluding with my role as the researcher.

3.2. Interpretive framework

Setting out how research is conducted is to translate a vision. To do this, each researcher sets out the ontological, epistemological, and methodological premises or interpretive framework, including the set of beliefs that guide their actions (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). The interpretive framework influences each researcher's choices on how knowledge is created (Klenck, 2008): the most appropriate methods that fit with the paradigm (Gephart, 2013) and how the researcher's philosophical assumptions come together to create the lattice within which the research process is set (Crotty, 1998; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, 2015). Therefore, interpretive research needs to have a path of coherent evidence running throughout the research process which demonstrates a) trustworthiness, and b) transparency, through the methods employed (Koch, 1994). In accordance with this principle, the perspective of this thesis is broadly in line with a relativist ontological perspective. This views reality as made up of 'many truths' and assumes that facts depend on the viewpoint of the observer as there is no single external reality to be discovered and measured

objectively as in a positivist orientation to research (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, 2015).

3.2.1. Why a relativist ontology?

The main challenge in adopting a relativist approach is that it is burdened with stigma, relating to the term ‘anything goes’ coined by Feyerabend (2010). Miller (2019) argues this term is an observation, not a prescription and should be considered in the context of its historical meaning. Namely, Feyerabend’s (2010) questioning of whether ‘methodological anarchy inherent in some of the major breakthroughs in science’ were the result of thinkers intentionally ignoring or unwittingly breaking methodological rules over time (Miller, 2019, p. 444). Miller illustrates a relativist approach using the example of different groups with their own audiences interested in the same policy issue but with different preferred outcomes. Groups’ different perspectives on a given issue mean that the solution is relative to each group’s perspective, even when they are attempting a rational and objective task. Relativism opposes the imposition of assessments and standards on the truth claims of groups, out with their respective contexts on the basis that standards of reasoning and procedures of justification are products of conventions and frameworks of assessment where authority is confined to and resides in the traditions and context giving rise to them. Thus, knowledge is relative to time, culture, group, and individual (Phillips, 2011).

In this research, relativism does not mean that all things are equal, or that ‘murder is just as good as chocolate’ (Miller, 2019, p. 443). The view advanced is that relativism arises from the tacit assumption that different social structures can construct their realities differently and knowledge always arises from a certain position and is distributed in terms of its

relativity to the concrete social environment (Miller, 2019, drawing on Berger and Luckman, 1967, and Alfred Schutz). In this research, this means that different groups while members of the same federation, governed by the same protocols and membership rules will interpret these protocols and rules in relation to their local conditions.

3.2.2. Why a constructionist epistemology?

Epistemology relates to the ‘theory of knowledge’. It is concerned with the most appropriate ways to enquire into the nature of the world (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, 2015, p. 46). Knowledge for the constructionist means ‘there is no meaning without a mind’ (Crotty 1998, pp. 36–7). Therefore, truth or meaning is constructed by individuals in different ways, even when it concerns the same phenomenon. It is our engagement and different interpretations of our world that construct our realities (Crotty, 1998). As knowledge is socially embedded, constructed, and made up of multiple truths, the task of the researcher is threefold. First, to illuminate different interpretations and how these ‘claims for truth and reality become constructed in everyday life’ (Easterby-Smith et al., 2015, p. 84). Second, to carry out a further layer of interpretation to develop understanding about the meanings people have constructed and how they make sense of their world (Gephart, 2013). Third, to understand situations in their uniqueness (Patton, 2002) by drawing on small samples to generalise to a theory.

In contrast, the positivist orientation dominant in natural sciences views ‘reality’ as something ‘out there’ (Lincoln and Guba, 2003); thus, an external objective truth waiting to be discovered. The epistemological assumption is that knowledge is significant only if it is empirically verified and demonstrates causality. This limits its value for research in relation

to meaning-making, as ‘meaning and therefore meaningful reality exists apart from the operation of any consciousness’ (Crotty, 1998, p. 36). While positivism is considered an economical approach employing large samples to provide generalization to wider populations through statistical probability (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, 2015), constructionism aims to induce ideas and concepts from the data it brings about while recognising tensions that interact between meanings constructed through lived experience and various systems (Grandy, 2018). Specifically, the idea of an active mind in the construction of knowledge (Schwandt, 2000, p. 189, in Grandy, 2018). Furthermore, the idea that ‘what really exists is not things but ‘things in the making’ (Grandy 2018 drawing on James, 1909/1996, p. 263, in Tsoukas and Chia, 2002, p. 567). This thesis subscribes to ‘normal’ constructionism (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, 2015, p. 53): the idea that individuals construct their own knowledge while accepting the existence of independent phenomena that exist independently of human consciousness. Therefore, the knowledge of the world is always provisional and relative to a community, but the world is seen as separate from those attempting to know it. This is in contrast to strong social constructionism which ‘assumes no difference between individual and social knowledge’ (p. 53). A constructionist epistemology is appropriate for this research as it offers access to the interplay between individual and collective agency, enactment of individual and team constructions of leadership, and multiple realities of board leadership.

3.2.3. Why qualitative research?

This thesis employs a qualitative case study (QCS) informed by a constructionist epistemology in order to offer an interpretation that acknowledges the common-sense

understanding of participants as well as an academic interpretation (Gephart, 2013). According to Richards (2015), there is no dichotomy between numerical and non-numerical data. Both qualitative and quantitative studies collect information in both forms as required. While quantitative data efficiently reduce large samples, qualitative research is commonly about identifying puzzles that have to be explained.

Qualitative research is an ‘umbrella term’ that covers an assortment of interpretive techniques which come to terms with the meaning of ‘more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world’ (Van Mannen, 1983, p. 9). While certain authors have emphasized different features (e.g. Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2009), four features are common to understanding qualitative research: 1) a focus on process, understanding, and meaning; 2) the researcher as the primary instrument of data collection and analysis; 3) the inductive process; however, it is recognised that not all qualitative research is inductive and some researchers employ qualitative research to test theory; 4) the richly descriptive product. Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding situations in their uniqueness and context (Patton 2002). Therefore, they tend to collect data from the field by gathering information from talking to people and seeing them act within their particular context (Creswell, 2007). This data is then used to build concepts or theories rather than make predictions. It is the meaning people have constructed and how they make sense of their world that is of interest (Gephart, 2013).

3.2.4. Why an interpretive perspective?

Distinctively interpretive social science takes an ‘insider view that privileges social actors’ knowledge of social contexts and their common-sense meanings’ while seeking to

‘understand members’ tacit knowledge, shared meanings, and the informal norms everyday actors use to act in the world’ (Gephart, 2013, p. 3). In adopting an interpretivist paradigm, it is recognised that the researcher is part of what is being researched in that it is my construction and interpretation of data that informs the findings of this study.

The above philosophical and theoretical assumptions informed the research choices in this thesis. Taking the view that leadership is a construct that appears out of actual meaning-making processes in a specific context means that it is necessary to focus on experiences of leadership at work where context is central to understanding. To inquire into how leadership happens in a board context led to a qualitative case study (QCS) being adopted, focusing on the experiences of all board trustees, not just a designated individual leader, in order to develop understanding of shared leadership from a variety of different perspectives. This is reflected in the choice of organization and by applying a hybrid analytical process that takes account of multiple perspectives at individual level in stage 1 and both independent and interdependent leadership activity at board level in stage 2.

3.2.5. Why a qualitative case study?

The research strategy illustrates the logic of answering research questions (Creswell, 2003) by means of a thorough investigation which provides analysis of the processes, theoretical interests, and context. The term case study has been variously described as a research method of choice (Stake, 2005): an empirical inquiry into a contemporary phenomenon in a ‘real-life’ context (Yin, 2009), a research strategy (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 1994; Stake, 1995; Creswell, 2007), and defined in terms of its theoretical orientation (Hartley, 2004). While Yin takes a broadly positivist orientation, Stake is oriented towards constructivism and

existentialism. In particular, the view that qualitative researchers are interpreters as they privilege knowledge that is constructed rather than discovered. Merriam in turn takes the view that all types of qualitative research are established in ‘reality constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds’ (Merriam, 1998, p. 6).

The case study approach is employed in this research as the primary strategy and basic approach of constructing new knowledge. In avoiding a commitment to a particular type of analysis method or data, it created the freedom to adopt a hybrid analytical process to study board leadership in its real-world context. Methodologically speaking, this case study is anchored in the qualitative tradition. It is the basis from which the quality of the research criteria of credibility, trustworthiness, and believability of the findings have been adopted in this research (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, 2015). The qualitative case is selected because it is of interest (Stake 2005) or chosen for theoretical reasons (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007). Typically, the data collection emphasis is a triangulation of interviews, archival documents, and observation (Flick, 2009) resulting in a detailed case description and analysis to better understanding ‘how’ and ‘why’ things happen (Ridder, 2017; Stake, 2005).

In this research, an ‘interpretive sensemaking’ case study has been employed in the idiographic tradition of social science (Welch et al., 2011, p. 747). The emphasis is to understand the complex nature of nonprofit federated board leadership as opposed to ‘law-like explanations’ (p. 747). To this end, the theoretical focus of positioning theory helps to illuminate the everyday interactions and discourses through which boards construct leadership.

Therefore, this case study emphasises not only the uniqueness of the social world in which trustees ascribe meaning to individual leadership action in talk and their interactions in decision-making episodes in the boardroom, it also offers ‘an analysis of the context and processes which illuminate the theoretical issues’ (Hartley, 2004, p. 344). A case study strategy has been adopted for four reasons. First, because it is considered helpful when the topic is broad and complex and can be studied in its environmental context rather than a commitment to a particular method. Second, it can be combined with theory elaboration (Ridder, 2017). Third, the case functions as part of the iterative process of analysis by remaining open to the idea of the evolving case through moving between theory and evidence throughout the study while keeping the ‘research focus’, ‘the unit of analysis and case-study boundaries’ shaped by the context under review (Poulis, Poulis and Plakoyiannaki, 2013, p. 306).

Working in a constructionist paradigm, two case boards have been selected within the single organisational case study, analysed within the bounded context of one charitable UK federation. The single case aims are as follows:

- To contribute to studies about how leadership actually occurs at individual and board levels in practice, and to explore the multiple ways in which accountability might occur.
- To contribute to empirical studies of shared leadership through the lens of positioning theory, and to explore how position-oriented analysis proceeds.
- To contribute to innovative methodological studies.

Unlike research from a positivist paradigm concerned with issues of validity around generalisability, causality, and objectivity, this thesis is concerned with having a sufficient number of perspectives to interpret (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, 2015, p. 103). To address this concern, positioning theory has been chosen underpinned by the mutually influential ideas of positions, storylines, and speech acts (Van Langenhove and Harre, 1999). The choice of PT have been made for three reasons: 1) because of its potential to bridge the analytical gap between individual and board levels of analysis (Zelle, 2009); 2) to explore trustees' experience of leadership having assigned themselves 'agentive powers' to take up leadership responsibility on certain tasks (Harre, 1995, p. 122) either as individuals or dyads; 3) to better understand how trustees' individual constructs of leadership are negotiated in actual board decision-making episodes to become board constructs of leadership.

To arrive at a suitable case, a broad criteria was considered. In practice, however, the selection was made through the process of gaining access and establishing that the case was appropriate for the research aims and proposed methodology.

Securing access to individuals in organisations is crucial in qualitative research. However, 'there is no online dating service that connects researchers and organizations' (Alexander and Smith, 2019, p. 181). While securing access was an early decision in the case study strategy and agreed with the federation, it was also an ongoing negotiation, notably at times of organisational change. The paradox of access is that it is the most common obstacle for success (Johl and Renganathan, 2009) that shapes this type of research (Alexander and Smith, 2019), yet how researchers gain access is not well understood. For example, access will not be approved if there is a risk of confidential commercial information being disclosed

(Buchanan, Boddy and McCalman, 1988) and is dependent on the goodwill of gatekeepers who can both facilitate and withdraw access at the ‘drop of a hat’. While ‘rich backstories’ of qualitative researchers (e.g. Buchanan, Boddy and McCalman, 1988; Feldman et al., 2003; Cunliffe and Alcadipani, 2016) give a relational perspective on how to gain access, each organization is unique and ‘what works in one may not be appropriate for another’ (Alexander and Smith, 2019, p. 172).

In this research, securing access has been viewed as a strategic initiative moving outside the act of gaining access to point to the ‘trustworthiness’ and ‘credibility’ of the researcher in ‘interpreting findings and collecting data’ (Alexander and Smith, 2019, p. 183). Access here was built on a pilot study at master’s level in 2016/2017. This pilot confirmed the suitability of the organisation as a case study. The organisation’s support for the research aims were formally approved at the same time as the research was endorsed by the Open University ethics committee under HREC/3001/ 5/3/2019. Both proposals detailed the research aims, methods, timelines, assessment of risk of harm to participants, informed consent, and provided an information leaflet for potential participants. A reciprocal condition (Buchanan, Boddy and McCalman, 1988) of providing 1000-word reports for each participating board and the federation was agreed.

3.2.5.1. Access to boards

Access to boards was facilitated by the federation, based on interest from three regional chairs in response to a targeted federation email. Ten ‘foreshadowing’ conversations were carried out with three regional chairs, six board chairs in different counties of England, and the CEO. These described ‘the interesting situation’ (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, p.

28) of getting inside the black-box of federated board leadership. Following this process, two boards chose to participate in the research. This involved chairs nominating up to four individuals who could provide insights external to their boards, which included federation employees at national office. Early in 2019 the CEO agreed to canvas the then national chair's view on granting access to the main board. This was agreed for June 2019 but subsequently put on hold following a change in office bearer.

This single case study of how board leadership occurs was shaped by opportunistic sampling where participants on two boards were used, which was not the original plan and changed the shape of the research (Alexander and Smith, 2019). It also introduced unanticipated risk that could not be controlled (Buchanan, Boddy and McCalman, 1988). There was a concern that this might not include sufficient perspectives (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson 2015); however, the range of interviewees was sufficient because this research does not seek to generalise findings to a large population but to have enough data to suggest how boards function from a constructionist-interpretivist perspective.

Unrequested access also occurred, for example, the invitation to observe the regional committee of which board 1 is a member. On reflecting and making sense of the process of securing access, it seems that the sample was opportunistic because the overall federation chose not to get involved in nominating boards for participation; although initially it had considered picking boards that it considered to be of particular interest.

3.2.6. Data collection

The logical steps that are taken to connect the research question with data collection, analysis, and interpretation in a coherent manner, are set out in the research design and effectively frame the argument (Hartley, 2004). A strength of case study research is that data collection and data analysis are jointly developed in an iterative process which ‘allows for theory development grounded in empirical evidence’ (p. 329). In this study, data collection was carried out between December 2018 – December 2019, as set out in the following table 3.

Table 3: Data collection timelines

Context	Timelines
Board 1	04/2019 – 10/2019
Board 2	06/2019 – 11/2019
Federation	07/2019 – 12/2019

Author 2020

Throughout the period, data bases were being simultaneously constructed or refined and interviews and meetings were being transcribed and subsequently analysed. The following table 4 summarises the data sources including those external to boards.

Table 4: Breakdown of data sources

Board 1		Board 2		Federation	
Interviews					
Trustees	7	Trustees	11	National office 6 employees 1 volunteer	7
Non-trustees (local)	2	Non-trustees (Local and regional)	6	Follow-up interviews prevented by Covid 19	
Observation					
Board meeting (Second meeting prevented by Covid 19)	1	Board meeting	2	Meeting –senior management team	1
		Annual general meeting (AGM)	1		
Regional committee meeting	1	Regional committee meeting prevented by Covid 19	.		
Archival Documents					
Regulatory	8		5		
Regional committee	11	AGM	6		
Other	6		1		2

Author 12/2021

Stage 1 analysed positioning in trustees’ talk in semi-structured interviews. Specifically, about their experience of leadership and a) the factors that prompted them to take independent leadership action; b) when this becomes interdependent leadership; and c) how

positioning theory helps us to understand how they make sense of their own leadership activity and that of others (see section 3.3.3 for overview of detailed analytical activity).

Stage 2 employed key ideas of positioning theory (Harre and Van Langenhove, 1991; Van Langenhove and Harre, 1999) to analyse observation of actual board decision-making episodes. The process was looking for insights of a) how trustees construct individual narratives of leadership which they then negotiate in unfolding storylines; and b) how leadership shifts in trustees' interactions. The hybrid approach of thematic analysis (TA), underpinned by the coding strategies described in table 10 and the analysis of positioning, provided access to trustees' leadership activity first, in terms of their prepositioned roles and subsequently in their decision-making interactions.

Data collection was not a linear process in that design ideas were 'relatively unstructured' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, p. 3) in the early stages of research in foreshadowed conversations in 2017. Ideas were kept under review in the iterative process of adjusting the design to respond to change (e.g. access to the federation board).

3.2.6.1. Conducting semi-structured interviews

Qualitative interviewing depends on the research topic. It has the potential, if done well, to achieve depth and understanding about a phenomenon that other methods, such as survey and questionnaire, cannot achieve (Silverman, 2006). This view is echoed by Patton (2002) who argues that in-depth interviews give access to how people experience a phenomenon, make sense of it, describe it, and talk to others about it. Therefore, it is through talk with people that the researcher can relate experiences to their research question. In taking a

constructionist approach, the researcher's relationship with the trustees and other participants could be seen as actively constructing meaning by interpreting their positioning in talk throughout the interview.

The activity of selecting and producing data (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007) was sequential, starting with flexible semi-structured interviews around three overarching topics. Of the 33 interviews carried out, 18 semi-structured interviews were conducted with trustees. Specifically, seven were conducted in board 1 with five trustees. There were two follow up interviews carried out. The remaining three follow up interviews were postponed but did not take place due to Covid 19. In board 2, 11 interviews were conducted with six trustees. There were five follow up interviews. The remaining 15 interviews included retired volunteers, employees at national level, and volunteers in regional and county roles. Follow-up interviews were interrupted in early 2020 due to Covid-19. The words of these participants helped to shape the 'case organisation' in chapter IV and are scattered across the data set often providing confirmation of trustee interview data shared.

While each topic was introduced to the participants, thereafter they set the direction of the conversation. Initial themes were reviewed in a second face to face interview with two available trustees in board 1 and three trustees and three volunteers in board 2. While one further follow-up interview was diarised, it was subsequently postponed. Then Covid-19 interrupted the process. Follow up interviews to review themes with available participants, focussed on their feedback.

Interview protocol – first interview (Author2019)

Interview topics were loosely framed and directed towards how trustees make sense of their experiences and reproduced below:

- Role and experience
- Board goals
- Relationships – within the board team and across the federation

Protocol – follow-up interview questions and introducing themes

- How was the first interview – what stands out for you?
- Do you feel that you shared your ideas about the topics of what leadership means in this board?
- With hindsight is there anything that you would have said differently or would like to change?
- Author then introduces and validates themes.

Interview protocol can be found under appendix 1.

3.2.6.2. Observation

There are three focal points to be considered in observational research: the focus of the study, methodological decisions, and theoretical choices (Silverman, 2006). This chapter focuses on methodological decisions, in particular ‘positioning acts’, defined here as relationally situating at least two individuals (‘self’ and other) into a local moral order according to some

storyline (Van Langenhove and Harre, 1999) (see glossary of positioning terms appendix 2). Table 7 sets out the 'orders of positioning' applied here.

Initially, I assumed a 'complete observer' role and distance from the participants (Easterby-Smith, 2015, p. 162) in both boards. This was due to a) the regulatory nature of board meetings; and b) my research focus on how trustees' positioning acts in decision-making episodes led to leadership shifting between independent action and interdependent leadership. Consequently, I declined invitations to speak on subjects in each board meeting. However, I started to think of myself as a 'guest-observer'. This was mostly due to the warm and generous hospitality extended to me.

The observation framework was open and categories were not pre-coded. However, 'observer-identified categories' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, p. 38) were constructed in general around the topics of leadership and governance. Observations were noted in terms of a contact form adapted from Miles and Huberman (1994) illustrated below and in appendix 3.

Observation contact form (Author 2019)

What are the main issues or themes that made an impression?

What are the governance mechanisms that enable accountability?

What are the contextual influences that shape leadership?

To what extent shared leadership exists in the board team, if at all?

How do these impressions/instances relate to the research objectives?

What else jumped out as being important in this contact?

3.2.6.3. Complete observation

The research method of ‘complete observation’ is considered of limited value for researchers taking a social constructionist perspective in that their detachment can be regarded as snooping by participants, leading to lack of depth in the data gathered (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, 2015). In taking a constructionist perspective, this problem was avoided in two ways. First, by a ‘getting to know you process’ through foreshadowed telephone and email communications with trustees and other participants. Second, by using ‘theoretical triangulation’ (Denzin, 1989) of data from multiple perspectives drawn from different sources and types of data. This allowed insight into trustees’ meaning-making in interview and their complex interactions in observation using theories not just off the shelf solutions to research problems but to provide the ‘focus for future field work’ (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, p. 165).

3.2.6.4. Archival documents

Secondary data, summarised in table 5 were treated as social products to be ‘examined and not relied on uncritically as a research resource’ (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, p. 130). In this study, various kinds of written material were reviewed and underscore the linguistic character of qualitative data (Silverman, 2006). In the social setting of nonprofit boards, trustees routinely engaged in producing and circulating various forms of written material in paper or electronic format. These range from formal regulatory documents to guidance on an A4 paper attached to a stable tack room door. For example, health and safety standards

in relation to hats and horses. The role of this study in relation to written text was not to assess texts in terms of 'objective' standards but to analyse how they work and the functions they perform (p. 155). Silverman (2006) argues for four advantages to textual data: richness, relevance and effect, naturally occurring, and availability. In this study, naturally occurring texts, such as the feasibility paper for the capital project in board 2 are of particular interest. Documents were interrogated using the following:

- 'How are they produced in socially organised contexts?'
- 'How are they used in everyday organizational action?'
- 'How do they enter into the manufacture of self and identity?' (Silverman, 2006, pp. 155–157).

Textual analysis here informs a) the account of the case study (3.2.5) and b) the analysis and interpretation of interview and observation data but also provides information about the respective board settings; their organised practices and evidence of transparent board processes and accountability.

Table 5: Secondary data

Board 1	
Regulatory documents	8
Committee papers	11
Others – e.g. employment contract	6
Board 2	
Regulatory documents	5
AGM papers	6
Other – e.g. riding establishment brochure	1
Senior management team	
Policy papers	2

Author 2020 summary of archival documents (39).

As previously mentioned data collection was not a linear process and the research design remained open to change (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007).

3.2.7. Overview of data collection

Thirty-three semi-structured interviews were conducted and six meetings observed. These were audio recorded with the consent of each participant and transcribed. The reasons for wishing to record interviews and meetings were clearly explained; namely, that it enabled full concentration on the interview or meeting, knowing that the transcript of the recording could be relied on for analyses. Meetings lasted about two hours on average and interviews about one hour. While consent was readily granted to audio record each interview, board meeting consent to video meetings was controversial. Indeed, it resulted in a vote in one board. In another meeting the video stopped working during the meeting for no apparent reason despite showing it was powered up. However, as the meeting was also audio recorded a verbatim transcript was produced, as was the practice for a) all board meetings and trustee interviews; and b) federation employees and regional office bearers proposed by trustees.

3.2.8. Data reduction and display

All data require reduction if a story or account is to be given of what the data records show (Richards, 2015). Data reduction is a process of selecting, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming (Miles and Huberman, 1994). In turn, data display is a means of organising information to convey summaries, ideas, and findings (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Given the volume of qualitative data in this research, data displays perform a central role in illustrating systematic data collection and analysis at different stages. In particular, tables have been employed to condense, manage, and convey information for further refinement and interpretation, and to provide displays of meaning while simultaneously balancing this with coded extracts of trustees' talk and their interactions in larger units of text. However,

this was a far from mechanistic process in this study. In the early stages of analysis, balancing participants' common-sense meanings against academic analysis and interpretation was challenging to ensure that the data reduction process reflected both constructions adequately. It was an iterative process that started with chronological coding, collated coding, and categorising initial themes from interview and meeting transcripts supported by textual data to cluster these analytically. An iterative process was used of dialogue between relevant literature, theory, and recategorizing empirical data that suggested single codes of interest for later interpretation (Boyatzis, 1998). Data reduction of empirical data drew on different authors, in different phases of the process.

Early iterations of the findings included many examples of trustees' positioning in talk but these were not specifically answering the research question. Consequently, it could have been an account that participants' themselves generated, without my own sensemaking of the data being apparent (Richards, 2015). Like much qualitative research, there were some difficulties with data reduction because of an unwillingness 'to let go of the detail' (p. 217). Additionally, a 'shrink-wrap principle' (Richards, 2015) was used in phase 6 in order to hold on to focussed coding of complexities and contexts until producing the final report. In practical terms there was the word-count constraint of a doctoral study. In the end, examples were chosen that supported an alternative and plausible interpretation that contributed deeper insights in stage 1 and stage 2 of a more dynamic portrait of leadership in unfolding storylines. These are elaborated in the findings chapter V.

3.3. Theoretical foundations and hybrid analytical approach

The process of analysis starts from the ‘necessity to know one’s data’ (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, p. 162). Thus, this requires employing connecting strategies that not only preserve data in its original form but offer a way to ‘reduce data’ while maintaining the key relationships that hold the data together (Maxwell and Miller, 2008). Before moving on to the data analysis, the next step in the process is to set out the theoretical foundations, the hybrid analytical process, and an overview and summary of the analytical activity.

3.3.1. Theoretical foundations

This section explains why thematic analysis (TA) (Braun and Clarke, 2019; 2021) combined with positioning theory (PT) (Harre and Van Langenhove, 1991), employing the analytical tool of the positioning triangle (Van Langenhove and Harre, 1999), provide the basis of analysis for this case study. The hybrid analytical process is then introduced, followed by a summary of analytical activities carried out and set against the Braun and Clarke framework. The section concludes with an overview of the process.

3.3.1.1. Thematic analysis

Themes are analytic outputs based on the creative labour of coding and actively created by the researcher at the intersection where data, analytic process, and subjectivity meet. They are creative and interpretive stories about the data, anchored in the researcher’s theoretical assumptions, their analytic resources and skill (Braun and Clarke, 2019). The original TA framework (2006) offers a flexible method with theoretical freedom that recognises many ways of applying thematic analysis, providing that researchers make known their

epistemological assumptions. More recently, Braun and Clarke have offered ‘reflexive TA’ (Braun and Clarke, 2019; 2021) as an approach suited to relativist-constructionist framings which recognise both deductive (theory-based) and inductive (data-driven) analytic processes conceived as a continuum and not a dichotomy. This provides a basis for combining thematic analysis with the ideas of positioning theory as the bases of analysis in this relativist-constructionist-interpretive study.

This study recognises the key ideas of ‘researcher subjectivity understood as a resource’ and qualitative research as being about meaning and meaning-making that tell stories that are always context-bound, positioned, and situated (Braun and Clarke, 2019, p. 591). Reflexive TA’ has been chosen for three reasons: 1) it provides a clear framework for early researchers; 2) it focuses on distinguishing implicit and explicit ideas, identified in initial codes, then collated to become initial themes that are then categorised and developed into final themes; 3) recent articulations of Braun and Clarke, (2019 and 2021) are clearly expressed as suitable for combined analytic processes that are ‘not intended to be followed rigidly’ (Braun and Clarke, 2021, p. 331). Critics argue that TA is not a separate method, rather something to be used to help researchers in analysis (Boyatzis, 1998). This view is not shared by King and Horrocks (2010) and unsurprisingly Braun and Clarke (2019). However, Braun and Clarke recognise a new criticism of succumbing to ‘proceduralism’ (p. 329). Therefore, while an acknowledged criticism of TA is that it loses depth around individual accounts, (Nowell, et al., 2017) this is offset here by the theoretical flexibility of combining reflexive TA with the ideas of positioning theory (Harre and Van Langenhove, 1991) and the analytical tool of the positioning triangle (Van Langenhove and Harre, 1999) introduced in 2.4.4. A summary of the TA procedure is provided under table 6.

3.3.1.2. Positioning theory (PT)

As mentioned in 2.4.4, PT continues to emerge as a theory in its own right (Van Langenhove, 2017; Moghaddam, 2017), but it is applied in different ways by researchers. Some studies use the idea of position or positioning as a general metaphor but without using PT in their analysis (McVee et al., 2018). These scholars argue that ‘researchers should be deliberate and specific’ in their application of conceptual frameworks and thus avoid conflating generic discussions of position with PT’ (p. 391). Arguably this common misconception prevents researchers taking up the opportunity for deeper and targeted analysis and potential for additional theory building.

The study employs the analytical tool of the ‘positioning triangle’ introduced in 2.4.4 and elaborated in the ‘hybrid analytical process’ in 3.3.1.3. It enables a deeper analysis of how trustees talk about their experience of leadership in interview and how they enact complex interactions and leadership activity in decision-making episodes observed in board meetings. Thus, within this integrated process the positioning triangle facilitates the move from data analyses to interpretation at two different levels. As previously mentioned in 2.4.4, it is a conceptual undertaking not to be confused with a metaphorical representation of position that is used in everyday life (McVee et al., 2018). Drawing on the words of McVee et al. what is important for this doctoral study is that scholars who choose to use PT provide good empirical data for peer review and ‘authors should be clear about analytical procedures’ (p. 397).

In this study, positioning theory shapes empirical analyses in three ways. First, it illuminates the prepositioning of the board, its constitutional roles and mechanisms, including actors

with their own rights and duties (Hirvonen, 2016; Harre, 2012). Second, it gives access to the interactions and discourses through which these nonprofit boards construct leadership. Third it makes visible trustees experience of leadership in talk and in their interactions as they negotiate individual narratives of leadership in actual board decision-making episodes.

3.3.1.3. Hybrid analytical process

Hybrid approaches are recognised as demonstrating rigour in qualitative research by integrating methodological approaches in a way that demonstrates transparency (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006). In this case study, transparency is achieved by setting out the step by step processes of analysis in order to articulate the overarching themes and storylines from trustees' original data.

While hybrid approaches often focus on a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods, the hybrid approach adopted here offers a theory-method fit (Gehman et al., 2018) to answer the research question introduced in chapter I. Significantly, thematic analysis combined with the ideas of positioning theory and leadership differentiated as 'independent action' and 'interdependent leadership' allowed access to the interplay between individual and collective constructions of leadership and a more dynamic and targeted process of analysis that accommodated multiple-levels of analysis. Essentially, positioning theory provided a bridge between insight from inductively generated themes and unfolding storylines revealed in observation that link to the concepts of interest in this study.

The hybrid analytical process was applied in two stages. In stage 1, inductive analysis of the data was carried out following the amended framework of thematic analysis (Braun and

Clarke, 2019; 2021) and informed by positioning analysis. In stage 2, abductive analysis employed the analytical tool of the positioning triangle (Van Langenhove and Harre, 1999) to analyse emerging storylines (see 2.4.4 for further orientation). The third element of the hybrid process of differentiating trustees' leadership as 'independent action' and 'interdependent leadership' outside and inside the boardroom employed the 'agentic framework of Harre (1995) across both stages in order to analyse how and when trustees' assign agentic powers to 'self' and others to take up responsibility for tasks.

3.3.1.4. Thematic analysis

I followed the most recent 6-phase approach of Braun and Clarke (2019; 2021) summarised in table 6 below. Detailed analytical activity carried out in each phase can be found in table 9.

Table 6: Overview of TA procedure

Phase 1 – writing familiarisation notes
Phase 2 – systematic data coding
Phase 3 – generating initial themes from coded and collated data
Phase 4 – developing and reviewing themes amended phase
Phase 5 – refining, defining, and naming themes
Phase 6 – writing the report

Author's own elaboration of Braun and Clarke (2019; 2021).

A strength of case study research is that data collection and data analysis are jointly developed in an iterative process which 'allows for theory development grounded in empirical evidence' (Hartley, 2004, p. 329). As previously mentioned in section 2.4.4, the

analytical tool of the positioning triangle (Van Langenhove and Harre, 1999) is employed as part of an innovative hybrid analysis. Its purpose is not only to develop a deeper understanding of how trustees construct individual narratives of leadership which they then negotiate in actual board decision-making episodes but also to contribute deeper and targeted analysis which has the potential for additional theory building.

3.3.1.5. The positioning triangle

Three elements of the positioning triangle (Van Langenhove and Harre, 1999) were applied to the data. As set out in the literature review (2.4.4) the positioning triangle can be engaged from any one of the apexes of ‘position’, ‘speech act’ or ‘storyline’ (McVee et al., 2018; Hirvonen, 2016; Harre and Moghaddam, 2003). In this study, the point of entry is the apex of storyline which provides context to an ongoing social episode: the positioning acts that relationally situate two or more people in a ‘local moral order’ and information about the availability of positions and the rights and duties attributed to them. Drawing on Hirvonen (2016) the following table illustrates the ‘orders of positioning’ employed in negotiations in stage 2 of the study.

Table 7: Orders of positioning applied in the boardroom

First-order positioning	Second-order positioning	Third-order positioning
Initial act of positioning which is open to challenge	Questioning or negotiating a first-order positioning act within the same storyline	Breaks storyline. Act of repositioning made in a new context from that in which first-order positioning took place

Author's own elaboration of Hirvonen (2016).

As mentioned in section 2.4.4, the purpose of the analytical tool of the positioning triangle (Van Langenhove and Harre, 1999) is not only to develop a deeper understanding of how trustees construct individual narratives of leadership which they then negotiate in actual board decision-making episodes but also to contribute deeper and targeted analysis which has the potential for additional theory building. This study employed positioning to interpret episodes of observation that exemplified particular themes identified as significant through thematic coding. The next section examines the final element of the hybrid analytical process, that of differentiating leadership.

3.3.1.6. Differentiating leadership

The third element of the hybrid process concerns interpreting the experience of leadership enacted by trustees differentiated as innovative independent action outside the boardroom and interdependent leadership within the boardroom as leadership shifts. These are illustrated in the findings chapter V and inform the arguments in the discussion chapter VI. In this study, these forms of leadership are important in contributing to understanding three strands of literature. First, self-leadership (Manz, 1986) and the idea of recognising situations

to be addressed. Second, agency anchored in the idea of ‘agentive discourse’ (Harre, 1995, p. 120). Third, shared leadership (Pearce and Conger, 2003) and its potential to focus on how individuals take up leadership, individually and jointly in board teams that are interdependent and share responsibility.

Table 8: Differentiating leadership type

<p>Independent action</p> <p>Actors search for solutions and take up responsibility without prompting (amalgam of ideas).</p> <p>Looks to ‘proactivity’ in self-leadership (Hauschildt and Konradt, 2012)</p>	<p>Interdependent leadership</p> <p>Actors act as mutually accountable in crafting solutions and sharing responsibility for performance outcomes (Katzenbach and Smith, 1993)</p>
<p>Empowered by:</p> <p>Constitution authorises individual authority</p> <p>Portfolio roles</p> <p>Individual knowledge and skills relevant to the situation</p> <p>Assigning ‘agentive powers’ to ‘self’ and others (Harre, 1995)</p> <p>Choosing when to act independently through ‘judgment of agency’ – oneself the author of action (Haggard and Tsakiris, 2009) to control events (Moore et al., 2012)</p>	<p>Empowered by:</p> <p>Constitution authorises shared responsibility</p> <p>Established trust and confidence</p> <p>Situation requiring combination of knowledge and skills</p> <p>Assigning ‘agentive powers’ to ‘self’ and others (Harre, 1995)</p> <p>Choosing when to understand themselves as part of a collective. ‘Judgment of agency’ – ‘self’ and others as authors of action (Haggard and Tsakiris, 2009) to control events (Moore et al., 2012)</p>

Author 7/12/2021

In addition to the conceptual ideas being applied, the above table features two elements of how trustees talked about being empowered in preliminary interviews. These are ‘portfolio roles’ and ‘established trust and confidence’. Trustees linked ideas of independent leadership to ‘portfolio roles’, and ideas of interdependence to ‘established trust and confidence’.

To end this explanation, the purpose of the table is to characterise ‘independent action’ and ‘interdependent leadership’ as two archetypes of leadership. The approach was to interpret how trustees combine and move between the two. Consequently, it was not expected to find either approach as a static reality. Moving forward, the following section provides an overview of the analytical activity carried out.

3.3.2. Overview and summary of analytical activity

As previously indicated, positioning theory provides the bridge which connects analysis at the individual level of trustees’ talk with their positioning observed in interactions in board meetings. It helps to construct a more dynamic process of analysis that a) links inductively generated themes with unfolding storylines observed in trustees’ interactions in decision-making episodes; and b) links the analysis to the concepts of interest already identified (shared leadership, self-leadership, and teamwork) and capable of being interpreted by these particular concepts.

The final table in section 3.3 gives an overview of the analytical activity carried out, set against the Braun and Clarke framework adapted to incorporate the other two elements of the hybrid approach explained above.

Table 9: Analytical activity

Framework Braun and Clarke (2019; 2021) Phases 1–6	Activity Conducted (LW-J 2021)
Phase 1 – data familiarisation Writing familiarisation notes	Organised case data base Prepared transcripts of digitally recorded interviews and meetings for analysis and transcribing Read transcripts before analysing data Noted initial thoughts in coding diary
Phase 2 – systematic data coding	Coded interesting features in chronological order using descriptive, topical, and analytical codes (Richards, 2015) Collated codes into categories
Phase 3 – generating initial themes from coded and collated data	Applied frequency coding to segments. Applied co-occurrence to themes to see how thematic domains distributed (Namey et al., 2007) Applied the practice of positioning to initial themes linked to leadership activity Retained single codes relevant to research question
Phase 4 – developing and reviewing themes	Working with interviews Reviewed inductively generated themes face to face with available trustees Reviewed tenuous insights from trustees' talk in interview that pointed to storylines and different archetypes of leadership Explored individual connections across the data set Working with observation Applied the positioning triangle Entered the triangle from apex of storylines Created storyline structure from observation of trustee interactions Reviewed observation sequences for positioning insights related to leadership activity in board decision making Revisited interpretation in light of literature Interpreted themes from trustee talk and storylines from observation in dialogue with literature

Phase 5 – refining, defining, and naming themes	<p>Employed similarity and contiguity – based connections (Maxwell and Miller, 2008) across the entire data set relevant to research question</p> <p>Generated a summary of themes and sub-themes</p> <p>Generated a structure of storylines for each board</p> <p>Contrasted storylines for each board and relationship with federation</p>
Phase 6 – writing the report	<p>Reconfirmed extracts from trustees’ talk in stage 1</p> <p>Re-examined unfolding storylines of how leadership is constructed in decision-making episodes in section two</p> <p>Write the methodology chapter</p>

Author’s elaboration Braun and Clarke (2019).

In summary, the flexibility of the case study design together with a hybrid approach to analysis produced rich and insightful data. How this was accomplished is the subject of the next section.

3.4. Analysis in practice

The overview in table 9 illustrates the analytical activity across each phase of the framework (Braun and Clarke, 2019; 2021). In preparation for the data analysis all information about the case boards and the research setting were brought together in MS Word and Excel folders for each board. Digital recordings were stored separately under participant codes, a summary of which was held in a paper diary of codes. Within board folders, individual folders were created for each trustee and participant. Separately, contextual information about national office and its regions were brought together. Folders include the interview records and transcripts, observation notes and meeting transcripts, archival documents associated with each board, process worksheets, and exploratory practice exercises for different stages of the research.

TA provided a framework to move iteratively from interesting features within the data, to initial codes representing information and ideas, then collated and categorised as initial themes which shaped final themes and associated sub-themes arising from the data. From phase 3 the analysis focussed on ‘larger units of meaning’ (Maxwell and Miller, 2008). Maxwell and Miller (2008) remind us that a ‘theme itself’ may be considered to have an ‘internal connected structure’ such as between concepts, but that this connection is between categories and not segments of the actual data (p. 466). This influenced the decision whether or not to use software for coding. An early decision to manually code and categorise the data had been taken. Therefore, keeping connected to the data ensured that links were being made from data, rather than NVivo. The downside to this approach is that the data analysis was very time-consuming. However, it was possible to see, even in the early days, the richness of the data but it was not always clear how to approach it. Consequently, TA was employed as a ‘categorizing strategy’ (p. 466) to find similarities and differences across the data. Themes across the data set of each board were then contrasted and shared with available trustees in a follow up interview in phase 4.

A recognised challenge in this process, was to eliminate data not relevant to the research question while at the same time extracting relevant data. The coding mechanism of co-occurrence of two or more themes (Namey et al., 2007) in phases 3 and 4 of the framework helped to tighten the focus on data that answered the research question. For instance, trustee positioning in talk suggesting a form of leadership activity that is then observed in board meetings. Therefore, while each initial theme was analysed in detail, final themes and sub-themes were selected for their relevance to answering the research question. In summary, this hybrid analytic approach, guided by a modified version of the most recent TA (Braun

and Clarke, 2019; 2021), provided targeted insights about leadership activity from both data-driven and theory-based interpretive analyses from across the 6-phase framework.

Thematic analysis – preparation

The data analysis process started by preparing each interview transcript for analysis. Interviews were listened to, transcribed, and then read several times before carrying out any analysis. Transcripts were coded for each participant and board and filed accordingly using MS Word and MS Excel. Each transcript was colour coded to describe codes relating to a) the interview topics; and b) discussions in meetings. Connecting strategies were employed such as co-occurrence of themes in different phases to understand the distribution of themes and ideas across each transcript. These codes and strategies are summarised below in tables 10 and 11.

Table 10: Summary of coding strategies and analytical structure

Coding and connecting strategies	Authors
6-Phase framework	Braun and Clarke (2019)
Initial coding - phase 2	Richards (2015)
Frequency and co-occurrence coding Position-oriented analysis Phases 3 and 4	Maxwell and Miller (2008) Harre and Van Langenhove (1991) Harre and Van Langenhove (1999) Van Langenhove and Harre (1999)
Co-occurrence of two or more themes phases 3–4	Namey et al. (2007)
Categorising themes and link to storylines Phases 3–4	Maxwell and Miller (2008) Harre and Van Langenhove (1991)
Interpretation using the positioning triangle Phases 4–6	Van Langenhove and Harre (1999)

Author 2021

The following table provides the legend for codes and the connecting strategies.

Table 11: Codes and strategies

Codes	Connecting Strategies
D – Descriptive T – Topical A – Analytical C – Conceptual F – Frequency Co – Co-occurrence	Co-occurrence of themes Similarity and contiguity-based connections RQ – relevant to research question

Author 2021

At the same time, a database file was set up to register archival data relating to different boards and the federation. Archival data were saved both electronically in folders and paper versions in ring-binders. An example of the database file follows.

Table 12: Archival data 2017 – 2019

Date	Board	Activity code	Description RQ – relevant to research question
		Regulatory admin/meeting/minutes/reports Non-regulatory/promotional	
14/10/2019	2	RA – agenda	Meeting 14/10/2019
09/09/2019	2	RM - minute	Meeting 09/09/2019

Author 07/2021

The back-up system involved emailing daily work to a personal computer and printing it for editing on paper. Simultaneously, electronic and paper coding diaries were set up, which served as a record of the steps carried out and any reflections on important issues. Work sheets were then set up for the analysis process and organised in preparation for sequential steps. The analysis process is set out below in each phase of the framework in table 9, illustrated in examples of work sheets and participant quotes.

Phase 1 – data familiarisation

Getting to know the data started from the pre-fieldwork period when engaged in foreshadowed conversations that influenced the interview topics (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007) and developed during data collection (Gioia, Corley and Hamilton, 2012). The familiarisation process included reflecting on notes of how interviews and meetings had proceeded, and my own responsibility as the interpreter of knowledge that is constructed

(Stake, 1995). In particular, recognising my role in knowledge production in implementing ‘reflexive TA’ in a way that is mindful of the philosophical and theoretical assumptions that I bring to the analytic process, and in my reporting of this study (Braun and Clarke, 2019). For example, declining invitations to comment on items in different board meetings. In making sense of this, I had prepositioned myself in the boardroom as a guest observer without speaking rights in legally constituted meetings. Therefore, as interviews and observations of meetings were transcribed, I recognised familiar intersections in my notes, where I would have contributed if I had taken up speaking rights.

Table 13: Phase 1 example – setting up worksheet

Initial notes	Transcript (colour coding)	Emerging themes /categories	Codes
Exploratory comments	<p>Stage 1 – role and experience</p> <p>Section 2 – board goals</p> <p>Section 3 – relationships</p> <p>Codes: Descriptive D, Topic T, Analytical A, Conceptual C, Frequency F, and Co co-occurrence</p>		<p>D, T, A,</p> <p>C</p> <p>F,</p> <p>Co</p>

Legend:

D – Descriptive, T – Topic, A – Analytical, C – Context, F – Frequency, and Co – Co-occurrence.

Phase 2 example – systematic data coding

In order to preserve the link to the original interview or meeting text in phase 1, each transcript was analysed using a process in which initial codes were identified using elements of ‘free association’ to note interesting features in the data. This retained focus on the text. enabling the recognition of important moments or something in the data for later

interpretation (Boyatzis, 1998). Initial codes of interesting features were ordered chronologically. While interviewing trustees, observing meetings, and transcribing recordings, notes were made in relation to points that stood. These notes became a ‘health check’ on the research questions, balancing the need to be open to the volume of field data from December 2018 – December 2019 while eliminating and extracting data relevant to the research questions and objectives (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Each transcript was interrogated around the questions:

- ‘What are these data about?’
- ‘Do they support existing knowledge?’
- ‘Do they challenge existing knowledge?’ (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, 2015, p. 192)
- ‘What data is missing or ambiguous?’ (Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, 2014, p. 116).

The iterative process of rereading each transcript continued through each phase of the analyses.

Table 14: Phase 2 example – systematic data coding

Interesting features Exploratory comments	Transcript	Emerging themes/ categories	Codes
Hierarchy in board Positions self as in- experienced	‘I was made Group Secretary in November 2018. So still finding my feet’ ‘I guess my main responsibilities and role are such that to support XXX our chair and the rest of the trustees’		D A C

Legend: D – Descriptive, A – Analytical, C – Conceptual.

Phase 3 – generating initial themes from coded and collated data

In this study, phase 3 represented an intensive phase that started to move from thematic analysis to theory-based analysis towards the end. An iterative coding process employed descriptive, topical, and analytical codes to differentiate codes that required interpretation leading to more conceptual codes (Richards, 2015). For example, descriptive codes related to board attributes, topical codes related primarily to interview topics of board goals and relationships, and analytical codes that pointed towards processes of positioning which facilitated sharing leadership or taking independent action. Initial codes were then collated to become initial themes categorised by relationships based on similarity and contiguity (Maxwell Miller, 2008). The following five examples illustrate this process.

Table 15: Phase 3 example (i)

Interesting features Exploratory comments	Transcript	Emerging themes/categories/unique codes	Codes D, T, A, C, F, Co, RQ
Constraining social structures	‘In practice, the regional chairmen effectively controlled the council. I would say not numerically, but in practice’	Exercise of power	A, C, RQ

Legend: A – Analytical, C – Conceptual, RQ – Relevant to research question.

As this study relied heavily on data from semi-structured interviews, emerging themes were categorised. Frequency and co-occurrence coding were applied across large segments of each transcript. This enabled a feel for the distribution of codes across the transcript (Namey, et al., 2007). The data was then related to literature before moving to theory-based analysis.

Table 16: Phase 3 example (ii) – frequency (two or more instances)

Themes	Descriptive	Topic	Analytical	Conceptual	RQ -relevant to research question
Deliberate self-positioning as a new trustee in supporting role			4	4	Translatable knowledge Director private sector Enthusiastic Short tenure affects her ability to fully show her capability
Responsible leadership		3		3	Collective board accountability/contrasted with individual responsibility Positional accountability

Moving through phase 3 co-occurrence of themes was employed (Namey et al., 2007) across each individual transcript and then all transcripts for each board; thus, application of two or more themes to a discrete section of text, first from a single participant, then the board. The purpose being to better understand how themes, concepts or ideas are distributed across the data set. In the following example three co-occurring and two co-occurring themes are distributed across one interview transcript. This is followed by an example of the checking process across all board transcripts.

Table 17: Phase 3 example (iii)

Participant	Themes applied	Looking to literature
PL001 3 co- occurring	Accountable financial management Transparency Risk management	Verifying use of charitable funds (Hyndman and McKillop, 2018) Accountability (Kearns, 1994; Morrison and Salipante, 2007; Knutsen and Brower, 2010)
2 co- occurring	Managing group with volunteers Managing conflict	Self -leadership (Bligh et al., 2006) Voluntarism (O'Toole and Grey, 2016)

Table 18: Phase 3 example (iv)

Co-occurring themes	Checking process across transcripts
Translatable knowledge	PL001; PL002; PL003; PL007
Self-positioning of trustee	PL001; PL002; PL003; PL004; PL005; PS004; PS005; PS008
Managing/working with volunteers	PL002; PL003; PL004; PL005; PL007; PS008; PS007; PS005; PS004; PS002; PS009
Accountability	PS008; PS007; PS005; PS004; PS002

In the final stage of phase 3 initial themes were explored using positioning theory (Harre and Van Langenhove, 1991). The practice of positioning was employed to link themes to 'independent action' or 'interdependent leadership'. The idea of differentiating leadership in this way arises from early data collection where it was apparent that broadly there were two categories of leadership framed as 'independent action' and 'interdependent leadership'. As set out in 3.3.1.6, this provided another instrument of analysis that refined themes related to

leadership type, illustrated in the following table. This is followed by examples of trustees' leadership positioning in talk.

Table 19: Differentiating leadership

<p>Independent action</p> <p>Actors search for solutions and take up responsibility without prompting (amalgam of ideas). Looks to 'proactivity' in self-leadership (Hauschildt and Konradt, 2012)</p>	<p>Interdependent leadership</p> <p>Actors act as mutually accountable, interdependent and sharing responsibility for performance outcomes</p> <p>(Katzenbach and Smith, 1993)</p>
<p>Empowered by:</p> <p>Constitution</p> <p>Portfolio roles</p> <p>Knowledge, skills, and situation</p> <p>Assigns 'agentive powers' to themselves and others (Harre, 1995)</p> <p>Chooses when to act independently through 'judgment of agency' – oneself the author of action (Haggard and Tsakiris, 2009) to control events (Moore et al., 2012)</p>	<p>Empowered by:</p> <p>Constitution</p> <p>Established trust and confidence</p> <p>Knowledge, skills, and situation</p> <p>Common working assumptions</p> <p>Assigns 'agentive powers' to themselves and others (Harre, 1995)</p> <p>Chooses when to understand themselves as part of a collective. 'Judgment of Agency' – 'self' and others as authors of action (Haggard and Tsakiris, 2009) to control events (Moore et al., 2012)</p>

Phase 3 Example (v)

This example of phase 3 employed the concept of positioning to illuminate a) how trustees adopt positions (self-positioning); and b) are assigned positions by others (other-positioning) that indicate leadership activity out-with the institutional mechanism and social episodes of board decision making. Two illustrations are provided giving an explanation and interpretation of the leadership in action.

Insights from applying positioning to trustees' talk (that pointed towards potential storylines which subsequently revealed themselves in stage 2 analysis) was an advantage of applying the practice of positioning at both individual and board levels. Therefore, tentative insights around the unique codes of 'seizing a commercial opportunity' in board 1 and 'developing new service' in board 2 were identified as something important to be explored and interpreted later (Boyatzis, 1998).

Table 20: Applying the practice of positioning to trustees' talk

Mode of positioning	Example	Explanation of positioning	Experience of leadership
Deliberate self-/other positioning Moral positioning Self-leadership	'... [A]l the payments and things have to be run past me, before the treasurer will pay any bills'. 'And that's what he wants to do'	The chair is using moral positioning to point to her rights and duties as chair and her obligation to perform in line with the social expectations of her constitutional role. Her statement implies that she accepts personal responsibility for shared financial control and accountability	Independent, empowered by constitutional role Interdependent dyad of sharing leadership by two individuals in prepositioned roles Self-leadership in that both trustees are ensuring a transparent process
Deliberate self-/other-positioning Indirect positioning	'I mean as far as accountability ... we are very meticulous about keeping - eh client records secure'. 'We are certainly very aware of the sensitive nature of the clients who come to ride with us'	The trustee is using both deliberate self-/other-positioning to point to the rights and duties of all trustees to protect riders' confidential records. Many of which may be records in 'medical confidence' Her statement implies that all trustees hold the same pattern of belief and share equal understanding of their leadership responsibility. Indirect positioning places individual trustees and the	Interdependent leadership culture recognising individual internal parts of a collective It also points to shared leadership-trustees' having equal understanding of what's required

		board in terms of moral characteristics of taking joint responsibility for protecting client confidentiality	The speaker is using 'we' to position trustees as sharing responsibility
--	--	--	--

Author 03/2021

Phase 4 – developing and reviewing themes

The main purpose of reviewing inductively generated themes is to keep questioning them in relation to the data, context, and the research objectives. Given the volume of data in this study, the ongoing question that emerged was to what extent these themes helped to answer the research question, point to the concepts of interest, and offer a coherent thread that could make sense of the part/whole relationship of individual data within each board. Co-occurrence (Namey et al., 2007) was employed as a comparative method to examine each item of data in relation to categories based on similarities and difference (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). This led to a complete reinterpretation of themes in this phase which provided insights to be explored in observation in stage 2. While phases 3, 4, and 5 of the framework overlap at times, in practice there were distinct analytical activities in each phase (see table 9, section 3.3.2 for overview of analytical activity).

Before moving on to analytical activity in observation in phase 4 and a dialogue with literature in phase 4.5, the initial themes were reviewed in a second face to face interview with two available trustees in board 1 and three trustees and three volunteers in board 2. This was to ensure that the coded extracts had been correctly understood, but it was also an opportunity for trustees to reflect on whether they had shared their ideas about what leadership meant to them. The impetus then moved towards a more theoretical interpretation by employing the concept of positioning to understand their practice. In the analysis of interviews, the focus was on trustees' talk in relation to a) their role and the rights and duties associated with the role contrasted with categories of self-positioning and by implication the positioning of others; and b) deliberate positioning of others in the absence of those being

positioned. Third-order positioning (Van Langenhove and Harre, 1999) was employed to understand how people talk to somebody else about how they have been positioned, as in my interviews with trustees. An example of this process is provided below.

Phase 4 example – board 2 extract from summary of trustees self-/other-positioning.

Table 21: Trustees self-/other-positioning in talk and experience of leadership

Other-positioning	Theme	Self-positioning	Experience of leadership
1	Working with volunteers	1	Independent (empowered autonomy)
3	Accountability	1	Interdependent shifting to interdependent

Author 07/2021

In terms of process, final themes were solidified arising from trustees' talk in phases 3 and 4 for each board. The following three tables first summarise the inductive thematic process, followed by the initial themes for each board, and then the final themes together with the sub-themes which contribute to it.

Table 22: Inductive process to final themes

Board 1		Board 2	
Initial codes	474	Initial codes	550
Collated codes	68	Collated codes	58
Categories	49	Categories	32
Initial themes	10	Initial themes	9
Final themes	3	Final themes	3
Unique code	1	Unique code	1

Table 23: Summary of initial themes

Board 1	Board 2
<p>Translatable knowledge</p> <p>Engaging with volunteers</p> <p>Building reciprocal relationships</p> <p>Sharing accountability</p> <p>Taking authority from ‘self’</p> <p>Common goal – ‘keep the show on the road – but don’t touch the nest egg’</p> <p>Sharing knowledge from multiple perspectives</p> <p>Transparent financial management</p> <p>Dyads of leadership</p> <p>Leading from portfolio</p>	<p>Translatable experience</p> <p>Managing volunteers</p> <p>Managing communications</p> <p>Personal commitment</p> <p>Board knowledge and experience</p> <p>Maintaining good governance</p> <p>Shared understanding of safeguarding clients</p> <p>Taking authority from self and team</p> <p>Agency</p>

Author 2021

Table 24: Overview of final themes and contributing sub-themes

Board	Common themes	Sub-themes
Board 1	Applying accountability	Transparency in: financial management decision making Translatable knowledge and expertise Taking personal responsibility Adhering to national standards Proactive self-leadership Agency
Board 2	Applying accountability	Safeguarding riders and volunteers Board knowledge and expertise Making governance transparent Navigating different systems Taking personal responsibility Agency
Board 1	Managing resources	Working with volunteers Leading from portfolio Consulting on policy Shared commitment to common goals
Board 2	Managing resources	Recruiting and working with volunteers Managing capital projects Developing policy - 'reserves' Managing federation information
Board 1	Engaging with team tensions	Leading from portfolio Sharing knowledge Teams within teams - dyads of leadership Standing back for others to lead Induction practice new trustees
Board 2	Engaging with team tensions	Trustees commitment to teamwork Shared understanding of goals

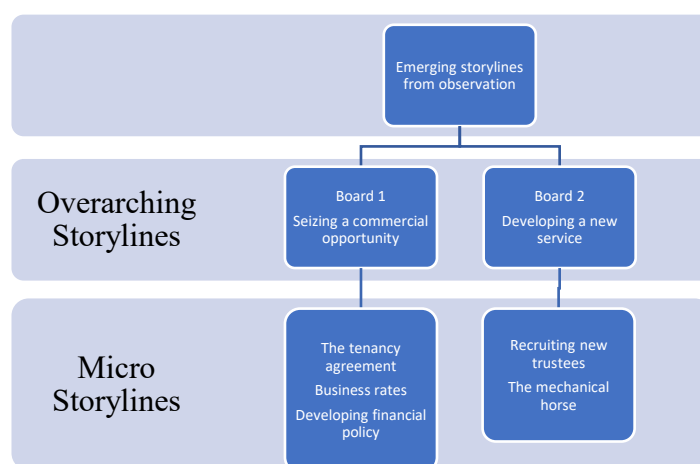
		Putting knowledge from elsewhere to team advantage Voting mechanism Mentoring new trustee
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Author 01.2022

Attention then turned to the analytical activity of observing boards in phase 4.5. Here unfolding storylines of trustees negotiating leadership in decision-making episodes revealed themselves for each board. When moving from thematic analysis to theory-based analysis there was some experience of ‘conceptual fuzziness’ around the core terms of ‘positioning’ and ‘storyline’. This relates to the idea that multiple storylines and positionings occur in any interaction, and the importance for the researcher to acknowledge this by differentiating different kinds of positioning in interactions (Herbel-Eisenmann et al., 2015). While grappling with differentiating storylines from themes ‘that recur in the data’ (Aitken et al., 2017, p. 39) this thesis like Aitken et al. (2017) looks to Harre and Moghaddam (2003) for understanding. These scholars view a ‘storyline as ‘an unfolding narrative told at a particular time’ (p. 6) within the context of socially developed conventions, such as nonprofit board conventions. In this thesis, board decision-making episodes are construed as unfolding storylines, according to a) insights in analysing interview data that also revealed themselves in observation of decision-making episodes in the boardroom; and b) related their relevance to the research questions. While positioning theory has been helpful for the theory-based analysis of trustees taking up different positions in decision-making storylines, the interpretation does not suggest that the storylines selected here represent all trustees’ possible storylines.

In observation stage 2 analysis, the interpretation of leadership activity is based on the practice of trustees taking up positions in board meetings. For example, how trustees position themselves to challenge issues in unfolding storylines, and how the obligations of a legally constituted board influence (or not) such interactions when the board meeting is prepositioned as an institutional situation which carries its own discursive regulation (Harre 2012). Four steps of analysis were carried out in phase 4.5. First, the meeting was observed. Second, insights identified were reviewed in the meeting transcript together with diary insights from TA that had been flagged up along the way as something to return to for interpretation (Boyatzis, 1998). Third, the positioning triangle was entered from the apex of the storyline (Van Langenhove and Harre, 1999). Fourth, the storyline structure was created and the practice of positioning was applied to specific unfolding storylines of decision making. An abbreviated example of this activity follows the storyline structure in figure 4.

Figure 4: Emerging storylines



Author 01/2022

Phase 4 example of initial positioning in one unfolding storyline in board 1.

Storylines in stage 2 are set out in vignettes in the findings chapter V. They follow the format of context, interactive sequence, and interpretation. This empirical example is drawn from the overarching storyline ‘seizing a commercial opportunity’ in board 1.

Developing financial policy

Context

Taking on a commercial venture is a new challenge that requires a change in financial policy. In this storyline the treasurer is constitutionally prepositioned in his recognizable role and regulatory obligation to perform within the social expectations of treasurer.

Interactive sequence

First-order positioning (initial act of positioning)

Treasurer – ‘I just want to mention – XX [the chair] and I discussed the possibility of opening up another current account to handle all the business side of running the stables ... I actually went into TSB and they said they’re not actually doing any more trustee accounts at the moment. ... So the question I think we need to look at, I and the chair and maybe the trustees, is do we actually need to have another current account to keep our operating costs separate from or distinct from the charity costs?’

Second-order positioning (questioning within the same conversation)

Chair – ‘What do you feel from an accounting point of view?’

Second-order positioning (takes up expert position)

Treasurer – ‘I think from an accounting point of view it probably isn’t necessary. But what is probably a good idea is to keep a separate deposit account to keep a balance of the surplus of funds in there – as a working capital for the stables because I think that ... if we make a profit it will be good to put that to one side to cover the situation where we make a loss on it ...But I will, on paper, keep it as paper accounts incorporated in the overall charity account’.

Second-order positioning (expands storyline to federation)

Treasurer – ‘I did speak to FXX on that because the question I have is are we allowed as a charity to actually run a business ... and are we actually going to have any tax? ... his feedback was as far as he understood the various bits of legislation as long as we don’t make more than £40k a year basically we wouldn’t be liable for tax’.

Interpretation

Decision making here originates in the prepositioning of the system of board regulation and roles. However, it also originates in the treasurer positioning himself as an independent leader in taking responsibility for developing financial policy to manage the commercial venture.

However, it is in the board meeting that leadership develops and is shared as the treasurer, the chair, and the interactive process of the board negotiate leadership positions. The treasurer’s expert position is tacitly constructed in first order positioning as he reports to the

board members about the actions he has undertaken on their behalf. He uses deliberate other-positioning to situate a federation director in the storyline of financial expert. Nevertheless, he is also using indirect positioning to illustrate the board's obligation to evaluate the tax liability of a commercial opportunity. However, it can also be argued here that tax liabilities are a prepositioned institutional mechanism.

The treasurer's leadership here is a) independent, empowered by his prepositioned role and by his self-positioning in knowing how to frame the precise question about tax implications and who to contact in the federation; and b) a form of shared leadership that becomes interdependent as the treasurer and chair report to the board, thus positioning trustees individually and collectively in a financial decision-making process (see findings chapter V for full interpretation of board 1, vignette 4).

In phase 4 my review of recurring themes pointed towards the final themes of 'applying accountability', 'managing resources', and 'engaging with team tensions' in both boards influenced by different sub-themes. The overarching storylines revealed in observation in stage 2 of the analysis are set out in figure 6.

Phase 5 – Refining, defining, and naming themes

Aside from the interest in positioning theory (Harre and Van Langenhove, 1991) there are three concepts of interest in this study. These are shared leadership (Pearce and Conger, 2003), self-leadership (Manz, 1986), and teamwork (Katzenbach and Smith, 1993).

Together with the concepts of 'agentive powers' (Harre, 1995) and pluralist accountability (Coule, 2015) highlighted by the data, these shaped the dialogue with literature through

phases 4, 5, and 6 of the analytic process. As already indicated, phases overlapped at times and represent the main thrust of thematic analysis of trustees' talk. Refining themes was an ongoing process in phase 5 while simultaneously moving between themes and insights from unfolding storylines in observation and writing the thesis.

Themes were inductively generated and selected as outcomes of an integrated coding process in 'reflexive TA' (Braun and Clarke, 2019). It is acknowledged that the qualitative techniques of data collection and analysis applied in this study are situated within the 'big Q' qualitative paradigm rather than qualitative positivism ('small q') (Braun and Clarke, 2021, p. 329).

The observation framework was open and categories were not pre-coded (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007) notwithstanding my interest in the concepts identified in the above paragraph. The analytic process was immersed in the data so this meant there was a constant questioning of interpretation and sometimes a revisiting of the analysis of certain themes. Refined themes from trustees' talk were subject to supervisors' comments and my own review of themes related to the research question, before naming them. Themes in this study are 'developed *through* coding' that is organic and looks towards a 'reflexive TA' drawing on qualitative research values and the subjective skills that the individual researcher brings to the interpretive process (Braun and Clarke, 2021, pp. 332–334).

The detailed approaches have already been described under phase 4, as have the outputs in terms of themes and storylines, which can be found in the following tables:

- Table 22: Inductive process to final themes

- Table 23: Summary of initial themes
- Table 24: Overview of final themes and contributing sub-themes.

In phase 6 of Braun and Clarke the analysis was developed further and iteratively as I wrote.

Reflecting on the overall process, positioning theory was a good fit for the theory-based analysis of data at individual and board levels. It is not suggested that the themes and storylines explored in this thesis represent all the trustees and other participants, nor that views were fixed. Simply that they were themes and storylines that emerged through the data at a particular time within the context of socially developed conventions in two nonprofit boards contextualised in a UK federation.

3.5. Summary (section 4)

In summary, as set out in 3.2.2, a constructionist epistemology is considered appropriate and underpins this research into two nonprofit federated boards. It offers access to the interplay between individual and collective agency, enactment of individual and team constructions of leadership, and multiple realities of board leadership. Multiple perspectives provided multiple sources of evidence (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007) that enriched the quality of this analysis (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002). Three methods of interview, observation, and textual analyses provided this evidence employing a hybrid analytical approach of three instruments (see 3.3.2).

Data from 18 trustee interviews (board directors) and unfolding storylines that emerged from observation of 3 decision-making episodes in board meetings were analysed using a hybrid analytical process (see 3.3.1.3). This was carried out in two stages. Stage 1 employed a

modified version of the 6-phase thematic analysis procedure of Braun and Clarke (2019; 2021) together with position-oriented analysis (Harre and van Langenhove, 1991) to explore trustees' experience of leadership in semi-structured interviews. This specifically focused on their experience of leadership and the factors that prompted them to take a) independent leadership action; b) when this becomes interdependent leadership; and c) how positioning theory helps us to understand how they make sense of their own leadership activity and that of others. Stage 2 employed key ideas of positioning theory (Harre and Van Langenhove, 1991; Van Langenhove and Harre, 1999) to the observation of actual board decision-making episodes. This process enabled three inductively generated themes to emerge common to both boards – applying accountability, engaging with team tensions, and managing resources – together with an overarching storyline structure of 'seizing a commercial opportunity' in board 1 and 'developing a new service' in board 2. The analytical activity has been accounted for by employing the framework of Braun and Clarke (2019; 2021). Specifically, inductively generated themes and their sub-themes in phases 1–6. A storyline structure was created that is revealed in phases 4, 5–6. Trustees' independent action and interdependent leadership employing agentive powers (Harre, 1995) have been accounted for. Insights have been provided that point to the concepts of interest here. Namely, shared leadership (Pearce and Conger, (2003), self-leadership (Manz, 1986), and teamwork (Katzenbach and Smith, 1993). Finally, of the data gathered from 33 interviews and 6 meetings in total, the remaining 8 interviews at local level and 7 at national office inform the research context set out in the 'case organisation' in chapter IV and summarised below. Follow-up interviews with these participants were prevented by Covid-19.

Table 25: Abridged version of table 4

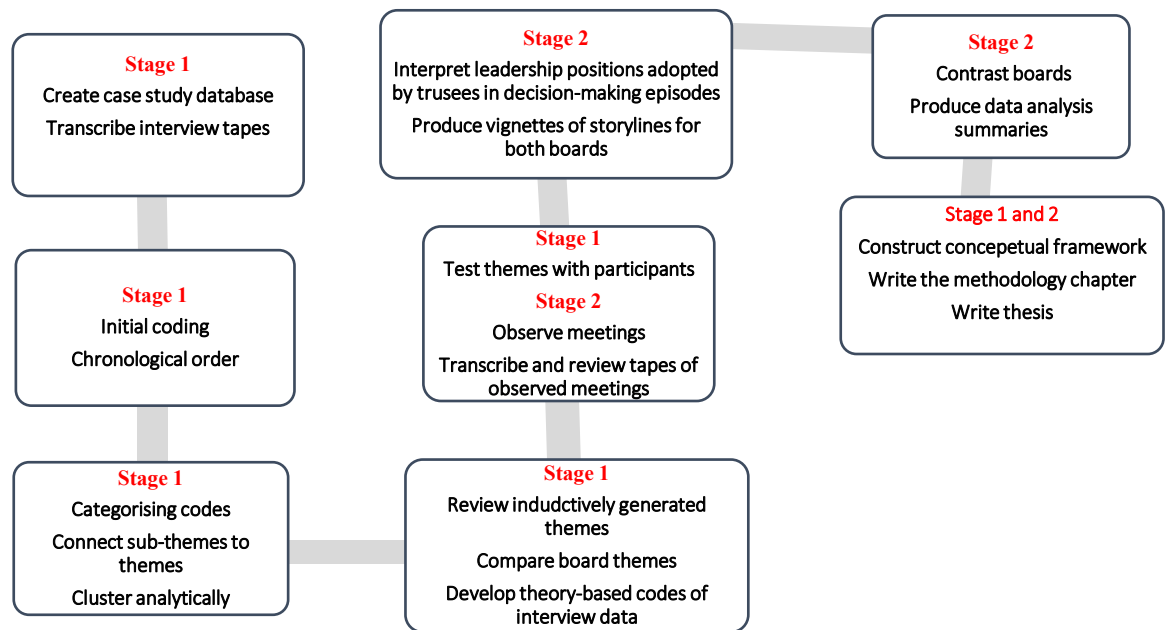
Board 1		Board 2		Federation
Interview				
Non-trustees	2	Non-trustees	6	6 employees 1 volunteer
Observation				
Regional committee	1	AGM	1	1 senior management team

Author 12/2021

Data has been selected on the basis of what was distinctive in helping to answer the research question. This chapter closes with a figure of the integrated process of the analysis, followed by the role of the researcher. Before moving on to interpret findings in chapter V the case organisation is first explicated in chapter IV.

3.5.1. Overview of integrated process

Figure 5: Hybrid analytic process of thematic analysis, positioning theory, and leadership differentiated as independent action or interdependent leadership



Author 2021

3.5.2. The role of the researcher

Qualitative researchers are interested in the meanings people have constructed and how they make sense of their world (Gephart, 2013) by studying different interactions in different contexts. The researcher is an active person whose values and experiences shape the research setting together with the choices that are made (Creswell, 2007; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, 2015; Patton, 2002). They are interpreters, as they privilege knowledge that is constructed rather than discovered. Therefore, multiple-layered construction of knowledge is gathered and interpreted by the researcher while recognising that there is a further level of knowledge construction by the reader (Stake, 1995). The more transparent the interaction

between the researcher and the research, the more likely the findings will be received as credible. To this end the role of the researcher in this study was to ensure 1) that the hybrid analytical approach enabled an open and transparent process which took account of how board leadership comes to be what it is in the participating boards; 2) the modification to the framework of Braun and Clarke and the application of positioning theory to empirical data reflected different trustees experience of board leadership and the circumstances in this research; and 3) provided detailed presentation and analysis of data.

Chapter IV Case Organisation

4.1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to analytically describe the case organisation, its federated structure, and the boards of group members of the organisation. While this research design focuses on board leadership (mainly interview and observation data) board chairs were invited to suggest individuals external to their boards that they were happy to be interviewed (for an external perspective). Specifically, those they had worked with on leadership issues. Out of 33 interviews conducted for this study, 18 were with trustees. The other 15 interviews included retired volunteers, employees at national level, and volunteers in regional and county roles. The words of these participants a) help to shape this chapter; and b) are scattered across the data set often providing confirmation of trustee interview data shared. In summarising this introduction, the chapter provides an initial orientation to the federated context in which these participating boards operate.

4.2. Historical context

The organisation is a charitable company limited by guarantee, registered as a charity in October 1969, and incorporated in January 2004. It provides equine assisted therapy to children and adults with disability. In 1998 this UK organisation was one charity with branches throughout the country run by ‘The Council’ – a body made up of 18 regional chairs with ultimate control over the functioning of the organisation, but without control either fiscally or by a third-party liability, or any other type of liability. As an ‘unincorporated’ body, trustees were personally liable although there is some doubt that this

was brought to their attention. In practice, they appointed a management committee who were ‘effectively their delegates’ (interview December 2019).

Around this time, the need for change was brought to a head when the then recently appointed CEO (former banker) refused to sign off the annual VAT return that was dealing with many transactions across the country. However, he had no way of knowing if the return was correct. This led to a structural review by the interviewee (retired volunteer) and the CEO resulting in a decision to adopt a federated structure as a way to empower local trustees for the accountable running of their group. While the catalyst to federate arose from a negative incident, the opportunity to empower local trustees was viewed as positive and can be said to be an enduring structure. The organisation’s annual report of 2021 confirms the legal status of the organisation:

‘The company was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers of the charitable company and is governed under its articles of association. The XXX family is a federation of member groups which are governed by a Membership Agreement with XXX UK and a standard group constitution (or Mem & Arts, as appropriate). XXX UK is divided into 18 regions and each region is divided into counties. Support, advice and training for the member groups is delivered through both the regional and county structure and directly by national office. Member groups are all separately registered charities’ (Annual Report (31/03/2021, p. 16).

The function of regional committees is to represent views at regional level and act as an advisory body to member groups. They have no obvious controlling power, although chairs

are consulted on policy. However, constitutionally the chair of one regional committee (anonymised as SR1 in this study) has a seat on the federation board. Thus, giving the incumbent a pathway to ensure the views of regional committees are accounted for at federation board level (interview 9 December 2019).

4.3. Contemporary structure

The Federation is nested within a wider governance system through independent membership of the British Equestrian Federation (BEF) and adheres to its policies and procedures. Structurally, the change in control from powerful regional chairs and their committees to legally constituted independent member groups, was a challenge and one that continues today.

Individual member groups are responsible for delivering services to clients and their boards are responsible for the leadership processes that make decision making of both routine and complex matters happen. In 2019 when data were collected from the organisation, circa 460 member groups geographically situated within counties (not to be confused with political counties) were accountable to the federation for training and regulatory standards (paper 9, July 2019).

Operationally groups are independent charities with legal identity of either ‘unincorporated’ (formed as ‘trusts’ or ‘associations’) and governed by a constitution and a board of trustees, or ‘incorporated’ (CIO) as a charitable company registered with both ‘Companies House’ – typically as a company limited by guarantee, as in the federation – and the ‘Charity Commission’. Holding CIO legal identity means that each group is capable of owning

property in its own right, has personal liability removed by provision of insurance, and is empowered to deliver equine assisted services that meet local conditions but also federation standards. There are 18 regions in the legacy volunteer committee structure. Each has a regional committee and chair. They form part of this UK federation of which there are four elements:

- Trustees – federation board
- Regional committees
- National office
- Sub-committees of the federation board now known as ‘national leads’

Regional committees, made up of county representatives report to the federation board. At local board level, this is regarded as the ‘old’ structure whose role and purpose are unclear (interview 10 June 2019).

Observation of ‘Regional Committee SR.1’ suggests that this is a support network for equine related matters such as sharing resources, expertise, training, and physiotherapy strategies. Their funds are ring fenced by the federation (observation October 2019). While regional chairs are consulted on national policy (July 2019) it is not clear how regional committees influence policy nor how their considerable collective expertise is put into practice.

At the time of data collection the federation was managed by a senior management team of 1 CEO and 3 functional directors (hereafter referred to as SMT) supported by circa 28 employees. While the SMT reports to the federation board through the CEO, each director has a ‘dotted reporting line’ to the trustee responsible for their function. The SMT also

ensures that priorities of the 14 board sub-committees are piloted through the main board (interview July 2019). Critically, the SMT manages the membership agreement with groups by providing support from initial set-up to navigating governance systems, issues, and disputes (interview July 2019).

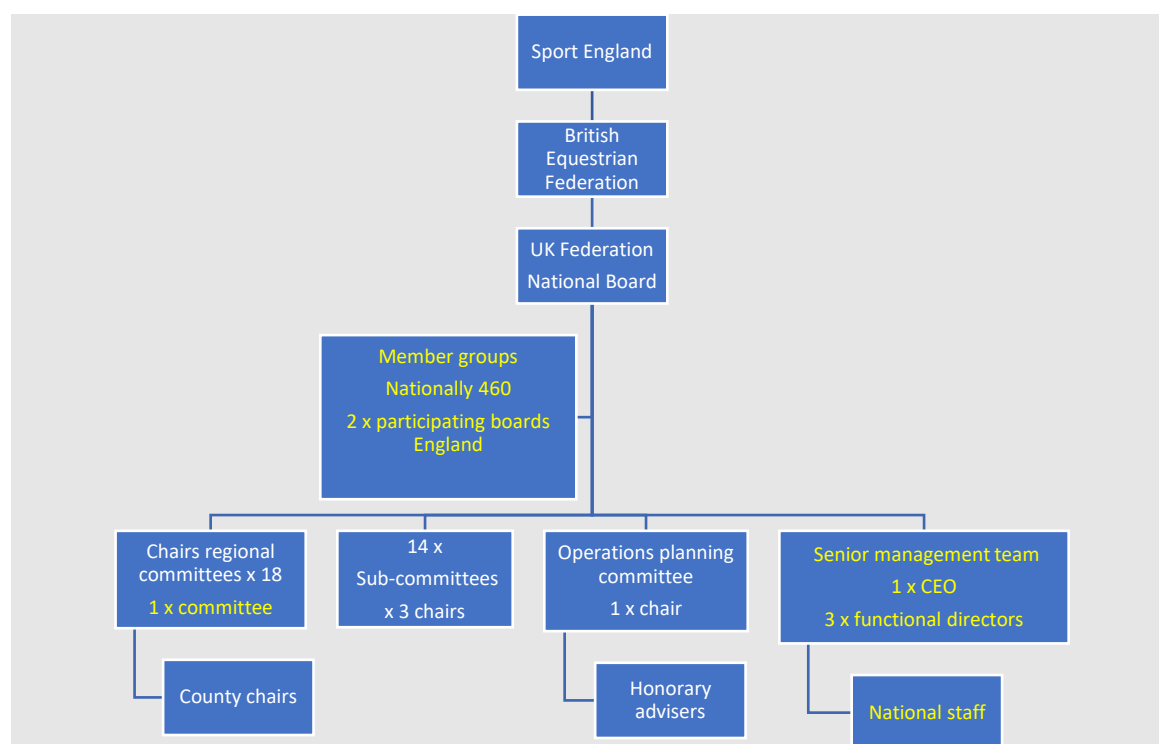
Therefore, the SMT is responsible for managing the relationship with member groups and ensuring that rules and standards are observed. To this end, it is a source of expert advice on finance, fundraising, publicity, and governance of boards. Trustees typically contact members of the national SMT for advice on tricky leadership issues. Interviews were conducted with 3 SMT directors and the CEO in June and December 2019 and observed 1 meeting. What jumps out of this data (Miles and Huberman, 1994) is the team's commitment to accountability, working with structural complexity, and striving for consensus. A dichotomy identified in a past BEF safeguarding audit recognised that while the SMT can give a 100% guarantee of what the federation is doing to ensure safeguarding, it is not possible to give the same level of guarantee for member groups 'without policing groups' (interview June 2021).

At national level, the wide scope of the SMT responsibilities is evident in their accountability. It is enacted in two ways: 1) internally in their 'instrumental' accountability upward to the national board and externally to institutional bodies and benefactors; 2) 'expressive accountability' (Knutsen and Brower, 2010) is enacted downward towards the federation community and staff grounded in a sense of shared leadership.

The following organogram gives an overview of the competing structures in this federation and positions the boards and SMT. Unlike the organisation's chart which locates the member

groups at the bottom level, the relationship has been repositioned here because the member groups are influential as each holds one vote at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) (interview July 2019) and they are differentiated as independent legal bodies.

Figure 6: Case organisation in context



Legend: participating groups and functions are differentiated in yellow

Author's elaboration of federation structure as of 2019 and data collection

4.4. Contemporary concerns

Contemporary leadership and governance concerns shared in interview are threefold. At local level, the ambiguity of regional and county roles, characterised as the 'old' UK structure is perceived to be inconsistent in applying regional and county funding (interview June 2019). At regional level, the increasing number of staff at national office is a concern

(observation October 2019) as is maintaining professional coaching standards across all levels, especially in light of the new coaching qualification pathway (interviews June; July; October 2019). Aligned to developments in coaching, embryonic ideas about new ways of purchasing, leasing, and training horses are emerging (interview November 2019).

The relationship between member groups and the federation is technically determined by a membership agreement. While the agreement is the foundation stone of the relationship and member groups interact with other important parts of the structure, interviewees suggest that in practice the relationship between member groups and the federation is nurtured through volunteers' personal networks cultivated over years.

4.5. Structural comparison of case boards

Boards of two member groups with CIO identity (hereafter referred to as board 1 and board 2), located in different federation regions in England, participated in this study.

Both are comprised of volunteers who are responsible for volunteer administration, financial management, fundraising, publicity and governance of equine assisted services to clients. They have constitutional roles of 'group chair', 'group treasurer', and 'group secretary'. In both boards a particular trustee holds designated responsibility for volunteers; however, this is not a constitutional role. In other words, in this study, it is not a prepositioned role such as that of the above constitutional roles. The trustee responsible for volunteers in board 1 is responsible for a portfolio of circa 37 volunteers and safeguarding at one riding establishment. In board 2 the incumbent trustee is responsible for co-ordinating 96/97 volunteers across two riding establishments with *Ad hoc* assistance from other trustees. They

are also designated the rider representative. Safeguarding in principle, however, is viewed as the general responsibility of all trustees in both boards irrespective of those with designated responsibilities.

At the time of data collection in 2019, both boards had six trustees. In each Board 1 trustee declined the invitation to participate in the study. Both chairs are experienced trustees and qualified equestrian coaches who hold multiple leadership roles at different federation levels. For example, dual roles of local board chair and federation trustee, and local board chair and county committee chair. They position their groups as financially secure while acknowledge having to respond to unanticipated change at board level. Board 1 owns its horses and leases premises at one riding establishment. Board 2 leases horses from two different riding establishments. Many trustees often take up multiple roles at local, regional, and federation levels, including running training workshops and coaching (interviews 04/2019 and 06/2019). Neither group employs a salaried CEO or manager to manage operational functions. Such functions are carried out by the board. The consequence of this is that management decisions reach the board earlier than if these responsibilities were delegated. Finally, these charities are sustained by public donations, fundraising activity, and benefactors.

4.6. Why is this an appropriate case study?

This research is a single case study of two similar but different boards in one nonprofit UK federation. The horizontal authority structure of these boards and the absence of a Chief Executive Officer or other employees at the time of data collection, offer a case design to study shared leadership (Pearce and Conger, 2003) in top teams. In particular, the structure

enables a more ‘collective form of leadership’ (Vandewaerde et al., 2011, p. 414). However, it also offers the opportunity for different voices to be heard (Carson, Tesluk and Marrone, 2007) in an environment characterised by social mission, unpaid trustees, and volunteers, where individual contribution is valued. The design of these boards, in particular the chair as *primus inter pares* (first among equals) makes them an ideal context for this study.

Chapter V Findings

5.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the empirical findings of this study in relation to the research question: How do individuals in the context of two nonprofit federated boards take up and make sense of leadership and enact accountability? It proceeds as follows. Part 5.1 presents findings from interviews in stage 1, focussing on trustees' experience of leadership having assigned themselves 'agentive powers' to take leadership responsibility on certain tasks (Harre, 1995, p. 122), either as individuals or dyads outside the boardroom. Section 5.2 presents findings from observation of actual board decision-making episodes in stage 2, focussing on developing a deeper understanding of how trustees construct individual narratives of leadership which they then negotiate in meetings. Section 5.3 as a conclusion, summarises findings from three perspectives employed by trustees: 1) the patterns of independent and interdependent leadership experienced by trustees in stages 1 and 2; 2) the forms of positioning adopted in different stages and their implications; 3) the orders of positioning employed in constructing leadership in unfolding storylines that reflect the temporal nature of leadership.

Findings explicate trustees' experience of leadership and accountability in this context, drawing on analysis and interpretation of 33 interviews of which 18 are with trustees; observation of 6 meetings of which 3 are board decision-making episodes; and archival data as supporting material. Findings are presented in 13 vignettes of which 8 draw on interview data (reported in stage 1) and 5 draw on observation data (reported in stage 2). The vignettes

explore how trustees in their experience, reconciled different kinds of leadership. Each vignette is structured in three sections: context, interview excerpt or sequence of trustees' interactions, and my interpretation. A tabled overview of the vignettes discussed in each stage is provided before detailed interpretation of findings are set out. It reflects the positioning employed within interviews and the kind of leadership that emerges and provides a guide to the work that the analysis is demonstrating.

Findings from interviews (stage 1)

This section focuses on understanding the different ways that trustees position themselves and the forms of talk about experiencing leadership in interview. Specifically, the factors that prompted them to a) take independent leadership action; b) when this becomes interdependent leadership; and c) how positioning theory helps us to understand how they make sense of their own leadership activity and that of others. Stage 1 revealed three inductively generated themes concerning experiences of leadership: applying accountability, engaging with team tensions, and managing resources. It is argued these three themes together suggest a way of understanding trustees experiencing leadership through a deeper explanatory construct 'acting as responsible charity board members' which seems to guide their actions.

5.1.1. Overview of themes, positioning, and experience of leadership

As introduced above, the following table provides an overview of the positioning employed within stage 1. Each theme is then introduced before providing evidence of my analysis and interpretation in empirical examples set out in vignettes.

Table 26: Overview of themes, positioning, and experience of leadership

Board	Vignette	Theme	Forms of positioning	Experience of leadership
Board 1	Vignette 1 The negotiator Actors: the chair	Applying accountability	Prepositioned role of chair Chair assigns agentive powers to herself Positioning: self-positioning as the negotiator Other-positioning of schools, riders, and carers	Independent leadership empowered by role Self-leadership in perceiving a safeguarding problem and recognising need for interdependent leadership Proactive in finding a solution
Board 1	Vignette 2 Delivering board priorities Actors: The chair The treasurer Fundraising trustee Trustees	Applying accountability	Assigned agentive powers by chair and treasurer Trustee accepts agentive powers Positioning: Other-positioning by office bearers gives authority to trustee Trustee tacitly constructs expert position in questioning office bearers in induction meeting	Independent leadership empowered by taking responsibility to deliver results, portfolio, and translatable knowledge of trustee

Board 1	<p>Vignette 5</p> <p>Keeping in touch with volunteers</p> <p>Actors:</p> <p>The secretary</p> <p>The chair</p> <p>The trustee</p>	Managing resources	<p>Secretary prepositioned self-positioning in communication process with volunteer</p> <p>Other-positioning of chair</p> <p>Indirect-positioning of volunteer trustee and board</p>	<p>Interdependent leadership in the dyad of the chair and secretary</p> <p>working together to process problem solve volunteers' issues raised by email</p>
Board 2	<p>Vignette 1.1.</p> <p>Recruiting New Trustees</p> <p>Actors:</p> <p>The treasurer (elected chair following the interview)</p>	Applying Accountability	<p>Assigns agentive powers to herself as treasurer to take action</p> <p>Prepositioned role of treasurer</p> <p>Positioning:</p> <p>Self-positioning as chair experienced in recruiting trustees</p> <p>Explicit positioning of intention to appoint applicant</p> <p>Other-positioning of applicants in recruitment storyline</p>	<p>Independent leadership empowered by accepting responsibility</p> <p>Self-leadership in perceiving</p> <p>a need to recruit trustees</p> <p>Proactively seeks applicants</p> <p>Recognises that actions will need to be justified to board</p>
Board 2 Vignette 3 Theme (T)	<p>Vignette 3</p> <p>Making effective user of expertise</p> <p>Actors:</p> <p>The outgoing chair</p> <p>The secretary</p> <p>The Board</p> <p>The Members</p>	Engaging with Team Tensions	<p>Chair assigns agentive powers to herself to address knowledge gap</p> <p>Prepositioned chair</p> <p>Positioning:</p> <p>Explicit self-positioning of chair as governance expert</p> <p>Mutual positioning of Secretary; Board; and Members</p>	<p>Independent leadership by accepting responsibility</p> <p>Empowered by board experience and profession;</p> <p>Self-leadership in perceiving</p> <p>gap and sharing knowledge to benefit of team</p> <p>Shared leadership</p>

Board 2	<p>Vignette 4 , Cutting tall grass down to size</p> <p>Actors: The Treasurer Trustee 2 The board</p>	Engaging with Team Tensions	<p>Prepositioned treasurer</p> <p>Third-order positioning (speaking about someone who is not present)</p> <p>(Other-positioning of chair as inflexible but of some value.</p> <p>Other- positioning of trustee 2</p> <p>Other-positioning of the Board</p>	<p>Independent leadership action with unintended consequence</p> <p>Self-leadership of Trustee 2 in obtaining quotes</p> <p>empowered by agency to change a board decision</p>
Board 2	<p>Vignette 5 Sharing leadership across organisation boundaries</p> <p>Actors: Board Chair / County Chair County Coach</p>	Engaging with Team Tensions	<p>Chair prepositioned in dual roles</p> <p>Chair assigns agentive powers to herself; the county coach; the board while still accepting responsibility for leadership actions</p> <p>Positioning: Tacit positioning of experts</p>	<p>Engaging with Team Tensions of two individuals interrelating to propose a solution</p> <p>Interdependent leadership of board; chair; and county coach as proposed split of legacy is approved aligned with groups requests for funding</p>
Board 2	<p>Vignette 6 Dynamic Co-ordination of volunteers</p> <p>Actors: Trustee - Volunteer co-ordinator Trustee 2</p>	Managing Resources	<p>Trustee assigns agentive powers to herself and accepts responsibility for managing volunteers</p> <p>Positioning: Deliberate self-positioning</p> <p>Deliberate other-positioning of trustee 2 chair; board and to intentionally check volunteers' papers</p> <p>Other-positioning of chair and board</p>	<p>Independent leadership</p> <p>Interdependent leadership when dyads of leadership connecting with administrative practices</p>

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5.1.2. Thematic analysis informed by position-oriented analysis

Using positioning theory to interpret inductively generated themes from trustees' talk of taking up leadership makes it possible to consider how independent leadership occurs outside constitutionally prepositioned roles. Thus, aside from the social expectation of an elected office bearer (e.g. chair and treasurer) discharging their obligations in relation to governance rules, developing understanding of how trustees' claim or justify taking up leadership responsibility. The empirical examples illustrate the kind of leadership trustees have taken up and how they experienced the relationship between independent and interdependent leadership when both are present.

The process of experiencing leadership that is highly independent leadership starts when trustees assign agentive powers (Harre, 1995) to themselves and/or others. Significantly, the portfolio structure of board 1 empowers all trustees not only with permission to take responsibility and lead from their portfolio but also to recognise the responsibilities of other trustees. Empirical examples illustrate how and when trustees chose when to act independently (oneself the author of action) while at other times choosing to understand themselves as part of a collective (self and others as authors of action) (Haggard and Tsakiris, 2009; Moore et al., 2012).

The themes set out above are drawn from trustees' talk in 7 semi-structured interviews with 5 trustees in board 1 and 11 interviews with 6 trustees in board 2. These themes are expanded upon and illustrated in the data below.

5.1.3. Theme 1 – applying accountability

There are different forms of accountability at work in this research, aside from the general management and administration of these incorporated charities. Specifically, inductive analysis highlighted accountability in the sense of being a responsible charity board member. This term is intended to capture Harre's (1995) idea that people continually struggle to present themselves (their thoughts and actions) as acceptable within a local moral order, in this case the order of acting as a responsible charity board member. The presentation of self goes outside the formal or legal requirements of being a trustee. As set out in the above overview of vignettes in stage 1, in this research it is featured in different forms of leadership experienced by trustees which they claim and justify in interview. Empirical examples of 'applying accountability' follow. First, the 'negotiator' reaching outside the board to work with others to the benefit of clients. Second, an example of being 'positioned by others to deliver board priorities' and taking personal responsibility to deliver board goals. Third, an example of 'recruiting new trustees' by applying board knowledge and experience.

5.1.3.1. Board 1, vignette 1 – self-positioning as the negotiator

In this vignette the chair endeavours to integrate the group's rider admissions process into the external system of residential schools in relation to their risk assessment. She recognises that her actions control only part of the admissions process; however, as accountability for the safeguarding of clients is paramount in equine assisted therapy, she wants to ensure that the schools' risk assessment meet accountability standards.

While this is a familiar annual task, it is shaped by the complexity of safeguarding clients, the knowledge of residential school experts, and the chair's responsibility of applying organisation policy and values while recognising these may contradict schools' policy.

Context

The application form for assisted riding purposes is standard and applicable to independent riders, and those in residential schools, and colleges. However, additional safeguarding processes are in place for children and young adults from residential settings. The chair assigns agentive powers to herself aside from being empowered by her prepositioned role. She visits residential schools in order to a) review their risk assessments; and b) observe students' mobility for riding purposes.

Interview excerpt

Chair - 'The running of the group – I am responsible. I'm the sort of main point of contact for everybody within the group ... I think it is probably two different types of people we deal with. So with independent riders we are dealing with – usually with parents and carers or with the individuals themselves if they are an adult and ehm able to be accountable for themselves ... our young students usually young adults late teens early 20s ehm tend to come with schools and colleges so we are therefore dealing with the schools and the colleges. So they are the service providers and actually the schools and colleges are very good they know that they take these students out to places ... so they've done their risk assessment'.

Chair - 'I go into the schools erm or sometimes we invite them to come here because we can actually see them away from their comfort zone, particularly with the assisted riders. So we need to be absolutely sure that those riders are going to be safe so what I would do with those ones in particular is a visit first. I'll go to the school ask to not necessarily meet them, because they may not want to meet me ... but to have sight of that person walking around ... just to be absolutely sure that when they come here with all this open space, they are going to be safe for themselves, and for everybody else around them. Everybody fills in the same form what they put on it is prescribed but then there are areas where ehm a parent or a carer, or the person themselves, can put information in as well ... once we've got their application form back, and we've assessed whether they would be suitable, we then invite them, all our riders, to come to us, to meet us ... to come here so that we can assess them'. (interview April 2019).

Interpretation

In this example, decision making originates in the prescription of the admissions' process application form of the organisation. The chair in her prepositioned constitutional role recognises not only the complexities of how to assess riders, particularly their mobility, but also that her actions control only part of this annual process. This leads to her shifting position from regulator of the process to that of 'the negotiator' seeking to create an interdependent leadership process between the board, the residential school, and parents and carers, where appropriate. While identifying these challenges point to the chair's expert

knowledge of equine assisted therapy, positioning herself as an independent leader takes the form of talk proactivity in visiting schools, questioning their risk assessments, and observing students' mobility.

Findings here show the chair positioning herself as engaged in proactive self-leadership (Manz, 1986) that comes from her perception of risk to clients coupled with a sense of agency to initiate and control actions (Moore et al., 2012). The chair's initial positioning as an independent leader stems from her commitment to clients and her shared values in looking to partner with residential schools. Her aim is to align school risk assessments to the perspective of equine assisted therapy and impose safeguarding standards on schools for residential scholars. However, this also encounters the complexity of the decision to admit certain riders and not others, and recognition of the need to share leadership with external actors.

Therefore, while the chair is empowered by her constitutional role as the person responsible, signifying her instrumental accountability for governance processes (Hudson, 2017) she is faced with a paradox. She recognises that schools routinely also carry out independent action such as risk assessments prior to students visiting other premises. However, the complexities of safeguarding assisted clients present particular challenges, as there may be contradictory requirements for each client, not yet known to her. In initiating the move from independent leadership action to interdependent leadership the chair is assigning 'agentive powers' to others (Harre, 1995) while still accepting responsibility for her leadership actions. The chair acknowledges that schools take risk assessment seriously.

Therefore, while her independent leadership action recognises shared accountability at a formal level is needed – particularly as the school is the service provider – she also recognises that there are limits to schools’ risk assessments and gaps in safeguarding from a riding perspective which she can fill. Consequently, she interprets her role as taking on additional accountability to cover any contingencies that might arise. Applying positioning theory offers a more nuanced picture of leadership shifting to reflect accountability that is arguably moving between organisations and agents.

Here the chair is trying to make sense of her own leadership in achieving the highest standards of governance. She does this by relying on her own agency and taking a highly independent approach to leadership in the initial stage of the rider admissions process for residential students. Empowered by her constitutionally prepositioned role and moral positioning of the chair, her positioning implies a) deliberate self-positioning in her interpretation of reconciling school and organisational risk assessments; and b) deliberate other-positioning of schools in carrying out competent risk assessments for student visits and openness to a form of interdependent leadership between her group and the school. Finally, the idea that accountability is negotiated implies the need for both independent and interdependent leadership is discussed in the discussion chapter VI where the focus is on the relationship between leadership action and accountability.

5.1.3.2. Board 1, vignette 2 – positioned by others to deliver board priorities

The second example illustrates the trustee experiencing leadership that is both a) independent, in which the trustee draws on translatable knowledge and skills as a director in the private sector and applies it to the fundraising portfolio; and b) shared, in that leadership

flows between the chair and treasurer to the trustee then to other trustees when they have the opportunity to change the new online system when it is demonstrated to them.

Context

This newly appointed trustee had no previous board experience at the time of data collection and was about to attend his first board meeting. However, he is an experienced IT director in the private sector with committee experience in local sports clubs. Having made an initial approach to join the board, once the trustee was appointed, he moved very quickly to deliver an online fundraising programme. This was facilitated by an induction meeting with the chair, his predecessor, and the treasurer.

Interview excerpt

Trustee - 'I'm a very new trustee I've been on the Board 2 months ... my role as a trustee is to focus on fundraising. ... It was extremely helpful [induction meeting] I had quite a few questions that between XX [previous trustee] XXX[chair] and XXXX [treasurer] they were able to answer. ... I managed to ask those questions that I had with regard to fundraising that's required for each year. How much of that is raised from grants; and how much is raised from people sponsorship; and whether there are people who have donated regularly privately as some people do to charities'. 'I always copy in XXX [chair] on an email if I am asking a question ... flag up the [grant] application – have we done this before? That's what I need to know. What I have done is to ... I've made a huge spreadsheet ... I put a pipeline together - people may

suggest on Monday and I can certainly change ... I'll show you Monday evening as I want to show everyone else as well. The way I work is once this is edited it saves automatically so people are seeing the latest and greatest things on here' (interview April 2019).

Interpretation

The trustee's experience of leadership is interpreted as independent having accepted the agentive powers assigned to him by the chair and treasurer to take full responsibility for fundraising. Therefore, the elected office bearers and the portfolio structure of the board position the trustee to experience himself as authorised to lead independently within his portfolio. To this end, he tacitly positions himself as an expert best shown as: 'I had quite a few questions that between the previous trustee XXX [chair] and XXX [treasurer] they were able to answer'.

His agency at this point is a temporal orientation towards the present, informed by the past, as he questions his predecessor on past practices such as the funds raised from grants, sponsorship, and private donors: 'I managed to ask those questions that I had with regard to fundraising that's required for each year'.

This is interpreted as 'practical-evaluative capacity' before the trustee reinvents his orientation to become future-oriented. This draws on the ideas of Emirbayer and Mische (1998, p. 962); however, the trustee is also assigning agentive powers to others in two ways. First, to the chair best shown as: 'I always copy in XXX [chair] on an email if I am asking a question'. Second, he is using other-positioning to locate trustees in the scenario of the new

system and assigns agentic powers to them to take up the responsibility to question and propose changes to the system when it is demonstrated to them at the board meeting:

‘I’ve made a huge spreadsheet...I put a pipeline together ‘people may suggest on Monday and I can certainly change ...’ I want to show everyone else as well’ ‘The way I work is once this is edited it saves automatically so people are seeing the latest and greatest things on here’ (interview April 2019).

This exemplifies shared leadership (Pearce and Conger, 2003) in the sense that it is about knowledge transfer, other trustees standing back for the person with the knowledge to lead the team, and then influencing the outcome.

While we don’t hear from the other trustees, the chair is using deliberate other-positioning to hold the trustee responsible for fundraising within a clearly defined fundraising portfolio: ‘We can’t be complacent and that is why XXX ... has come on’ [interview with chair April 2019].

In taking personal responsibility and accountability for creating and delivering a new system, notwithstanding his short tenure, the trustee is assisted by a timely human resource practice of an induction meeting.

5.1.3.3. Board 2, vignette 1.1 – recruiting new trustees

This example is the first of two parts of board 2, vignette 1. The treasurer is an experienced office bearer in both constitutional roles of chair and treasurer. She recognises the resourcing

problem stemming from contextual factors such as the retirement of several trustees and a large capital project looming that requires action.

Context

While identifying these problems points to the treasurer's governance experience and expertise, positioning herself as an independent leader takes the form of talk about proactivity in relation to the recruitment of trustees. Her actions are subject to negotiation in a subsequent board meeting. In section 5.2, the second part of this vignette focuses on the actual negotiation where leadership is jointly constructed (the treasurer here is voted in as the new chair at the meeting following this interview).

Interview excerpt

Chair - 'I have a concern about human resources without a doubt. We are a small team. XX [trustee] has been doing volunteers for a long time – she would like to stop doing volunteer – it's a very important role you have to be proactive in that role. I'm concerned we don't have enough proactive participants really'.

[Researcher – 'and how will you solve that?']

Chair - 'Well, you ask people – I am hoping that I have somebody who will replace me as Treasurer and who is a mother of a rider who used to be at the college I work at ... her mother is retiring this year and she has said she will take on the treasurer's role which relieves me of this role. If we could get somebody to be chair I could then do the volunteers or at least help with volunteers ... if everybody wants me to be

chair I'll be chair again. But that doesn't solve the volunteer problem. I spoke to another woman who would be a fantastic trustee. She doesn't want to be a trustee. I'm not sure that she understands the implications of a CIO over a charity - I asked her will you come on and she said to me that means I have to be a trustee?... but I said we are a CIO so you have limited liability and she said right okay'.

Interpretation

The treasurer's experience of leadership is interpreted in two ways. First, she recognises a complex resourcing problem to be addressed. Second, she assigns agentive powers (Harre, 1995) to herself to take action. The treasurer's agency stems from a need to not only control events (Moore et al., 2012) but also to 'self-start future-oriented action with the aim to change the situation' (Hauschildt and Konradt 2012). Although the treasurer can control her own actions, she recognises that in order to protect the group's future resources, this depends on others within and outside the board.

In choosing to take action to address the problem the treasurer's agency takes two forms. First she assigns and accepts agentive powers to take up responsibility for a 'practical-evaluative' (Emirbayer and Mische (1998, p. 962) assessment of the existing board's capacity to currently carry out its responsibilities. Second, once she has decided that there is a gap in what's needed – 'I'm concerned we don't have enough proactive participants really' – she then reinvents her agency to become future-oriented as she selects and targets particular individuals. At this point, the treasurer is shifting to interdependent leadership as she assigns agentive powers to others. First, she is assigning future powers to the board to elect her as chair: 'If everybody wants me to be chair I'll be chair again' 'But that doesn't solve the

volunteer problem'. In doing this, she is using other-positioning to position the board of having to take future responsibility for decisions about resources without relinquishing her own responsibility. Second, she is assigning powers to selected recruits to accept or repudiate taking up the responsibility of a trustee. The treasurer is using explicit positioning illustrating her intentionality to appoint a particular applicant, characterised as a client parent as her successor. However, the treasurer's positioning here is challenged in the boardroom in stage 2.

From an accountability lens, the treasurer is seen as positioning herself as someone who is taking action within a local moral code of making sure that the board has adequate resources to discharge its duties and obligations. This resonates with the idea of 'expressive accountability' in the control mechanism of shared values (Knutsen and Brower, 2010). This topic is discussed in chapter VI.

In summary, these vignettes contribute to the research question in that they show multiple forms of accountability at work in this research, which illustrate how trustees experience leadership in terms of 'acting as a constructive integrator'. This term is intended to capture Harre's (1995) idea that people continually struggle to present themselves (their thoughts and actions, in this context about leadership) as acceptable within a local moral order. In this case, 'the presentation of 'self' as leader' goes outside the formal or legal requirements of being a trustee managing and administering these incorporated charities. This includes taking personal responsibility to work within and outside the board for the benefit of clients, applying knowledge and experience to resource the board, and taking the responsibility for projects while also sharing leadership to achieve board goals.

5.1.4. Theme 2 – engaging with team tensions

The relevance of debates about the nature of ‘engaging with team tensions’ in nonprofit boards is reviewed in the literature review chapter (II). The concept of ‘team’ has rarely been applied to depict the collection of individual trustees (board directors) (Vandewaerde et al., 2011). While it is recognised that the board is a good place to start to build teamwork (Conger and Lawler, 2009) other scholars, however, question ‘does this group need to be a team?’ (Casey, 1985) given that the prevailing working approach of boards of directors is about ‘person-to-person negotiations’ (p. 3).

There is evidence of trustees engaging with the tensions and dynamics typical of interdependent team working. ‘Engaging with team tensions’ is a significant element in the experience of taking up leadership. It is argued that this is based on the presence of conflict and joint crafting of solutions revealed in this theme, and which are generally depicted as key elements of teamwork.

Empirical examples are drawn from the same board. Initially, vignette 2 (board 1) was analysed as ‘engaging with team tensions’ notwithstanding this board’s portfolio structure but ended up being assigned to the theme ‘applying accountability’ because of its goal focus and clarity in illustrating ‘agentive powers’ (Harre, 1995). ‘Engaging with team tensions’ is present in board 2 and the examples here offer the richest picture of what it means to be a team member experiencing this aspect of leadership. The first example, ‘the conflicted bystander’, is arguably a form of unproductive conflict. On the other hand, the second example, ‘making effective use of expertise’, is about the chair applying translatable knowledge to an episodic governance mechanism to the advantage of others. The third

example, ‘sharing leadership across organisation boundaries’, is a minimal form of shared leadership that sees the chair and county coach working across boundaries to discharge the legal obligations of a legacy.

5.1.4.1. Board 2, vignette 4 – the conflicted bystander

This vignette is drawn from an interview with the treasurer (prepositioned office bearer). She gives us insight into her experience of leadership and making sense of her own role within this board team which involves positioning someone else as not to be listened to and where she assigns agentive powers to the team.

Context

In this example, the treasurer is recalling a contentious incident about bicentenary ‘T-shirts’ which led to the then chair’s resignation. Despite this, the treasurer characterises the chair [former MD of prominent UK company] in an undifferentiated way as ‘very good’. The following expanded text, from one trustee’s talk, illustrates a kind of leadership in relation to a board team that is ‘engaging with team tensions’.

Interview excerpt

Treasurer - ‘So how to deal with people who are not happy with the way things are. That can happen. We lost a chair because of that very thing. Someone who became our chair – he was an ex-magistrate and very good ... however when he took over as chair he didn’t like the way it had been run. I think he felt that it was various women of a certain age who chattered and he was there to be functional and this was the way

it had to be and how committee meetings would be run. We had discussions about how to spend the money at our 50th anniversary so we decided that it might be quite nice to buy T-shirts. He didn't think that was appropriate. One woman [trustee 2] went ahead and got prices and when the rest of us decided that we thought it would be appropriate he didn't like that and left. He felt that he had been undermined and I think he thought that his decision was final ... but of course we have to work as a team and that's how we operate. ... Yes I think he was a managing director of xxx [company] previously I think ... he was involved in other groups as well where he'd been a trustee and on the committee and felt it should be quite regimented, unfortunately the way we are you need to be flexible'.

Interpretation

Positioning theory helps us to understand how individuals experience leadership by positioning themselves or others within conversations that give meaning to their behaviour. The treasurer's conversation shared different modes of positioning to account for a situation where a former chair resigned suddenly. Using third-order positioning (speaking about someone who is not present) the treasurer positions the chair in paragraph 1 as unhappy with the board: 'When he took over as chair he didn't like the way it had been run'. She characterises the chair in an undifferentiated way as 'very good' while simultaneously characterising him unfavourably in relation to the other trustees: 'I think he felt that it was various women of a certain age who chattered and he was there to be functional and this was the way it had to be and how committee meetings would be run'.

The treasurer is positioning the chair as taking an inflexible authoritarian approach that is out of step with the other trustees and unwilling to be contradicted by a majority view on the board and illustrated in the bicentenary T-shirts: 'We decided that it might be quite nice to buy 'T-shirts'. He didn't think that was appropriate'. However, she is also positioning him as of some value in that he was 'very good' and he was 'lost' rather than got rid of: 'We lost a chair'.

By taking up action to progress the 'T-shirt' project, trustee 2 is interpreted as proactive: 'One woman went ahead and got prices and when the rest of us decided that we thought it would be appropriate and he didn't like that and left'.

While a board majority subsequently agreed with this trustee, the then chair was unwilling to change his stance which suggests that the board team did not assign agentic powers (Harre, 1995) to the chair to enable him to review his position and/or 'save face'. This creates a paradox for the treasurer sharing her experience (in interview); namely, that she is reconciling her positioning of the chair as both 'very good' while 'regimented' and inflexible with her own positioning in relation to the authority of an elected chair and her commitment to the shared view of the team: 'The way we are you need to be flexible'.

It is not clear from the above excerpt whether the team considered the unintended consequence that obtaining quotes could lead to the chair's resignation. Of critical importance, it appears that the team did not consider the potential loss of future access to the various contacts and funding that a former managing director of a prominent UK company is likely to have.

In making sense of the chair's behaviour and the loss of the personal resources of the chair, the treasurer experiences leadership which implies that the collective rights and duties of the team outweigh that of an individual. Therefore, leadership here can include positioning someone else out-with the norms of shared leadership, whilst others are positioned as operating within the norms. Crucially, this is an example of the treasurer making sense of her own role within the board team which involves positioning someone else as not to be listened to, and where she assigns agentive powers to the team.

5.1.4.2. Board 2, vignette 3 – making effective user of expertise

Trustees' talk and leadership actions in both boards suggest shared commitment to the social mission of the federation, evidenced in trustees frequently sharing knowledge and expertise. Although translatable knowledge and expertise is not a dominant theme in and of itself, it is present across the dataset. This is an illustration of 'engaging with team tensions' based on the idea that at any given time, team members' roles are determined based on their expertise and knowledge (Pearce and Conger 2003). Thus, team members form part of a leadership process in which they lead themselves (Drescher et al., 2014). While this may not seem an obvious illustration of 'engaging with team tensions', it points to supporting others through sharing previously individualised knowledge within a team (generally accepted as central to shared leadership).

Context

It is the final stage in the mentoring of a new secretary facing her first Annual General Meeting (AGM). The chair put together a 'note' on regulatory governance, setting out the

underlying principles of the AGM. It was intended to assist not only the secretary facing her first AGM (interview June 2019) but also the board and voting members attending the AGM. In particular, to see that the regulation was observed correctly. This example illustrates how someone can bring expertise to bear through sharing explicit knowledge for the benefit of others while simultaneously positioning themselves as bearing knowledge and acting responsibly, and positioning others as needing this knowledge to take up their own responsibilities.

Interview excerpt

Retiring chair - 'I mean it is a key method because I actually – it's XX's first year as secretary and I didn't want her to be ehm ... so I read the constitution. I don't know, sometime over Easter. I did a 'note' for everybody saying this is what we've got to do for the Annual General Meeting so it was there clearly for XX to follow. But also for other people to understand what we were trying to do – because I suppose my background is as a chartered surveyor, so that I find it relatively easy to read legal documents, constitutions, essentials of membership. I know that [for] some people – it seems to be quite difficult to follow'.

Interpretation

As part of positioning herself as an expert, the outgoing chair's experience of leadership brings knowledge and expertise from elsewhere and is using this experience to create explicit

knowledge and guidance for the benefit of the secretary, the board, and group membership. to take up their own responsibilities.

The outgoing chair applies translatable knowledge to position herself as someone who a) takes leadership action to ensure good governance of this prepositioned institutional meeting; and b) is capable of creating the guidance 'note' as explicit knowledge for the meeting and sharing with others. While she is empowered by her prepositioned role of chair, she is using mutual positioning to position the secretary, the board, and group members in the scenario of needing to understand the purpose of governance procedures, in a way that recognises their rights to this knowledge and their duty to apply the procedure correctly. She is also using local moral order to highlight the cluster of rights and duties associated with being a board trustee: 'This is what we've got to do'.

Having identified the knowledge gap in the board, the chair assigns agentive powers to position herself as an independent leader. This takes the form of talk of proactivity in producing explicit knowledge and guidance for the board. The outgoing chair's deliberate self-positioning points to her rights and duty to exercise her agency in the speech act of: 'I did a 'note for everybody'.

The chair is expressing the idea that those with expertise and knowledge apply it to the benefit of the team (Pearce and Conger, 2003). Furthermore, the chair's proactivity points towards self-leadership (Manz, 1986) in the idea of 'self-starting future-oriented action with the aim to change the situation' (Hauschildt and Konradt, 2012). For example, perceiving the secretary's knowledge gap, the chair chose to offer her a mentoring programme, which was taken up by the secretary with alacrity (interview with Secretary, June 2019).

The chair's initial leadership action is largely independent; however, her purpose in producing the 'note' to close the knowledge gap for the incoming secretary and act as a reminder for other trustees about what has to be done, points towards asserting the value of shared leadership in sharing her knowledge and inviting others to take up their responsibilities. Her proactivity in generating the 'note' comes from a sense of agency to initiate and control events (Moore et al., 2012). However, she is also positioning others to take up their responsibilities.

5.1.4.3. Board 2, vignette 5 – sharing leadership across organisation boundaries

In this example, two individuals are working together to create a joint solution to apportion a legacy across all nine groups in the county. The dyad is the incumbent chair of one board, who is also chair of a county committee and a county volunteer. The county committee meets twice a year and is made up of several independent charities who are members of the federation. Apart from these meetings, typical opportunities to work together are centred around the important aspect of coaching. Therefore, it is a rare opportunity for two individuals to work across the boundary between the 'old' and new federal structures, and this gives a glimpse of the paradox facing legally constituted boards as they navigate both the membership and past structures of the federation. Given the unusual nature of this task, the dyad in this vignette is a team within a team in that it has been 'brought together to perform organizationally relevant tasks' and carry out the same basic teamwork as that of three or more team members' (Kozlowski and Ilgen, 2006, p.79).

Context

The county committee reports to a regional chair of the federation (interview June 2019). As set out in the case organisation in chapter IV, the boards of individual charities operate within a federal structure. Geographically, they are located in what's known as organisation 'counties' which in turn form regions. There is some evidence of tensions between the county and the federation, arising from the way county funding to assess coaches is ring fenced at head office (interview June 2019).

This example is about working together to deliver a good outcome. The outcome of this dyadic leadership is jointly resolving group requests for funds within a) financial boundaries; and b) terms of the legacy. The outcome was referred to the board and regional committee for approval as the decision reached had financial implications for both the board and the federation as county funding is under its control.

Interview excerpt

Chair - '... you know we will get a legacy that somebody's left to [the organisation] now they live in XX shire [here]. There are nine groups in [XX shire] so which group are they leaving the money to?' We didn't touch it to be fair. The people who gave us the legacy dictated that one group should get the £4k and the remaining £6k shared between the other eight groups ... [M]yself and the county coach ... we asked each group what they would like to buy with some money?' 'we told them we had £6k and they all came back ... so myself and the county coach sat down and made it work'.

Interpretation

This chair was concerned that the joint solution was transparent and accountable to both the chair's own board and the county groups. Each county group was assigned 'agentive powers' (Harre, 1995) to apply for money in 'what they would like to buy with some money'.

Once all groups had made a request the chair and county coach worked through each request, checking how to apportion the money within the overall total. Each request was granted partly due to the chair's own board not applying for money. In the words of the chair:

'I suppose part of the conflict of interest – because of my position in my own group XXX, I knew what the funding situation was like ... I didn't feel that XXX [own board] could apply for any money ... and the board agreed'.

There are various kinds of experience of leadership at work here in dealing with multiple teams or bodies and upholding trust on the basis of making it clear that no conflicts of interest are being enacted. First, the independent leadership action of the chair is seen as self-leadership in that she perceives the problem of apportioning a financial legacy across nine county groups, which is done fairly and transparently in the absence of a standard protocol.

Having evaluated the problem, she proceeds with two solutions. First, the chair enlists the expert authority of the county coach to share the responsibility. Second, the dyad of the chair and coach agree to consult county groups. The chair's experience of leadership having assigned herself 'agentive powers' to take leadership responsibility on the legacy task

includes her assigning agentive powers to the county coach to share responsibility which she accepts (Harre, 1995). From a positioning lens, the chair is prepositioned by her dual roles of board chair and county committee chair. However, she is also tacitly positioning herself and the coach in two ways. First, as accepting responsibility for how to share the legacy:

‘myself and the county coach sat down and made it work’.

Second, the chair and coach can be interpreted as individuals in positions of authority, demonstrating impartiality and trustworthiness. This is particularly relevant to the chair who might be viewed as having a conflict of interest here.

Having found a solution with the shared understanding of the participating groups, the chair then assigns agentive powers to her own board to consider her recommendation that no application for a share of this legacy is made. The board approves her recommendation, then assigns agentive powers to the chair not to apply for a share of the legacy. In turn, this extends these agentive powers to the chair in her committee role to apportion the legacy to the advantage of the other groups. These experiences of leadership illustrate two preoccupations which can be related to existing literature: 1) shared values benefit other groups in the county with less financial security, which resonates with the idea of shared leadership as a driver of group level caring (Houghton et al., 2015); and 2) the idea that while interdependence naturally leads to conflict, it is individuals’ responses to conflict that is important for team effectiveness. This relates to Deutsch’s (1994) theory of moving from ‘differentiation’ to ‘integration’, specifically the focus on the concepts of competition versus cooperation.

In summary, the three vignettes under this theme illustrate the experience of leadership in engaging with the board as a team. For example, it involves taking a side in a conflict while preserving a sense of consensus; it involves both claiming specialist expertise while sharing it and affirming the need for others to work with some elements of this; and it involves presenting oneself as transparent and beyond reproach in dealings across organisational boundaries. Finally, it is also about responsibility being shared.

5.1.5. Theme 3 – managing resources

This theme highlights the ways in which these volunteer-led boards manage resources in the absence of a salaried charity manager or CEO. Volunteers constitute a major resource for both groups and managing this resource forms a major element of leadership activity for trustees. Both chairs characterise the task of working with volunteers as ‘difficult’; however, there is no evidence of difficult conversations with volunteers revealed in the data. That is apart from the account in ‘vignette 4’ (board 2) which suggests that a difficult conversation was required but avoided by the board. They also praised volunteers, also known as helpers, who regularly walk the extra mile for clients or customers as they are known at federation level. While it is not the purpose of this research to study the practices that improve board and group performance, it is notable that certain practices here support these ideas. For example, there is evidence of human resource practices that value volunteers in regular email communications from the board inviting feedback; an induction program for a new trustee; informal mentoring of another new trustee; and a long service award policy. These practices point towards boards valuing and retaining volunteers over time.

The experience of taking up leadership within a board of a volunteer-based service is illustrated in the data in a number of respects with a common thread of a concern for the effective management of resources. This includes the need to take responsibility for the actions and wellbeing of volunteers and making sure that other trustees (and one in particular) do likewise. This also relates to the need to keep well informed as to what volunteers are doing and experiencing, which involves both independent and interdependent leadership.

If volunteers cancel at the last minute, the impact on the service creates a challenge for those responsible for solving the resourcing problem. Two empirical examples of similar but different perspectives in managing resources – ‘keeping in touch with volunteers’ and ‘trusted boldness to deliver services’ – indicate how trustees position themselves and others in experiencing this leadership challenge.

5.1.5.1. Board 1 vignette 5 - keeping in touch with volunteers

The first empirical example is about communication practices which show trustees taking responsibility for the well-being of volunteers.

Context

As set out in section 5.1.5.1 at the time of data collection, board 1 had 37 volunteers outside of the board and owned its horses which were stabled under a tenancy lease. Volunteers cancelling or not turning up has immediate impact on service delivery for both boards. The communication strategies at work in this example are well-established practices of maintaining regular email communications between office bearers and volunteers. The

purpose is to enable office bearers to promptly address concerns raised by volunteers. The longer-term objective is to support and retain volunteers. This interview with the secretary to the board illustrates her experience of leadership juggled alongside her prepositioned role.

Interview excerpt

‘We keep in communication with our volunteers again by email on an almost weekly basis – asking them questions to see if there is anything they want help with. And a lot of those answers come back to myself or XXX [the chair] or both erm and if anything was – arose – that somebody might make a comment that they were unhappy about something then that would be something that XXX and I would be accountable for erm and would look to erm rectify, depending on what it was. Equally, if we are getting comments back erm with praise then that’s something that we would then want to put throughout the wider board and people can know that they are doing a good job. ... We all as a board take accountability for everything that goes on erm in terms of ... the clients or participant riders or volunteers. ... We have a volunteer trustee – it’s her responsibility to talk to the volunteers ... make sure they have been through safeguarding. Accountability is shared throughout the board – I don’t think any one person is entirely accountable for any one thing erm because if anything that was an issue – you know that came in – would be discussed with the entire board if it needed to be. But again, ultimately the first port of call for any trustee would be to report it back to’ XXX [the chair].

Interpretation

The trustee's deliberate self-positioning and deliberate other-positioning of the chair, the volunteer trustee, and the board, locates them in a scenario of accountability for volunteers that is built on relationships and recognised as a socially significant duty of care. This example is an experience of interdependent leadership, as the secretary accepts the agentive powers assigned to her by the chair to communicate volunteers' experiences to the chair through regular communications to and from them. Her deliberate self-positioning and other-positioning of the chair locates them in a dyad of sharing leadership and accepting responsibility for addressing concerns in order to retain volunteers: 'If anything ... somebody might make a comment that they were unhappy about something then that would be something that XXX and I would be accountable for'.

However, as this is a portfolio board structure, trustees' responsibilities are clearly set out. Therefore, in the following comment, the secretary is assigning agentive powers to the volunteer trustee to take up particular responsibility for safety and maintaining relationships with volunteers:

'We have a volunteer trustee – it's her responsibility to talk to the volunteers ... [to] make sure they have been through safeguarding'.

Simultaneously, the secretary is also assigning agentive powers to the board to take responsibility for serious issues: 'Accountability is shared throughout the board – I don't think any one person is entirely accountable'.

Thus, this implies independent leadership action by the chair and secretary as early responders to issues. Leadership then becomes interdependent when serious issues are

reported to the full board for discussion. Given the different layers of responsibility being assigned here, the secretary takes up independent leadership to decide what is a serious volunteer issue within a process set by the chair. It then becomes shared leadership in the dyad with the chair before becoming interdependent leadership when referred to the board. Finally, her speech act of positioning all trustees as accountable for volunteers is socially significant in the context of their duty of care to volunteers. However, in order to retain them, this also relates to her setting the boundaries of her leadership responsibilities in addressing volunteers.

5.1.5.2. Board 2 vignette 6 - trusted boldness to deliver services

Board 2 has a particular challenge managing circa 95 volunteers. The co-ordinating trustee is responsible for managing the system for volunteers' eligibility and assigning them to different riding establishments and rides.

Context

There are various human resource practices at work in this example of the administering and managing volunteers. First, the management of the volunteer data base functions as a central system. It is populated by the volunteer trustee, collecting data from the general email inbox and information provided by the ride organisers, which is then uploaded to the central system. Second, there is the practice of securing a 'disclosure and barring service' (DBS) check for each volunteer to enable them to work with vulnerable adults and children. This onboarding process of new volunteers is often carried out by dyads of trustees assisting the co-ordinating trustee who is a rider representative. There is a hiatus of activity for those

responsible for maintaining services in the event of volunteers cancelling. This is especially problematic in the case of assisted riders who may require several volunteers to support them.

Interview excerpt

Volunteer co-ordinator - ‘... [W]e all have our ehm main roles ... there’s me who is volunteer co-ordinator. I’m responsible ... I am not going to pretend that it’s an easy role because it isn’t. It relies on the co-operation of all our rider organisers some of them ... produce more than others. you know – letting me know they’ve got people that have left or if they’ve got somebody ... interested ... [they] have to come through me so that you know we’ve got a central point and I can sort of allocate them to the various rides where they are needed. In terms of actually doing my role – yes I can say to people can you go and do so and so’s DBS [disclosure and baring service] for me?’ ... So I get the occasional help but basically carrying out my actual [role] is me. We have got a general email address everything goes to the relevant people, it does work well – yeh. I mean if it’s a volunteering inquiry its sent to me and I deal with it ... I keep a look out on the [XX Federation] national website for any new rules that have come out and make everybody aware of them particularly if it involves volunteers or well involving anything really’.

Interpretation

From a positioning lens the co-ordinating trustee is experiencing leadership from different positions. First, she assigns agentive powers to herself and accepts responsibility for the administration and management of volunteers:

‘I’m responsible ... I am not going to pretend that it’s an easy role because it isn’t’.

Second, she employs deliberate self-positioning to indicate her agency in controlling the process:

‘It relies on the co-operation of all our rider organisers ... letting me know they’ve got people that have left or if they’ve got somebody ... interested’.

She also assigns agentive powers to rider organisers to accept responsibility in terms of producing timely updated information on volunteers. The trustee’s statement implies that she takes up the leadership position in managing resources to the advantage of the board. She does this by pointing to her right to receive timely information from others and their duty to produce it. Her other-positioning of rider organisers situates them in the ongoing storyline of volunteer resources and administration which they can influence in providing information and carrying out delegated tasks given to them by the trustee. Therefore, the trustee is saying others also need to take responsibility. However, in the end it is her responsibility which she accepts.

Having analysed the interview transcripts of all trustees, it is apparent there is support for the importance of the DBS clearance. The co-ordinating trustee is being other-positioned by trustee 2 in a leadership dyad. In her words:

‘...[T]hey have to be cleared ... before they can be ... helping with vulnerable children and adults or one another’ ‘we’ve got them covered for both’. We have to fill this form in ... on paper or they can do it electronically’ ‘I have to go or XX does [co-ordinating trustee] and ... check the person’s documents’.

In summary, these vignettes illustrate the leadership experience involved in a board that has the responsibility for volunteers in the absence of a salaried CEO/charity manager. There are high levels of both individual and shared responsibility set in specific mechanisms that assist trustees to manage these responsibilities.

5.1.6. Overview of findings from stage 1

This section concludes the analysis and interpretation of trustees’ talk of leadership in interview in stage 1. Having analysed the inductively generated themes of ‘applying accountability’, ‘engaging with team tensions’, and ‘managing resources’ revealed in interview, findings suggest that highly independent leadership occurs when office bearers and trustees assign agentive powers to themselves (Harre, 1995) and/or others in order to focus on present-oriented issues or start future-oriented action (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). This might be to control or change a practice or an event, or alternatively to protect board resources.

Trustees’ independent leadership empowered has been illustrated in three ways. First, having accepted agentive powers and responsibility assigned to them (Harre 1995), trustees then position themselves as independent leaders taking the form of talk proactivity in carrying

out tasks; for example, visiting schools for mobility assessments or recruiting new trustees. Second, by engaging in proactive self-leadership (Manz, 1986) in recognising situations that require ‘self-starting future-oriented action with the aim to change the situation’ (Hauschildt and Konradt, 2012, p.502). Third, recognising when tasks require interdependent shared leadership of complementary skills and knowledge of dyads working together.

Findings suggest that trustees chose when to act independently (oneself the author of action). For example, vignette 1 (board 1) and vignettes 1 and 3 (board 2), in which the chair’s aim is to ultimately develop ‘shared leadership’ or ‘engaging with team tensions’. However, they achieve this in different ways; for instance, in vignette 1 (board 1) the chair is negotiating with an external school but in vignette 1 (board 2) the chair is negotiating with external applicants for a position on the board, then negotiating her actions within the boardroom in stage 2. In vignette 3 (board 2) the chair takes a mentoring approach. She shares her knowledge and expertise in a ‘note’ interpreting regulatory governance and including this in a mentoring programme for a recently appointed secretary. It is also shared with the board and group at large.

At other times, trustees choose to understand themselves as part of a collective (self and other/s as authors of action) (Haggard and Tsakiris, 2009; Moore et al., 2012). As set out in the literature review chapter (II), agency in this research is anchored in the ‘agentic framework’ of Harre (1995).

Findings show how trustees’ experience and sense-making of leaderships shifts, demonstrating how they make sense of themselves as both independent actors and in relation to others in interdependent processes of leadership. It starts with trustees assigning agentic

powers to themselves and others, recognising the need to accept responsibility for certain tasks. However, it is also about trustees making sure that others understand different things such as when to seek authorisation from others and trust that they will co-operate with established systems which have been set up for specific purposes.

Other-positioning has been interpreted in interview as trustees willing to share and assign agentic powers to others to accept or repudiate responsibility (Harre, 1995). Essentially, this is a recognition of the need to work in an interdependent way. For instance, see vignette 5 (board 1) and the office bearers' need to work together to exercise their duty of care to volunteers. Also see vignette 4 (board 2), where trustees taking up a board team position (general metaphor) avoid conflict with a new chair. Finally, in vignette 5 (board 1) and vignette 6 (board 2) while different in trustees' 'experience of leadership' both illustrations demonstrate recognition that 'managing resources' requires interdependent leadership and co-operation. This summary concludes the analysis and interpretation of findings from interview data in stage 1.

5.2. Emerging storylines from observation (stage 2)

5.2.1. Introduction

Stage 2 analysis enables a more dynamic and socially informed picture of independent action and interdependent board leadership to emerge through the examination of the unfolding storylines of decision-making episodes in board meetings. In particular, how trustees move between independent and interdependent leadership that is temporal. Findings here show the process of board leadership by focussing on the actual leadership activities constructed

through established ways of working; routine board processes; activities of individual trustees; and collective enactment of board decision making. This includes how, at times, decisions originating in prepositioned roles outside of board meetings develop, becoming shared and leading to different outcomes when subsequently negotiated in meetings.

Stage 2 vignettes explore how board processes, individual activities, and shared interactions interplay to deliver collective board decision making. Employing positioning theory as an approach, enables us to study board leadership as it unfolds in board teams. It does this in several ways: a) by viewing leadership as a process moving outside constitutionally prepositioned roles to trustees' interactions in meetings as a way of understanding the dynamics of leadership and how they experience taking up actual leadership activity; b) by focussing on leadership constructed through established routines and ways of working; c) by illuminating the leadership action of individual trustees and collective enactment of board decision making.

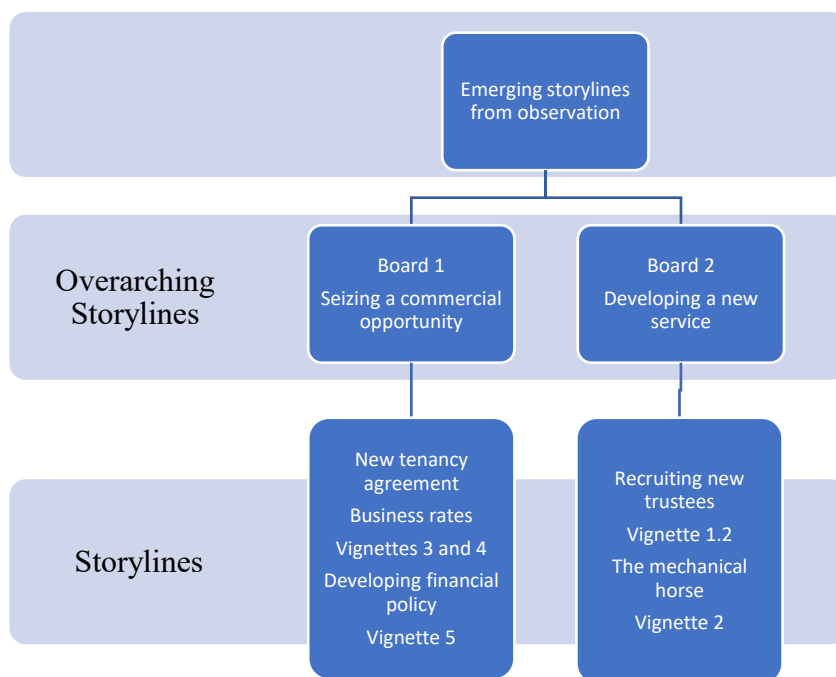
As described in the methodology chapter (III), the mutually influential triangle of position, storyline, and speech act, constitute the theoretical foundations positioning theory rests on (Van Langenhove and Harre, 1999). A position-oriented approach to analysis can advance from any one of the three apexes of the positioning triangle while keeping in mind the mutually dependent relationship of these three elements (Harre and Van Langenhove, 2010). In particular, the analysis looked for insights related to leadership activity in board decision making.

The triangle was entered from the apex of storyline because it is the context to the unfolding social episode and conversation. Furthermore, it gives access to conventions within which

the storyline unfolds and provides information about available positions and their associated rights and duties. These are brought together with speech acts and positions to create a storyline structure from observation of trustee interactions in actual decision-making sequences.

Stage 2 findings drawn from observation are presented in five vignettes. There are two overarching storylines that emerge from observation: ‘seizing a commercial opportunity’ (board 1) and ‘developing a new service’ (board 2). Within these overarching storylines, the vignettes illustrate that there were shifts within the contributing storylines, summarised in the following figure.

Figure 7: Emerging Storylines



Author 2021

A tabled overview of storylines brought together with forms of positioning and trustees’ experience of leadership follows. This is followed by further in depth analysis of storylines

in each board showing how positioning-oriented analysis makes it possible to explicate the construction of leadership in trustees' interactions in two board teams.

5.2.2. Overview of storylines, positioning, and experience of leadership

As in stage 1, vignettes in stage 2 are structured in three parts: context, interactive sequence, and interpretation. Before moving to study individual storylines, table 27 provides an overview of storylines, positioning, and trustees' experience of leadership.

Table 27: Overview of storylines, positioning, and experience of leadership

Board	Vignette	Overarching storyline	Forms of positioning	Experience of leadership
Board 1	Vignette 3 New tenancy agreement	Seizing a commercial opportunity Actors: Chair (absent deputy) Trustee 1 5 board Trustees	Chair assigns 'agentive powers' to herself and Deputy Positioning: Prepositioned chair Chair tacitly constructed position of expert in meeting Other-positioning of deputy as expert Positioning self and board in local moral order Chair assigns agentive powers to board for final decision	Chair's individual construct of leadership Leadership construct of chair and trustee 1 Leadership is then board construct in accepting responsibility for contractual terms and approving the agreement Interdependent leadership of board as legal provisions of addendum approved
Board 1	Vignette 4 Business rates	Seizing a commercial opportunity Actors: The chair 1 trustee 5 board trustees	Prepositioned of chair Chair assigns agentive powers to herself and the board Tacitly constructs position of expert Self-positioning as independent leader (future-oriented)	Leadership construct of chair's individual narrative Board's joint construct of leadership in taking responsibility for commercial rates

Board	Vignette	Overarching Storyline	Forms of Positioning	Experience of Leadership
Board 1	Vignette 5 Developing financial policy	Seizing a commercial opportunity Actors: Treasurer Chair 5 board trustees	Treasurer assigns agentive powers to himself, the chair', the board, and a federation director Other-positioning of chair and trustees Tacitly constructs position of expert Accountive positioning used by treasurer to explain his activities outside the boardroom	Leadership construct of treasurer's individual narrative Dyad of treasurer and chair construct a joint narrative of leadership Interdependent leadership as the treasurer is other-positioned by the board to take up the responsibility of both his prepositioned role and that of the expert position
Board 2	Vignette 1.2 Recruiting New Trustees	Developing a New Service Sequence 2 Actors: Chair Trustee 3 Board Trustees	Chair assigns agentive powers to herself to recruit and to the board for shared responsibility for the appointments Trustee assigns agentive powers to herself to question the chair Position: Chair's self-positioning of expert Chair's accountive positioning	Chair's Independent leadership Leadership construct of chair's Trustee's individual construct of leadership as she holds the chair to account Independent leadership of trustee Self-leadership of trustee in perceiving discrepancy in recruitment standards and creating a competing narrative.
Board 2	Vignette 2 The Mechanical Horse	Developing a New Service Actors: The Secretary The Chair The Co-ordinating Volunteer Trustee	Assigning agentive powers to herself Takes responsibility for questioning the feasibility of the project Positioning: Secretary prepositioned	Secretary experiences independent leadership and constructs initial leadership position. Leadership becomes interdependent as the perlocutionary effect of secretary's initial speech act results in joint construct of leadership of the chair, secretary, and trustee.

			Secretary tacitly constructs position of expert in tabling report Chair's tacit positioning of expert in repositioning storyline	They then jointly reposition the project in new contexts
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Author /02/2022)

5.2.3. Storyline ‘new tenancy agreement’ (vignette 3)

This board 1 vignette gives us important insights into how board leadership works as a dynamic process which is shaped by multiple factors: the task at hand; the chair's choice of goal and her customary practice of running meetings; the personal resources of the deputy's expertise and knowledge; and the board decision-making process.

Context

The landlord issued a tenancy termination notice for the riding establishment during the summer vacation of 2019 when the board did not meet. The chair then embarked on a process to find new premises and directly approached the owner of the property to take over the primary tenancy. As trustees had invested social capital with the owner over time, this approach was well received. Following lengthy conversations with the owner, the chair with the help of her deputy, successfully negotiated the primary lease that combined commercial liveries alongside those of the charity. While initially the tenancy notice was problematic and threatening, it was turned into a commercial opportunity with manageable risk to help secure the future sustainability of the group. Some decision making here occurs outside of the social episode of the board meeting by the chair in her prepositioned role assisted by the

deputy. The role of deputy is not constitutionally prepositioned; however, the deputy's relevant professional qualification, and personal resources of expertise and knowledge of working with, and negotiating contracts, prepositioned her. The goal is to secure the primary tenancy with the owner in preference to a sub-tenancy from a new, as yet unknown landlord. Both the chair and deputy respectively characterise their ongoing working relationship as good (interviews April and June 2019).

The board has two decisions to make in this meeting. First, whether to approve the new tenancy agreement as shown in the extract from the board meeting in vignette 3. Second, to approve council tax rates for the business in the following vignette 4.

Interactive sequence

First-order positioning (initial positioning)

Chair – 'Good news we've got it to ourselves. Bad news it's going to cost us a little bit more. Timewise a little bit more time but generally I think it will be for the better. AXX [owner] is very keen to have us there, they are bending over backwards to accommodate us. JXX [Deputy] and I have had long conversations with AXX [owner] in the last few weeks and we've drawn up the draft agreement which I think you've all seen'.

Second-order positioning (trustees acknowledge initial position)

Trustees – 'Yeh' [all 5 trustees speaking and nodding in agreement].

Second-order positioning (clarifying initial position)

Trustee 1 speech act – ‘If I’ve understood it correctly – it’s not necessarily going to cost us more is it?’ because AXX is going to make up the difference if we don’t get the liveries?’

Chair – ‘Correct’.

Trustee 1 – ‘So we’re safe?’

Chair – ‘Yes we’re safe – basically AXX [owner] has said – I think the shortfall is something £500 – £590 over what we are paying at the moment. As I said earlier on we have to have 5.something liveries to cover our costs. We’ve already got the three existing liveries’.

Second-order positioning (extends storyline)

Chair – ‘This literally came through last night ... ‘The Landlord and Tennant Act 1954’ there is a declaration which ... basically says that you have no right to ehm stay on the land at the end of your tenancy unless the landlord chooses to offer you another lease and agent CXX [external adviser] thinks it is important just in case we fall out with the owner, which is unlikely, that we should have that declaration attached to our tenancy. It’s fairly standard – [Chair reading text] – *If you commit yourself to the lease you will be giving up ... important legal rights ... unable to claim compensation for the loss of your business premises. It is therefore important to get professional advice from a surveyor*’.

Chair – ‘Which we have done. So basically its covering AXX [owner] so that we have no right to stay there once our tenancy comes to an end – which I don’t have a problem with. We have asked for a five-year tenancy because as good practice as a charity we should be we should have a five-year tenancy in place to apply the funding’.

Trustees – ‘Yeh’ [all 5 trustees agree].

Interpretation

In sharing explicit advice about the legal technicality associated with the proposed agreement which favours the owner’s rights, the chair self-positions and locates the board in the local moral order of its constitutional prepositioning and federation membership to enact governance and due diligence. However, it is in her other-positioning of the board as responsible for the decision that she is highlighting the local moral order and cluster of rights and duties associated with the board’s position embedded in the tenancy storyline. She does this by assigning agentive powers (Harre, 1995) to the board to accept responsibility for the five-year tenure of the new tenancy agreement notwithstanding the added protection for the owner under The Landlord and Tenant Act 1954.

Decision making is not only observed in the negotiation of leadership positions in the meeting but originates in the prepositioning of the system of board regulation and roles. The prepositioned chair who perceives the tenancy issue as both a short-term problem and a long-term opportunity takes the decision to see it as an opportunity (observation notes 9/2019). Although empowered by her constitutional role it is the chair’s positioning as an independent

leader that shapes leadership at this point. In taking agentive powers (Harre, 1995) to herself and assigning agentive powers to the professionally qualified deputy, she sets up a leadership dyad, and a collaborative leadership process of two individuals interrelating to negotiate with the willing owner.

While the deputy is regarded by the chair as a trusted expert resource experienced in negotiating contracts, it is her complementary skills of equine knowledge that make her an ideal person to work with on negotiating the new tenancy agreement. The chair's decision to combine the deputy's knowledge with her own equine and board governance knowledge is a key decision. The leadership dyad of the chair and deputy is a form of shared leadership where two or more individuals lead the team (Carson, Tesluk and Marrone, 2007). The leadership activity of employing translatable knowledge from commercial negotiations such as reviewing contracts and amendments, taking up opening and closing negotiating positions, and applying these to a nonprofit board problem, is the leadership practice being enacted by these two trustees to create a joint solution. The product of the negotiations has been circulated in advance of the meeting. Leadership at this point is the chair's construct and individual narrative as she introduces the agreement. While the draft agreement locates the board in the storyline, it is in the chair's initial positioning that the board is located in the unfolding storyline of the tenancy agreement: 'Good news we've got it to ourselves'.

In the above sequence, having first put the item on the board agenda and circulated the draft tenancy agreement in advance of the meeting, the chair introduces it for the board's approval: 'We've drawn up the draft agreement which I think you've all seen'.

The chair is following her customary practice of providing the board with the context to each agenda item, together with relevant knowledge and information, and then framing the discussion (interview 2019). The storyline at this point is the chair's construct and individual narrative, as the deputy, while generating the draft, is unable to attend the meeting.

The chair's constitutional position and control of the agenda is not disputed. However, taking a positioning lens suggests her initial tacitly constructed position of expert in the meeting can be challenged. It is challenged by trustee 1 but the timing is interesting for two reasons. First, it is not until after the other trustees have confirmed that they have seen the agreement in 'second order positioning'. Second, it is after the chair has located the board within the tenancy storyline:

'I think it will be for the better' and 'Are you happy with it?'

At this point, the chair is assigning agentive powers to the board and positioning trustees to claim the rights to frame the discussion from their own perspectives and fulfil their responsibilities. In the following turn 'trustee 1' claims this right and challenges the chair's initial position by questioning the figures involved:

Trustee 1 – 'It's not necessarily going to cost us more is it?'

This in turn prompts a swift response from the chair: 'Correct'.

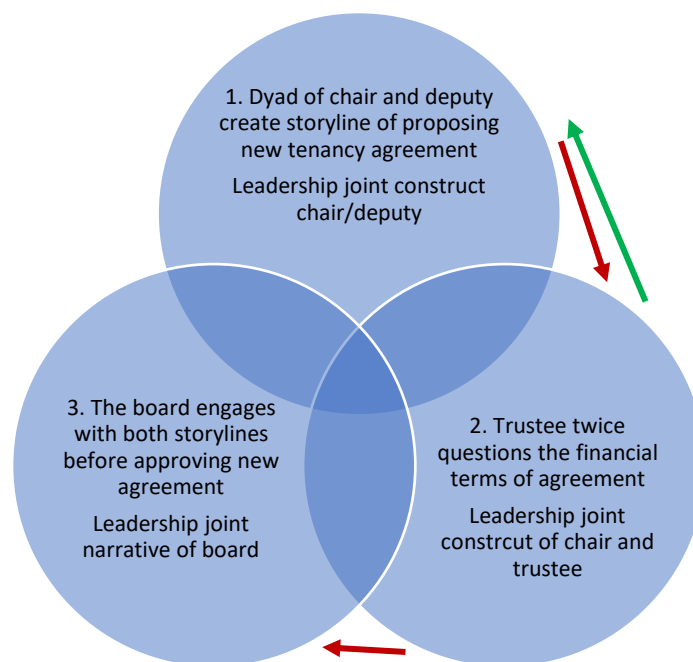
Trustee 1 then assumes the leadership position by pressing the chair further: 'So we're safe?'.

This changes the storyline to focus on financial security. It is the point at which the storyline becomes a joint construct of the board, as leadership is negotiated through a process and framed by each turn. The chair then reclaims rights to the leadership position by providing the board with precise information about the shortfall figures. She does this by giving the reassurance that trustee 1 requires.

The intervention by trustee 1 constructs a joint narrative around the risk of relying on the owner's commitment to make good any future shortfalls. She is using the word 'we' as indicating her understanding of the board's shared accountability for financial security. The chair's actions taken on behalf of the board can be challenged by trustees through a process of negotiation to claim equal rights and obligations within the board's conventions. It appears that the trustees support the chair's proactivity partly due to the urgency of securing alternative premises, and trust in the chair and transparency of the dyad. It is worth noting that at any time the board can claim the right to require the chair and deputy to renegotiate the terms of the agreement.

Leadership here is a dynamic process, which is shaped and constructed in each positioning turn. There are three constructions of leadership within the boardroom prefaced by one construction outside the boardroom, namely the chair's narrative as an independent leader. This storyline is a construct of the way that the dyad of chair and deputy, and trustee have framed the storylines to be decided. These individual framings interact with established ways of framing things in board meetings, and a joint construct of board decision-making suggests the dynamic nature of leadership illustrated in the following figure of the process and the associated construction of leadership.

Figure 8: Flow of decision making and construction of leadership



Author 02/2022

In summary, the chair's experience of leadership is interpreted as a) framing the advantages and disadvantages of the new tenancy agreement in order for the board to approve it; and b) assigning agentive powers to the board to make the decision (Harre, 1995). The chair's focus is both present and future oriented in that her agency stems from a need to secure the board's approval and control this unplanned event (Moore et al., 2012) and the disruption of finding and moving to new premises.

Trustee 1, however, takes a more future-oriented perspective. She takes agentive powers (Harre, 1995) to position herself as an expert in questioning the chair about the financial risk going forward. In choosing to take this action, she is accepting responsibility for a practical

evaluation of what the chair is proposing in relation to the owner's obligations and future implications for the board.

When it comes to the board's positioning turn (3) above, there are two decisions to be made. Thus, it is worth setting these out here in more detail. First, to approve the legally binding tenancy agreement under the 'Landlord and Tenant Act 1954' in its entirety. Second, to apply due diligence to the implications of the addendum, given that it is disadvantageous to the board. Initially, the storyline is the construct of the chair's individual narrative then becoming the board's joint construct. She does this by positioning the board as requiring more knowledge about the legal complexities of the decision in order to exercise due diligence in accepting the external agent's advice: 'Agent CXX [adviser] thinks it is important just in case'.

She closes the knowledge gap by reading aloud the addendum and highlighting the critical terms. She first states that the contract favours the owner now and in the future. Then she states that the board is giving up important legal rights to claim compensation for future loss of business premises, and in return, securing a five-year tenancy, considered best practice for charities. The chair is recommending an apparently weak legal position for short-term gain and to mitigate problems in the future due to unrealistic expectations. Trustees' body-language here is noteworthy as they all nod in agreement which we can take to mean trustees recognising the benefit of a five-year tenancy, given recent previous experience of twice having to find new premises. No further questions were raised and the tenancy agreement including the addendum was approved: 'Yeh' [all 5 trustees agree].

Finally, this storyline is a construct of the way that the dyad of chair and deputy, and trustee have framed the storylines to be decided. These individual framings interact with established ways of framing things in board meetings, and a joint construct of board decision making suggests the dynamic nature of leadership illustrated in the following patterns.

The second board 1 vignette from stage 2 of the analysis relates to the storyline ‘business rates’ and illustrates trustees ‘acting as responsible charity board members’.

5.2.4. Storyline business rates (vignette 4)

The group is required to have at least one year’s running costs in its deposit account as a condition of its membership of the federation.

Context

This vignette illustrates a financial operational decision raised by the commercial venture. Here the chair justifies her actions prior to the social episode of the board meeting, to a congratulatory response from the board.

Interactive sequence

First-order positioning (initial positioning act)

Chair – ‘We as a charity automatically only have to pay 20% of business rates. I’ve spoken to Wiltshire Council – the current business rate is £2680 per annum we get 80% relief. They’ve got our name and charity number as of today which takes it down to £536 pa. We can apply for 100 % relief charity’.

Second-order position (comments on initial positioning)

Trustee 2 – ‘I think we should’.

Other trustees – ‘Yes, yes’ [all 5 trustees agree in a congratulatory manner] (Van Langenhove and Harre, 1999).

Interpretation

Decision making here again originates in the prepositioning of the system of board regulation and roles. The chair, empowered by her constitutional role has the obligation to perform within the social expectations of her position. To this end, she is proactive in establishing the business rates that the board will need to authorise in relation to the new commercial venture. This points to self-leadership (Manz, 1986) in perceiving the need to understand the implications that commercial business rates will have on the charity and its cash flow. However, it is also about the chair positioning herself as an independent leader in taking action to register the charity with the council and presenting the board with a worked through solution that is future-oriented (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). The storyline at this point is a construct of the chair’s individual narrative as she accounts to the board for her actions. She is consistently following her customary practice of introducing and framing each agenda item.

Within the boardroom, the chair’s initial position tacitly constructed in the meeting, is that of expert as she is proposing a decision. Using her customary practice, the chair informs the board that she has identified a problem and solved it herself. She is bringing the solution to the board for approval, drawing on her prepositioned role and duty to inform the board. The

storyline becomes the construct of a joint narrative of the board when trustee 2 supports the chair's position: 'I think we should', followed by 'yes, yes' [all 5 trustees agree in a congratulatory comment].

This joint narrative is promptly achieved for two reasons. First, the chair has provided precise information about minimising business rates while complying with the council's regulatory framework. Second, trustees' own interpretations are taking into account the contextual factor of task complexity of managing three commercial liveries alongside the charity's services to clients and the additional financial processes required.

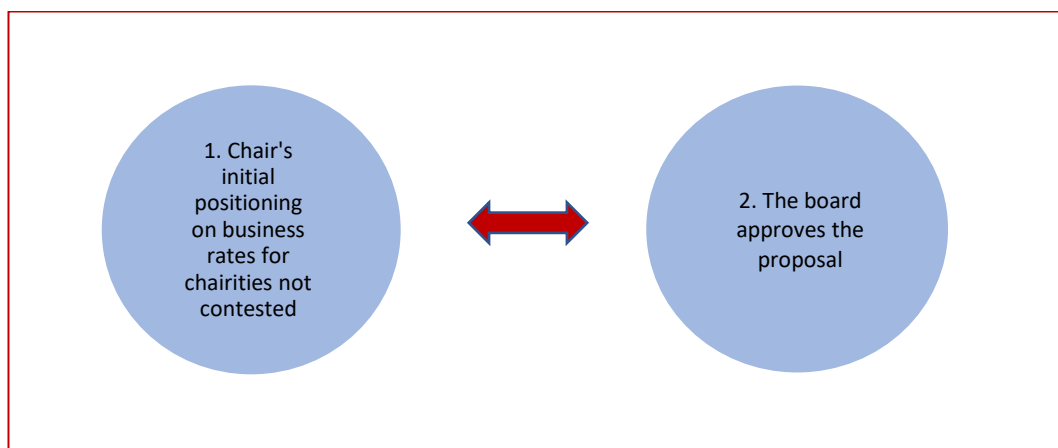
This is a pattern of leadership where the chair's initiative and recommendation is endorsed by the wider board with little friction or modification. Thus, the leadership actions of a trusted chair are nodded through without amendments. However, we will shortly see a contrasting pattern of a trusted chair facing a robust challenge resulting in her recommendation being subject to a further process determined by the board (see board 2, vignette 1.2.).

In summary, leadership outside of the social episode of the meeting is empowered both by the chair's prepositioned role, which is not challenged, combined with her sense of agency to provide the board with information that influences events and decision making. Leadership within the episode becomes shared as the trustees approve the prior actions of the chair and accept their responsibility and shared agency for the decision. This points to shared leadership (Pearce and Conger, 2003), albeit a minimal form where the chair's prior actions are recognised as enabling the board to take a fully informed decision. Thus, this

event/incident is about sharing knowledge and the product of the chair's prior actions, as no influencing of other trustees was apparent in the meeting.

Finally, the dynamic nature of leadership illustrated in the chair's initial positioning is uncontested. The storyline of business rates is the construct of the chair's individual narrative and is trusted. Therefore, it then becomes a joint construct of the board as it is approved.

Figure 9: Pattern of trusted chair leadership



Author/02/2022

5.2.5. Storyline ‘developing financial policy to meet a new challenge’ (vignette 5)

This storyline gives important insights into board leadership as a dynamic process which is shaped by the task at hand; the personal resources of the treasurer's knowledge and expertise; the interactive board process and external expert advice. Leadership here can be explained as fluid, developing, and becoming shared prior to and throughout the meeting where it is negotiated. This example illustrates the treasurer experiencing leadership that is both a) independent, as he draws on translatable knowledge and skills as a director in the private

sector and applies it to a commercial new venture; and b) shared, in that he assigns agentive powers to himself, the chair, a federation director, and the board.

Context

This group is characterised as financially secure (interview April 2019). Taking on a commercial venture, however, is a new challenge that requires a change in financial policy. In this storyline the treasurer is constitutionally prepositioned in his recognizable role and regulatory obligation to perform within the social expectations of treasurer. That is to take particular accountability on behalf of the board for providing governance supervision of the organisation's finances while recognising that trustees are 'individually and jointly responsible for financial decisions' (Hudson, 2017, p. 278).

Interactive sequence

First-order positioning (initial act of positioning)

Treasurer – 'I just want to mention – XX [the chair] and I discussed the possibility of opening up another current account to handle all the business side of running the stables. I actually went into TSB and they said they're not actually doing any more trustee accounts at the moment. So the question I think we need to look at, I and the chair and maybe the trustees, is do we actually need to have another current account to keep our operating costs separate from or distinct from the charity costs?'

Second-order positioning (questioning within the same conversation)

Chair – 'What do you feel from an accounting point of view?'

Second-order positioning (takes up expert position)

Treasurer – ‘I think from an accounting point of view it probably isn’t necessary. But what is probably a good idea is to keep a separate deposit account to keep a balance of the surplus of funds in there – as a working capital for the stables because I think that ... if we make a profit it will be good to put that to one side to cover the situation where we make a loss on it. But I will, on paper, keep it as paper accounts incorporated in the overall charity account’.

Second-order positioning (extends storyline to federation)

Treasurer – ‘I did speak to XX [Federation Director] on that weeks ago ... because the question I have is are we allowed as a charity to actually run a business which is effectively what the stables are?’ His feedback was as far as he understood the various bits of legislation so long as we were running the liveries as a part of the charities that is ahh – we would be making a profit yes – but as long as we don’t make more than £40k a year basically we wouldn’t be liable for tax’.

Interpretation

Decision making here originates in the prepositioning of the system of board regulation and roles. However, it also originates in the treasurer positioning himself as an independent leader in taking responsibility for developing financial policy to manage the commercial venture.

However, it is in the board meeting that it develops and is shared as the treasurer, the chair, and the interactive process of the board negotiate leadership positions. The treasurer perceives increasing financial complexities in relation to banking, tax, and profit margins in taking on the commercial business. While identifying these challenges point to the treasurer's expert knowledge and expertise, it is his proactivity in seeking current information from TSB (bank) and questioning a federation expert that points to self-leadership (Manz, 1986). However, his recognition of the increasing complexity of managing a commercial venture alongside the charity, also points to the need to share leadership (Pearce and Conger, 2003). Empowered by his prepositioned role and his own agency, the treasurer creates a shared leadership process locally and nationally with two individuals interrelating at different times. He does this outside of the meeting by a) discussing different options with the chair; and b) consulting a high-level federation expert. Similar to the chair in board 1, vignette 3, the treasurer is using his sense of agency to initiate and control actions and influence events (Moore et al., 2012). The treasurer's sense of agency is implicit (a pre-reflective 'feeling of agency') and unlike that of the chair which seems to be more explicit (judgement of agency), in that the latter is looking to attribute agency to others, given the portfolio structure of the board. The treasurer on the other hand, is looking to consult with the board in order to reassure himself that the trustees individually and jointly share responsibility for this financial decision. He also recognises that the knowledge required to navigate the task complexity of taking on a commercial venture, resides not only in those trustees in prepositioned roles but with all trustees. The dynamic nature of leadership shifting between the treasurer's expert position and interactive board process is nicely

illustrated in this unfolding storyline. In the treasurer's initial position the storyline is the construct of his individual narrative of wishing to consult with the board:

‘So the question I think we need to look at, I and the chair, and maybe the trustees, is do we actually need to have another current account to keep our operating costs separate from or distinct from the charity costs?’

Having accounted for his prior acts on behalf of the board and introduced the question, the treasurer positions the chair and the trustees as sharing the responsibility for financial decisions. This is also a feature of their constitutional responsibility; however, before he can consult with the board the chair intervenes, and positions him as the expert by asking the treasurer for his own view:

‘What do you feel from an accounting point of view?’

She does this so that she can frame the discussion for the board, as is her practice. At this point, the storyline becomes a joint construct of the board as leadership is negotiated between the treasurer's expertise, the chair's framing of the discussion, and the board process of authorising the decision. By responding to the chair's question, the treasurer recognises her undisputed right to question him and the need for him to demonstrate his knowledge and expertise. He does this by proposing the way forward:

‘What is probably a good idea is to keep a separate deposit account to keep a balance of the surplus of funds in there – as a working capital for the stables’.

He also provides additional reassurance to the board that he has taken specialist advice:

‘I did speak to XX [Federation Director]... and as long as we don’t make more than £40k a year basically we wouldn’t be liable for tax’.

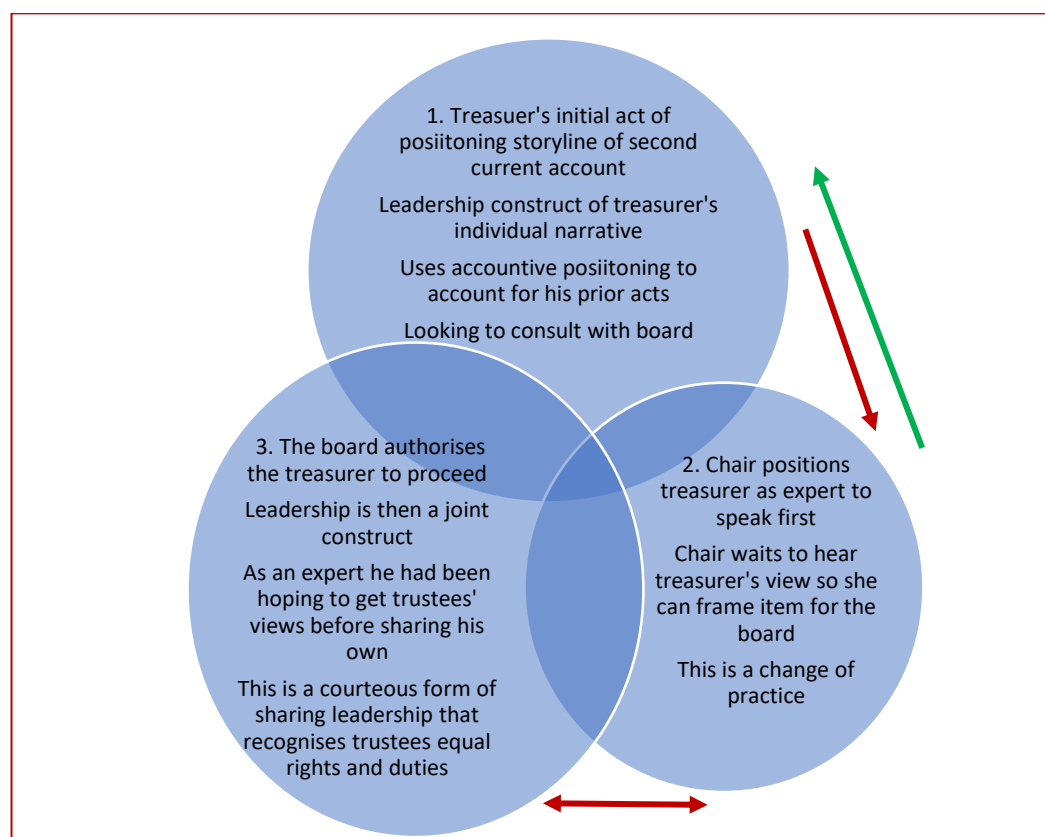
The paradox here is that the treasurer with his personal resources of knowledge and expertise is looking to consult the board before giving his expert opinion. However, he is prevented from doing this by the chair who positions him to first give his expert view. She does this because she needs his view before her customary practice of framing the discussion. Thus, having been authorised to give his view, the treasurer claims his right to lead the board on financial matters and sets out the way forward.

The processes of positioning results in a form of shared leadership in the board interactive process where the treasurer is positioned by others to take up his expert position. In making sense of the treasurer’s experience of leadership, the pattern seems to move from his independent leadership in raising an issue without accompanying it with a solution, to interdependent leadership where he is authorised and trusted to proceed following the board discussion. The treasurer’s intention to include the board’s ideas before taking up his prepositioned responsibilities of treasurer, echoes Deutsch’s (1994) idea of teams working cooperatively.

In summary, understanding the dynamic nature of leadership comes from studying trustees’ interactions moment-to-moment in unfolding storylines. However, these interactions are already influenced to a degree by decisions taken by prepositioned individuals outside of the social episode of the board meeting. However, the treasurer uses ‘accountive’ positioning to share his prior activities with trustees at the start of the meeting, thus positioning the board

with the information to take responsibility for the decision. I call this courteous shared leadership.

Figure 10: Flow of decision making and constructs of leadership



Author/02/2022

5.2.6. Storyline 'recruiting new trustees (vignette 1.2 continued from stage 1)

This board 2 example illustrates the trusted chair justifying and navigating a robust challenge to her independent leadership actions taken outside the boardroom to recruit three new trustees (see vignette 1.1, stage 1, for further background).

This storyline gives us important insights into how leadership actions, even from an elected position of authority, need to be negotiated. This might be called 'dynamic negotiation' which is shaped by the task at hand; attempts of the chair and one trustee to control

competing narratives; and the interactive board process which facilitates leadership developing and becoming shared once individual narratives are reconciled.

Context

Following the retirement of an experienced chair, the treasurer is elected chair during the first board meeting following the Annual General Meeting. She is reporting to the board about actions she has taken in her prepositioned role of treasurer to recruit three new trustees, including her successor as treasurer. She has identified three people willing to become trustees. Two of whom are experienced former board members and the third is known to the board. Application forms have been circulated to trustees in advance of the meeting in line with customary practice. The board's discussion about whether to appoint these three applicants runs into difficulty when the preferred applicant for treasurer is discussed. The chair's discussions with this applicant have reached an advanced stage; however, the proposal to appoint her is robustly challenged by one trustee. Decision making outside the social episode of the board meeting has been taken by the chair positioning herself as an experienced independent leader that takes the form of proactive action. The following sequence is the storyline of the contentious appointment of the applicant for treasurer.

Interactive sequence

First-order positioning

Trustee – 'I am going to be very honest here, I would feel more comfortable if you were still treasurer'.

Second-order positioning (rejects initial position)

Chair – ‘I understand that, but we do need to move on don’t we?’ [talking over] I completely trust’ XXX’ [preferred applicant].

Second-order positioning of trustee (negotiating)

Trustee – ‘As may be but she’s a) not proven committee member; and b) how much experience has she handling those sort of ... money that we’ve got?’

Third-order positioning (attempt to reposition the storyline)

Chair – ‘I don’t know I’ve not asked her. I can discuss that with her but I wouldn’t for one minute ... I’ve known her a long time’.

Trustee (repositions the storyline)

Trustee – ‘Alright I know that it is neither here nor there – and she probably didn’t even think it was relevant ... there is no financial experience or anything on her application form and most people who’ve got any experience in finance or nursing or whatever, they put it on their form – any other experience’.

Chair (negotiates the previous position)

Chair – ‘I don’t [know] whether she has been a trustee somewhere else or whether she’s kept accounts or things’.

Trustee (repositions the storyline)

Trustee – ‘I don’t know but I think before we categorically say right will you be treasurer I think this is – I know it sounds awful and ... she’s a lovely person – but I think we need to look at it a bit more in depth, does that make sense?’ to find out a bit more about what she actually has done’.

Chair (acknowledges the previous position)

Chair – ‘Yes - the idea really at the time was that I meet with her in the next few weeks – she’s going to come over to mine and I was going to go through with her exactly what was involved in the role if you can keep books, financial books, you can do the treasurer role. So I’ll talk to her’.

Interpretation

In this storyline, the system of board regulation and prepositioned roles is disrupted by the election of a new chair. The trustee challenging the chair is not prepositioned constitutionally in the same way as the chair; however, she holds equal rights and joint accountability for decisions.

The newly elected chair [former treasurer] assigns ‘agentive powers’ (Harre, 1995) to herself and takes responsibility for a board resourcing problem. She chooses to take action to recruit new trustees. She is now reporting to the board:

‘I’ve made various enquiries about who would like to come on the committee apart from the person who is willing to replace ... willing to be treasurer, if we vote her on

to be that. Also 1XX [applicant 1] and 2XX [applicant 2] who would be happy to come on the committee’.

The chair has past experience of recruiting new trustees, thus recognises that protecting the group’s future resources also depends on the actions of others. The chair’s leadership actions can be understood in two ways. First, as self-leadership (Manz, 1986) in perceiving the need to scaffold board resources now and in the future. Her agency stems from a need to secure the board’s approval and control events (Moore et al., 2012) having carried out an evaluation assessment of the board’s present and future needs. Second, she assigns agentive powers (Harre, 1995) to the board to take up responsibility and approve her recommendations to adequately resource the board with the applicants she is proposing.

While the chair takes responsibility for recruiting new trustees, she also assigns agentive powers to the board to share responsibility for these appointments. The chair’s independent leadership action set out in stage 1 draws on having self-assigned agentive powers to resolve the problem and her proactivity in recognising the discrepancy in resourcing needs. Therefore, there is a combination of self-leadership (Bligh et al., 2006) and a minimal form of shared leadership, in that while she is unable to influence the opposing trustee by using ‘accountive’ positioning to justify her actions, the chair accepts responsibility for doing a further check on the credentials of the applicant for treasurer: ‘So I’ll talk to her’.

The storyline is a construct of the chair’s individual narrative as she accounts to the board for her actions. However, she is also assigning ‘agentive powers’ to the board as she recognises the board is the decision maker: ‘If we vote her on to be that’.

The storyline then changes to become a construct of the trustee's individual narrative as she continues to hold the chair accountable for group finances while the post of treasurer remains vacant:

‘I am going to be very honest here – I would feel more comfortable if you were still treasurer’.

The trustee experiences leadership by recognising the impact of a specific situation caused by the actions of the chair that does not meet internal standards (Manz, 1986). Her action of questioning the chair is one of intentional activity and her sense of agency can be viewed as a) distinguishing her position from others; and b) the moral responsibility of a trustee exercising due diligence. Thus, she self-assigns agentive powers (Harre, 1995) to take responsibility for challenging the chair and correcting the perceived discrepancy in relation to standards.

In choosing to challenge the chair, the trustee is demonstrating both independent action and interdependent leadership in that while she is looking to ensure that the applicant holds appropriate financial knowledge to carry the duties of treasurer, she is reconciling this with the rights and obligations of the board. She recognises that this depends on the actions of others, so she situates her independent agency and leadership in the context of her board membership where she takes up shared responsibilities. She is then one part of the shared agency of the board. What is noteworthy here, is that while other trustees remain silent they are fully engaged in the exchange and observed to be listening intently. As there was no intervention, it is not unreasonable to presume that the outcome is satisfactory to the board. By challenging the trustee's initial position, the chair's speech act – ‘We do need to move

on' – is pointing to her capabilities and rights as the individual elected and in charge of the group. There are three consequences of her speech act. First, the trustee repositions the initial storyline from implied to explicit concerns about the applicant's credentials. She does this by questioning the applicant's apparent lack of financial knowledge: 'There is no financial experience or anything on her application form'. Second, the chair recognises that her actions have created a scenario where she needs to break the storyline from financial competence to board experience, which she does: 'I don't know whether she has been a trustee somewhere else or whether she's kept accounts or things'. At this point the trustee repositions the storyline to one of financial competence: 'I don't know but I think before we categorically say right will you be treasurer ... I think we need to find out a bit more about what she actually has done'.

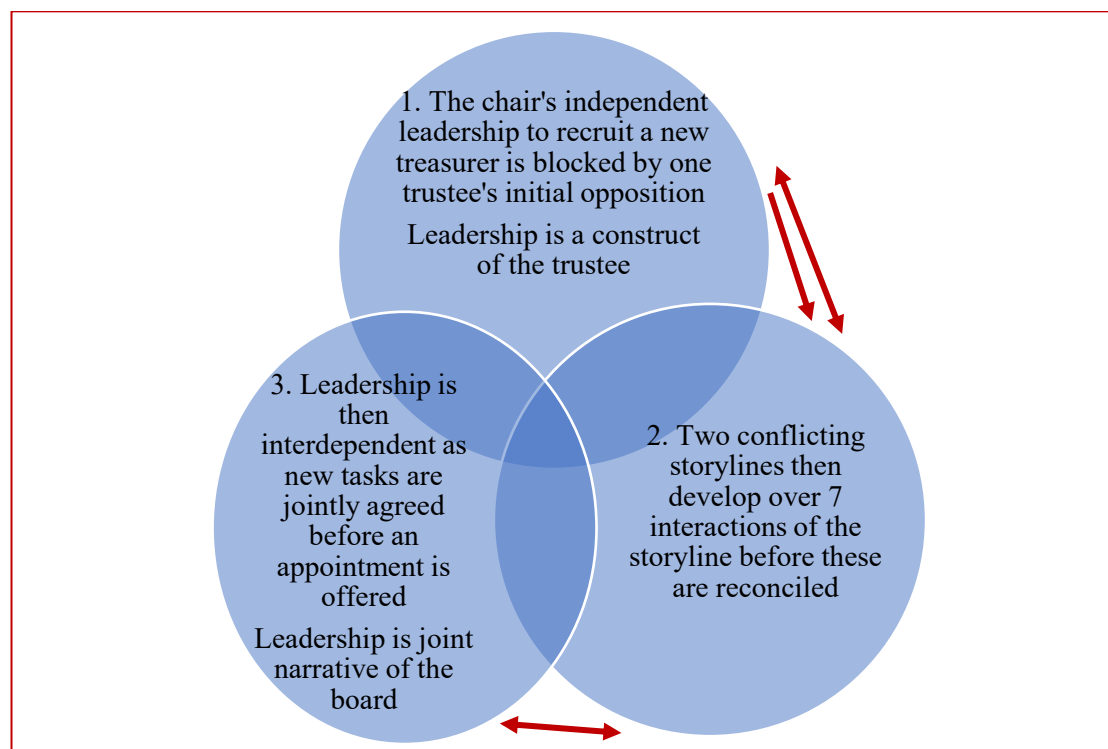
Therefore, the storyline remains a construct of the trustee's individual narrative of the financial competence of the preferred applicant for treasurer. However, the chair is starting to reconcile the contradictory demand of upsizing the board while ensuring the right skills are in place. Thus, she chooses to move from being an independent agent to an interdependent agent as she reaches an agreed position with the trustee at the close of the episode: 'if you can keep books, financial books, you can do the treasurer role. So I'll talk to her'.

The chair's independent initiative to upsize the board resources, outside of the social episode, is strategic. However, in the boardroom, the consequences of the trustee's initial speech act see the chair shifting to interdependent leadership in reconciling contradictory narratives. The trustee's questioning of the chair exercises her agency to construct a counter narrative

of financial competence while also addressing her perception of a discrepancy in recruitment standards. In particular, that the preferred applicant does not meet the required standard to manage the investments held by the charity. Thus, she takes action to reduce this discrepancy by questioning the chair and influencing the outcome.

In summary, this storyline illustrates how attempts at independent leadership, even from an elected position of authority, not only need to be negotiated, but can be blocked, and lead to different outcomes. While interdependent leadership is visible in the chair undertaking a further task before any trustee appointments are made, it is also more nuanced. Interdependent leadership emerges from the moment-to-moment pattern of interactions reconciling two contradictory narratives to reach a joint construct of board decision making, rather than individual actions. This is a noteworthy finding in terms of pattern of interactions in board decision making, which suggest the dynamic nature of leadership. Intriguingly, when characterising the pattern of interaction between independent and interdependent leadership within this vignette, it is distinct from others in this study in that there are competing narratives which are strongly contested then resolved.

Figure 11: Contradictory storylines



Author/02/2022

5.2.7. Storyline ‘the mechanical horse’ (vignette 5)

This board 2 storyline illustrates the secretary’s experience of independent and interdependent leadership action in managing a novel project. Leadership becomes a dynamic process shaped by the complexity of a capital project; the secretary’s proactivity in constructing the narrative of project feasibility; the personal resources of the chair’s knowledge and experience; and interactive board processes to make sense of ‘the ‘mechanical horse’ project.

Context

Following receipt of two large legacies, the board is considering spending significant sums of money on a capital project. If successful, it will help to reduce waiting lists and extend services to wheelchair users, often on waiting lists for long periods due to their weight to horse ratio. The recently appointed secretary is concerned about spending large amounts of money on this project. She didn't speak up in a previous meeting when it was discussed because she was newly appointed and wasn't sure about whether her 'opinion was valid' (interview June 2019). As time went on, she remained concerned, so prepared a feasibility paper for the June 2019 board meeting. In order to reconcile the contradictory demand of needing to express her concern while recognising her lack of knowledge, experience, and tenure in her prepositioned role, she self-assigns agentive powers (Harre, 1985) and takes responsibility for providing a feasibility paper for the board to open discussion on the questions that she is concerned about. This storyline is about not only the secretary's development from novice to influencer, but also how the board navigates decisions with long-term financial implications. Three trustees, the prepositioned chair and secretary, and the trustee responsible for volunteers, jointly construct this storyline.

Interactive sequence

First-order positioning (initial positioning)

Secretary – '... [N]ow I know that potentially we've got three more other members coming on ... is going to be useful. I've got some items under any other business. however I have produced a paper if you want to have a look at it regarding the

mechanical horse. So these are just my tumbled-out thoughts ... we had 'XX's email and I honestly think it's too massive a project ... '.

Second-order positioning (negotiating initial position)

Chair – 'I agree with you if you think that. Having kind of started the process my feeling is that we are looking at two things here. We are looking at a building, a disable friendly building, and we are looking at a 'mechanical horse' and they are actually almost two completely separate projects. So we kind of need to make a decision. My feeling would be – I mean I don't need to read what you have written down ... I think we need to get the legals [federation adviser] tied up. But we certainly need to know what, if we decide to go down the building route, we need find out, work out what [where] XX [stable owners] are within that I think really'.

Second-order positioning (developing initial position)

Secretary – 'I'm sure I've missed hundreds of things from this but I thought I'd jot my thoughts down and whilst they were in my head but I don't know what comes first – these are all questions. I think from my point of view we need to have some commitment from XX [stable owners] ehm and you know to make sure that they are on board'.

Second-order positioning (act of repositioning in a new context)

Trustee 1 – ‘I have my reservations when it comes to just talking now solely about the ‘mechanical horse’ I do have reservations about how much benefit it’s going to be to our group’.

Second-order positioning (continued repositioning of speakers in continuing conversation)

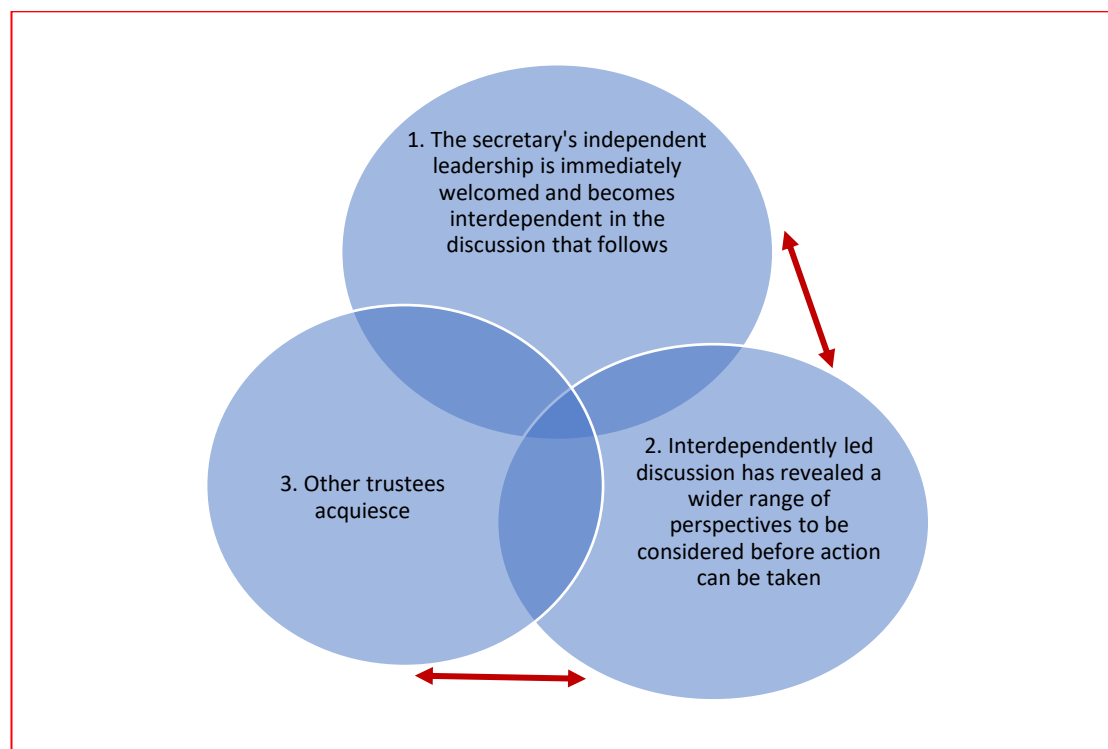
Chair – ‘I think the thing is as a committee, deciding as a committee, if we want to go down this route. That’s the very first thing that we need to decide. Do we want to do this or not?’ I think you are right I think maybe I go away as well and do a bit more research speak to RXX [owner], speak to TXX [federation] with regard to legals’.

Third-order positioning (expanding the repositioning to include additional context)

Secretary – ‘... [A]nd I think that we need to start keeping some records on this because it’s all been done verbally so far ... because you know we need to keep records not just for us but for the future’.

The interactive element of these three trustees shaping the way forward and grappling with this project is not fully conveyed in the following figure, nor is the shifting nature of leadership fully appreciated. The double arrows are intended to convey two real-time dialogues.

Figure 12: Shifting Storyline



Author 02/2022

Interpretation

Having identified the need to express her concern while recognising her lack of knowledge, experience, and tenure in her prepositioned role, the secretary assigns ‘agentive powers’ (Harre, 1995) to herself. Her experience of positioning herself as an independent leader takes the form of leadership action in preparing a feasibility paper for the board around her concerns about the capital project.

Decision making here is observed in the interplay of independent action and interdependent leadership that is a process that develops and becomes a joint construct of the secretary, the chair, and the volunteer trustee. At the start, leadership is a construct of the secretary’s

individual narrative. However, while her role is constitutionally prepositioned, it is her initial positioning act of tacitly assuming the position of expert that she experiences independent leadership action. As a trustee, she holds a cluster of rights and duties that enable her to take this initial positioning act. She takes up responsibility without prompting and aside from her regulatory role in two ways. First, by recognising that board decision making to date had left considerable uncertainty about how to tackle this capital project. Second, by producing a paper that set out her questions that the board had thus far not answered:

‘I have produced a paper if you want to have a look at it regarding the mechanical horse’.

Therefore, she situates herself in the project storyline in a way that distinguishes her position. Moving through the episode, the secretary’s concept of being an independent agent adapts to become interdependent leadership as the perlocutionary effect of her initial speech act prompts action from the chair and one other trustee. This is illustrated in how they each attempt to break the feasibility storyline and reposition it in new contexts where they can take actions to tackle the project. It is at this point that the storyline becomes a construct of the joint narrative of the chair and secretary as the chair negotiates the initial position through a process framed by each turn:

‘I agree with you if you think that...my feeling is that we are looking at two things here. We are looking at a building, a disable friendly building, and we are looking at a ‘mechanical horse’.

The chair is intentionally reshaping the project and tacitly positioning herself as an expert. By breaking the storyline, the chair is pointing to her rights and duties to create a new context for decision making about the project:

‘Maybe I go away as well and do a bit more research speak to xxx [stable owner] speak to xxx [federation specialist] with regard to legals’.

Thus, the chair repositions the storyline in a new context of framing the board’s priorities, This points to her rights and duties as chair. At this point, the storyline is the construct of the chair’s individual narrative, which then becomes shared as the secretary develops the chair’s positioning act to become a precise goal:

‘I think from my point of view we need to have some commitment from RXX [stable owners] ehm and you know to make sure that they are on board’.

This is then taken up by the chair who repositions the storyline:

‘I think the thing is as a committee, deciding as a committee, if we want to go down this route, that’s the very first thing that we need to decide’.

This is then taken up by the secretary:

‘I think that we need to start keeping some records on this because it’s all been done verbally so far ... because you know we need to keep records not just for us but for the future’.

At this point, the perlocutionary effect of the secretary’s initial speech acts on the trustee:

‘I do have reservations about how much benefit it’s going to be to our group’.

Here the trustee is exercising her rights and duties in two ways. First, as a trustee to reposition the storyline in a new context of local moral order of a particular group’s needs. Second, as a rider participant, the trustee holds additional rights and duties. By expressing her reservations about the project, she is recognising that her own actions and that of other trustees have created a specific situation where the complexity of the project is not well understood. Therefore, in reconciling contradictory demands of trustee and wheelchair user, the trustee assigns agentive powers to herself to reposition the storyline in a way to distinguish her position and that of the group she represents from other board members.

Thus the secretary, the chair, and trustee are jointly repositioning the storyline in new contexts of national office legal experts; regulatory compliance; the landowner’s agreement to erect a building on his land; and wheelchair users. These actions are an evaluation of the current state of the project and have potential future implications from the perspectives of the secretary, chair, and trustee who have assigned themselves and accepted responsibility for the project.

In summary, while the secretary’s leadership was hesitant when constitutionally prepositioned, positioning theory offers her, and us as readers, a way to understand her choice to a) exercise independent action; and b) participate in an exchange that shifts and becomes interdependent leadership and the construct of a joint narrative of the chair, the secretary, and trustee in reframing the project by evaluating its magnitude and prioritising tasks. This points to shared leadership (Pearce and Conger, 2003), in that the secretary’s assessment of the project provides a way for the topic to be discussed.

The pattern of leadership here is distinct from vignette 1.2, in that this storyline illustrates how the secretary's attempt at independent leadership is welcomed and interdependent leadership is immediately visible in the evaluative discussion of the project and sharing of tasks going forward. Decisions here are based on specific individual actions to which the others silently acquiesce. These trustees' sense of agency is being influenced by the presence of other agents in the boardroom performing similar tasks at the same time (e.g. attending to an agenda item in a board meeting) (Haggard and Tsikaris, 2009). Thus, the other (silent) trustees visually take their cue from seeing other trustees enacting a similar task, thus judging their agency is 'the same as recognising oneself' (p. 242). Therefore, this demonstrates a recognition of a shifting conception of oneself from being an independent agent judged to be the author of one's action (the general bias) to being part of interdependent leadership agency for these individuals in the absence of alternative storylines. While this exemplifies shared leadership (Pearce and Conger, 2003), it also exemplifies self-leadership (Manz, 1986) as the secretary not only perceives that appropriate feasibility standards are not being met but takes responsibility and action to sort out the discrepancy.

5.3. Conclusion of findings chapter

Findings of this research, elaborated in 13 vignettes of trustees' leadership, show the discursive and social interactions that constitute independent action and interdependent leadership and the ways in which trustees navigate between these two forms of leadership. This chapter explores trustees' experience of leadership drawn from empirical analyses of data. First, in the ways that trustees talk about experiencing leadership in interview; and second, by studying their interactions observed in unfolding storylines of decision-making

episodes in board meetings. In this final section of the chapter, the emphasis is on how those findings relate to the research objectives and questions detailed in sections 1.4 and 1.5 respectively.

1. The first objective of this exploratory study is to advance our understanding of nonprofit board leadership from a constructionist-interpretivist perspective in order to diminish the gap in literature about how board leadership actually works in practice (Cornforth, 2014; Cornforth, 2012; Widmer, 1993).
2. The second objective is to explore the multiple ways in which accountability might occur (Liket and Maas, 2015) aside from accountability to funders (Thompson and Williams, 2014).
3. The third objective is to advance our understanding of the dynamic nature of ‘shared leadership’ (Pearce and Conger, 2003) from an empirical study that employs positioning theory (Harre and Van Langenhove 1999; 1991) to address the gaps in literature resulting from studies which employed student populations and simulation games (He and Hu, 2021; Drescher et al., 2014).
4. The fourth objective is to extend the literature of how position-oriented analysis proceeds at individual and board level by applying positioning theory to genuine empirical analyses (Korobov, 2010). First, in relation to interview data. Second, in relation to sequential analysis of social interactions in the boardroom and by illuminating the strategies that trustees employ to negotiate positions (Deppermann, 2013).

5. The fifth objective is to contribute to innovative methodological and analytical studies by combining an interpretive sense-making case study (Welch et al., 2011, p. 747) combined with a hybrid analytical approach (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006) that employs thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2019); positioning theory (Harre and Van Langenhove, 1999; 1991); and a framework of leadership differentiated by independent action and interdependent leadership (Author 2021).

The overarching research question 'How do individuals in the context of two nonprofit federated boards take up and make sense of leadership and enact accountability?' rests on the following sub-questions which help to build knowledge from three different aspects:

Sub-question 1

What are the individual and shared processes through which leadership is enacted?

Sub-question 2

What are the forms of accountability that trustees draw on to enact independent and interdependent leadership?

Sub-question 3 (two parts)

How can positioning theory help to illuminate the dynamic nature of shared leadership? How does position-oriented analysis proceed at individual and board levels?

The remainder of this section of the chapter is structured to address the three sub-questions in the following ways. First, in trustees' experience of different forms of leadership outside

and inside the boardroom. Second, the different forms of accountability (Knutsen and Brower, 2010) that trustees engage in, in order to discharge regulatory obligations while enacting their commitment to clients in a way that reflects the constitutional purpose and mission of these incorporated charities. Third, the different varieties of positioning (Harre and Van Langenhove, 1991) employed by trustees that illuminate the elusive dynamic nature of shared leadership (Drescher et al., 2014). Additionally, it is argued that positioning illuminates the temporal and nature of leadership in negotiation.

In answering the overarching research question how do individuals in the context of two nonprofit federated boards take up and make sense of leadership and enact accountability? findings are arranged in three sections: forms of leadership, forms of accountability, and forms of positioning (framed by the three sub-questions above).

5.3.1. Forms of leadership

This section addresses the forms of leadership, including the differentiation between independent action and interdependent leadership. This categorisation represents an initial stage in answering sub-question 1 about the processes by which leadership is enacted. The second categorization of archetypes of leadership arises from the innovative/constructive typology in this study. This section starts by looking at independent action.

Independent action

Findings show that trustees fall into two different forms of leadership preoccupation that can be seen in a typology which emerges from the data where trustees can be seen speaking and

exercising agency to act according to the leadership types of ‘innovative agents’ and ‘constructive integrators’ (see section 3.3.1.6, table 8, for more detail.)

Trustees who proactively make things happen by acting as ‘innovative agents’ tend to take up agency and ethical commitment to the social expectations of others. They ascribe to an ethical view of what they should be doing and sometimes take up an external focus, although not exclusively. Contrastingly, trustees who act as ‘constructive integrators’ focus on holding the board to account by ensuring that administrative processes comply with standards and projects (current and future-oriented) are accommodated within established practices of the board. However, trustees’ agency is more fluid than this distinct dichotomy of innovation and integration suggests. A clarifying example of this fluidity can be found in ‘the mechanical horse’ storyline. Here the secretary’s initial independent action takes an innovative approach in tabling a feasibility paper. Her approach later changes when she acts as a ‘constructive integrator’ arguing for better record keeping while simultaneously supporting other innovative board actions to move the project forward. This categorisation of forms of leadership represents an initial stage in answering sub-question 1 about the processes by which leadership is enacted.

Independent action in this study tends to occur at the crossroads of trustees’ taking, assigning, and accepting ‘agentive powers’ and responsibility for a particular task (Harre, 1995). However, accepting this responsibility is often preceded by proactive self-leadership (Manz, 1986) as the individual trustee perceives an internal or external discrepancy in standards (see 2.4.2 for further insight) that require action (Hauschildt and, Konradt 2012). Trustees choose when to act independently (oneself the author of action) and at other times

to understand themselves as part of a collective (self and others as authors of action) (Moore et al., 2012; Haggard and Tsakiris, 2009).

In examples vignette 1 (board 1) and vignettes 1 and 3 (board 2) trustees take up ‘independent action’ while acting as ‘innovative agents’. Contrastingly, in vignette 5 (board 1) the trustee acting as a ‘constructive integrator’ shows that she is part of a collective in the process of resolving volunteers’ concerns. What is noteworthy about these examples is that ‘independent action’ is associated with ‘innovative agents’ in three cases, and interdependent leadership is associated with ‘constructive integrators’ in one case. In all four examples, the trustee concerned is an office bearer; however, what is different is the focus that prompts their proactivity. For example, trustees acting as ‘innovative agents’ are concerned to engage their self-influence with more strategic issues, such as sharing leadership across federation boundaries to allocating funds to geographically competing groups; taking a future perspective on resourcing the board; and mentoring a board member (over time) in governance procedures through knowledge transfer and skills development. In the fourth example, the trustee acting as a ‘constructive integrator’ is concerned to engage her self-influence with more operational issues in resolving volunteers’ concerns as they occur, through integrating accountability across certain trustees and the board. Therefore, while trustees’ independent action tends to be associated with acting as ‘innovative agents’, it is not exclusive to this archetype of leadership and can be taken up by trustees acting as ‘constructive integrators’. However, this is more likely to be associated with triggering an integrative process, as in the illustration of vignette 5 (above).

Interdependent leadership

This section focuses on the interdependent leadership uncovered in dyads outside each boardroom, and in the unfolding micro storylines of decision-making episodes within these boardrooms. Interdependent leadership is diverse in this research; it is found in the sharing of leadership both in dyads of trustees and across the entire board team. In this study, dyads are called teams within teams, and viewed as carrying out the same basic teamwork as that of three or more team members (Kozlowski and Ilgen, 2006). Arguably dyads reflect a minimal form of shared leadership (Pearce and Conger, 2003) that is shaped first by both individuals presenting themselves as agents in taking and assigning, and accepting responsibility for specific tasks (Harre, 1995) before then sharing complementary knowledge and information.

Dyads of trustees working outside the boardroom in both boards have two common features. Each dyad includes an office bearer and a trustee with high level knowledge pertinent to the topic and context within which the board is operating and offers the optimum use of board resources to the advantage of the board. In turn, dyads which include a non-board member tend to show specialist knowledge, professional expertise, and capability to act as a temporary resource for different organizational needs. While trustees who choose to understand themselves as part of a collective (self and others as authors of action) (Moore et al., 2012; Haggard and Tsakiris, 2009) tend to be ‘constructive integrators’, they also demonstrate agency which is more fluid than the distinct dichotomy of innovation and integration suggests.

Dyadic forms of leadership in action outside the boardroom can be found in three vignettes: vignette 5 (board 2) in stage 1, and vignettes 3 and 5 (board 1) in stage 2. The following two vignettes exemplify how dyads formed between trustees, and others external to the board, accomplish tasks.

First, vignette 5 (board 2) offers rare insight into working across federation boundaries (where one member is not on the board). Here the dyad of the board chair and county coach working across federation boundaries take responsibility for the delicate business of transparently apportioning legacy funds to several county groups. They act both as ‘innovative agents’ to develop recommendations which can be approved without further action by the board, and as ‘constructive integrators’, in that they are seeking an equitable distribution of the funds that is acceptable to eight groups. This example illustrates how agency moves from the individuals within the dyad to the board and county committee for authority to implement the proposed decision. In summary, the process starts with the formation of the dyad, followed by a group consultation, then the dyad presents recommendations to the board and federation committee for authority to implement these. Assigning agentive powers are interesting here in that they move within the dyad and outside to two separate organizational structures in achieving agreement.

Second, vignette 3 (board 1) shows three dyads – the chair and deputy, the chair and treasurer, and the treasurer and federation director – delivering a complex tenancy agreement including a commercial opportunity for the charity. This new agreement was approved at the first board meeting following the summer vacation, despite being a complex strategic initiative carrying acknowledged financial risk. This decision was facilitated by dyads

transparently circulating drafts of legal texts and professional advice from within and outside the federation to all board members. This comprehensive backgrounding of the work carried out by these dyads on the board's behalf, made it possible for the board to act swiftly in the context of an expiring tenancy notice.

Other examples of dyads including non-board members, illustrate operational levels. Specifically, vignette 6 (board 2), stage 1, shows the trustee keeping the service running with the help of different dyads of trustees, such as ride organisers and coaches. Notably, the extent of work carried out outside the boardroom echoes the findings of Pugliese, Nicholson and Bezemer (2015) and is discussed in chapter VI.

In bringing this section to a close, focus now turns to the board. Interdependent leadership is also uncovered across both board teams in the unfolding storylines of decision-making episodes in meetings in their boardrooms. It is apparent that trustees employ different forms of leadership in a three-stage negotiation process (see table 36 for detail). For example, in stage 1 of the process, trustees tend to share information and knowledge as part of transparent reporting and priming the board on the topic. In stage 2 trustees' question and clarify information provided in stage 1, while also looking for detailed factual information. In stage 3, trustees in constitutional roles (e.g. chair, treasurer, and secretary) tend to shape the decision and in the process assign responsibility to the board. Conceptualization of how further different forms of leadership are constructed in the negotiation process are explained in chapter VI, based on the positions adopted by trustees in each stage.

Overall findings show that while leadership in this study is both independent and interdependent driven by trustees' agency of taking, assigning, and accepting responsibility

for tasks, it also shifts between the two leadership preoccupations which are distinguished as ‘innovative agent’ and ‘constructive integrator’. It is apparent that both distinctions are useful in describing the range of ways trustees take up leadership in order to help develop a deeper understanding of actual board leadership. In order to illuminate the range of processes through which trustees take up leadership, further conceptualisation based on these categories is provided in the next chapter.

5.3.2. Forms of accountability

There are different forms of accountability at work in this research in addition to the general management and administration of these incorporated charities and taking account of clients’ interests in decision-making episodes in the boardroom in stage 2. Inductive analysis in stage 1 highlights accountability in the form of trustees acting as a ‘responsible charity board member’. As set out in 5.1.3, this term is intended to capture Harre’s (1995) idea that people continually struggle to present themselves (their thoughts and actions) as acceptable within a local moral order which in this study means acting as a ‘responsible charity board member’.

Knutsen and Brower (2010) acknowledge scholars’ acceptance of multiple forms of accountability for nonprofit organisations. However, they argue both instrumental and expressive dimensions of accountability hold particular significance for such organisations, principally in relation to understanding the dynamics of accountability (see section 2.3.3 for characterisation of both dimensions). Drawing on the ideas of Knutsen and Brower (2010), accountability in this study is related to trustees’ leadership preoccupation and the agency which they adopt, where agency is understood as taking and assigning, accepting, and repudiating responsibility for actions (Harre, 1995). This is summarised in the following

table which looks at the relationship between leadership ‘preoccupation’ and the interplay of instrumental and expressive forms of accountability illustrated by individual trustees with the leadership agency that they adopt.

Table 28: Overview of accountability in stage 1 of study

Board 1	Leadership preoccupation	Expressive accountability	Instrumental accountability	Leadership agency
Vignette 1	Innovative agent	High	High	The negotiator
Vignette 2	Innovative agent	High	Moderate	The willing expert
Vignette 5	Constructive integrator	Moderate	High	The guardian of volunteers
Board 2				
Vignette 1	Innovative agent	Moderate	High	The strategist
Vignette 3	Innovative agent	Moderate	High	The investor
Vignette 4	Constructive integrator	Low	Low	The conflicted bystander
Vignette 5	Innovative agent	High	Moderate (includes legal accountability for legacy)	The trustworthy officials
Vignette 6	Constructive integrator	High	High	The custodian of team standards

Author 09/2022

There are three noteworthy points that can be drawn from findings here. First, there is a high commitment to ‘expressive accountability’ to clients, the wider community, and the organisation’s mission in the form of a set of shared values. The control mechanism of shared values is enacted by trustees both as ‘innovative agents’ and ‘constructive integrators’.

Similarly, there is a high ‘instrumental accountability’ to the organisation’s mission through accountability to both internal and external resource suppliers (material and human resource). The control mechanism of reporting to institutions (e.g. The Charity Commission, Companies House and the Federation) and associated monitoring is enacted by trustees both as ‘innovative agents’ and ‘constructive integrators’.

Second, that leadership agency reveals the range of accountable tasks being carried out by trustees. These negotiations with external institutional bodies (schools) include: knowledge transfer at a high level in IT systems; mentoring new trustees; consultation processes about future actions within boards and across federation boundaries; and processing positive and negative feedback about volunteers at dyad and board level. The above overview illustrates the moving parts of accountability; however, there is one further significant point illustrated by these findings.

Third, findings show that how trustees enact accountability is dependent upon the context. This point is well illustrated in ‘the conflicted bystander’ whose commitment to both ‘expressive’ and ‘instrumental accountability’ is ‘low’. Notably, this trustee enacts both forms of accountability at a high level in other vignettes. While there is a faint echo of unproductive conflict here (Deutsch, 1994), this does not fit with the overall commitment to ‘expressive accountability’ illustrated across this board. Therefore, the dilemma facing the trustee is that her experience is shaped by team dynamics rather than her own agency.

In stage 2, accountability in the emerging storylines in the boardroom has two aspects. First, that incumbent trustees of constitutionally prepositioned roles take up their regulatory obligation to perform within the social expectations of their role. For example, the role of

treasurer is required to take particular accountability on behalf of the board for providing governance supervision of the organisation's finances while recognising that trustees are 'individually and jointly responsible for financial decisions' (Hudson, 2017, p. 278). However, part of this process is monitoring enacted by other trustees in their questioning of those in prepositioned roles (e.g. vignette 5 (board 1) and vignette 1.2 (board 2)).

Second, findings show a key aspect of this process of juggling regulatory obligations with social expectations is that prepositioned trustees enact both 'expressive accountability' in the form of a set of shared values together with 'instrumental accountability' to the board in their reporting and priming the board for decision making. Importantly, this process also includes trustees mapping the decisions confronting the board, while simultaneously sharing their provisional thinking.

In relation to sub-question 2 –what are the forms of accountability that trustees draw on to enact independent and interdependent leadership? – by focussing on the relationships between leadership 'preoccupation', the interplay of 'instrumental' and 'expressive' forms of accountability, and the leadership agency adopted by trustees, this study offers new insights of trustees taking responsibility for actions of accountability that are diverse. These are explained in chapters VI and VII.

5.3.3. Forms of positioning

The theoretical focus of 'positioning theory' (PT) in this study makes visible the everyday interactions and discourses through which nonprofit boards construct leadership. Employing PT as an analytical approach enables the study of board leadership as it unfolds inside and

outside the boardroom. As previously mentioned in section 1.3, meetings here are viewed as ‘orderly sequences of meaningful actions ... which seem to have some measure of coherence and structure’ (Harre, 1993, in Hirvonen, 2016, p. 56) that create an arena for positioning that is unlike everyday conversations. The regulatory conventions associated with board meetings are explicit, consequently trustees in prepositioned constitutional roles are not usually challenged on procedure; for example, who has the authority to open the meeting and guide the board’s decision making. However, taking the lens of positioning theory makes visible the multiple positions available and taken up by trustees in storylines.

Findings offer four dimensions with which to understand nonprofit board leadership. First, how trustees construct leadership and take up different positions in forms of talk of experiencing leadership in interview. These are illustrated in three inductively generated themes: applying accountability, engaging with team tensions, and ‘managing resources’. Looking at these three themes together suggests a way of understanding trustees experience of leadership through a deeper explanatory construct of ‘acting as responsible charity board members’ which seems to guide their actions not only in taking up independent leadership action but also when this should become interdependent leadership. Table 26 – Overview of themes, positioning and experience of leadership - provides a helpful guide to vignettes in stage 1. Namely 1, 2 and 5 (board 1) and 1.1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 (board 2).

Second, emerging storylines of ‘seizing a commercial opportunity’ in board 1 (within which there are three micro storylines) and ‘developing a new service’ in board 2 (within which there are two micro storylines) are the outcome of negotiated positions under the umbrellas of these overarching storylines (see figure 4 for detail). These represent both individual and

board team actions arising from the three-stage negotiation process. Findings show how decision-making episodes proceed in unfolding storylines in board meetings. These reflect the dynamic flow of trustees' repositioning storylines, while simultaneously moving between independent action in questioning initial positions adopted by others, and interdependent leadership that is both temporal and temporary in nature, Table 27 – Overview of storylines, positioning and experience of leadership – provides a helpful guide to vignettes in stage 2. Namely 3, 4, and 5 (board 1) in stage 2, and vignettes 1.2 and 2 (board 2) in stage 2).

Third, findings show positioning in relation to how board meetings advance. Prepositioned constitutional roles are seamlessly established in board meetings yet they are accompanied by trustees tacitly assuming expert positions to question their incumbents.

Fourth, findings show how positioning relates to the three-stage negotiation process. Each decision-making episode is interpreted as a single negotiation within the framework of an existing and continuous relationship. It is apparent that trustees adopt a cooperative motivational orientation to sort out perceived incompatibilities in negotiations. This is based on the idea of a positive interest in the welfare of the other individual, as well as their own interests (Deutsch, 1994). See vignette 1.2 (board 2) in stage 2 for a robust challenge to the chair where both the chair and trustee remain oriented towards cooperation throughout this exchange, in spite of their differences. The 'negotiation process' is elaborated upon further in the following discussion chapter (VI).

There are distinct positions adopted by trustees which help to illuminate how diverse and complex it is to take up leadership in nonprofit boards. In other words, trustees adopt a

‘repertoire of socially meaningful acts’ (Harrē and Van Langenhove, 1999, p. 6) in storylines with multiple positions available to them. The forms of positioning in the data frequently assumed by trustees and selected as examples, help us to understand how trustees take up leadership. These are made visible through self-positioning and other-positioning. While some forms are mentioned two or more times by trustees across both boards there are other positions which are rare and compelling. Examples of both frequent and rare forms of positioning are provided in table 29.

Table 29: Forms of positioning

Self-positioning as:	Other-positioning of:
Expert Knowledgeable Acknowledging own rights and duties Independent leader employing proactivity Accepting responsibility Acknowledging personal accountability Pointing to experience of governance Situating self and others in board process e.g. communications between volunteers and board	Institutions e.g. schools, local council, and the board Federation director Office bearers as experts Pointing to other trustees as accountable Situating the board and other trustees as future decision makers Relationally situating two or more people in local moral order – e.g. dyads
Rare forms of positioning	Rare forms of positioning
Consulting others for consent to proceed Explicit positioning of intentions	Assigning agency power to others

Author 11/2022

The orders of positioning employed by trustees in decision-making episodes, illustrated in the following table 30, illuminate a) detailed sequential analysis of authentic social interactions; and b) the strategies employed by trustees to negotiate positions. These make visible the dynamic nature of leadership through the lens of positioning and its fine-grained analysis of interactions.

Table 30: Orders of positioning

First-order positioning (initial positioning)	Second-order positioning	Third-order positioning
Prepositioning constitutional role Prepositioning board system Self-/other-positioning Positioning acts (relationally situating two or more people in local moral order)	Positioning acts (questioning and negotiating prior position) Repositioning the storyline Accountive positioning Performative positioning	Indirect positioning outside the boardroom decision making Accountive positioning Positioning acts
Forms of positioning		
Tacitly constructed positioning of expert	Tacitly constructed position of expert Explicit positioning (Employing pronouns to express agency)	Positioning acts Sharing actions aligned to local moral order

Author /11/2022

In relation to sub-question 3 (two parts) – how can positioning theory help to illuminate the dynamic nature of shared leadership? and how does position-oriented analysis proceed at individual and board level? – analysing positioning of two federated board teams makes visible a) the dynamic aspects of how trustees enact leadership as individuals and as teams in contrast to the static nature of role; b) the discursive practices in which trustees participate and through which meaning is understood in particular storylines; and c) the discursive

practice of presentation that trustees employ to present themselves as agents and their associated actions within an agentic framework (Harre, 1995).

Finally, it shows how board teams negotiate positions in a legally constituted institutional setting of board meetings with apparent local moral orders of commitment to clients that guide action in the storylines of decision-making episodes inside the boardroom and implemented outside it.

Chapter VI Discussion

6.1. Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to advance our understanding of nonprofit federated board leadership by exploring trustees' experience of leadership in talk in interview and in their board interactions. The thesis specifically focusses on how leadership is shared between individuals in a horizontal authority structure, where trustees hold equal rights and responsibility in order to make visible the elusive dynamic nature of shared leadership (Drescher et al., 2014) originally conceptualised by Pearce and Conger (2003).

This constructionist-interpretivist design, relying mainly on interview and observation data from fieldwork, offers an empirical account of nonprofit board leadership based on findings arising from a sensemaking case study (Welch et al., 2011) combined with a hybrid analytical approach developed in this study. This departs from the positivist orientation of much previous research.

This discussion chapter (VI) which completes phase 6 of the Braun and Clarke framework (2019) detailed in the methodology chapter (III), integrates the empirical and theoretical findings of the research. Following this introduction, the chapter is structured as follows.

Section 6.2 introduces the proposed framework of board leadership developed in this study by explaining the different elements and how they interact with one another. The section conceptually relates agency as a discursive presentation: the practice of accountability and positioning through which insights on board leadership are made visible.

Section 6.3 focuses on leadership outside the boardroom. It sets out the puzzle that has emerged from this research, which needs to be explained, drawing on selected exemplars from trustees' talk in interview. The discussion builds on the findings, detailed in some depth in the previous chapter (V). The purpose here, however, is (1) to integrate empirical findings with knowledge from different aspects framed by the research sub-questions and the concepts of interest reviewed in chapter (II); and (2) to advance our understanding posed by the overarching research question – how do individuals in the context of two nonprofit federated boards take up and make sense of leadership and enact accountability? – which is assisted by three sub-questions: what are the individual and shared processes through which leadership is enacted? what are the forms of accountability that trustees draw on to enact independent and interdependent leadership? and the two-part question how can positioning theory help to illuminate the dynamic nature of shared leadership and how does position-oriented analysis proceed at individual and board level?.

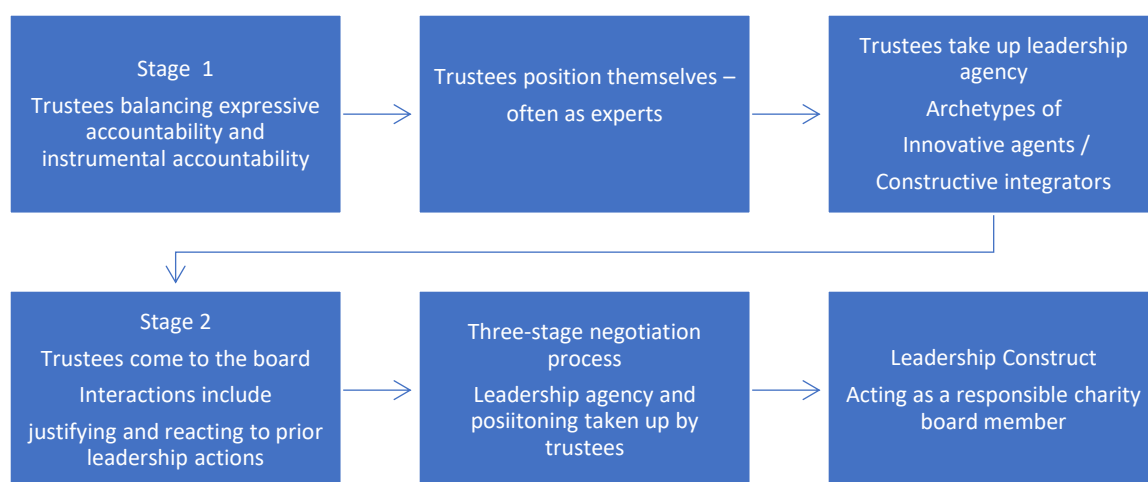
Section 6.4 focuses on leadership inside the boardroom. It introduces the three-stage negotiation process by which individual and collective leadership are negotiated in decision-making episodes of emerging storylines from observation of three board meetings. These reflect both strategic and operational agenda items on which decisions were reached.

6.2. Board leadership framework

The proposed board leadership framework developed in this research accomplishes two purposes. First, it integrates the individual and team aspects; second, it conceptually relates the elements of agency as a discursive presentation and the practice of accountability with the lens of positioning. Together these provide insight into the 'shared' leadership of two

teams that constitute trustee boards with the purpose of answering the research questions. Insights of trustees' experience of leadership in talk enacted outside the board room; and the importance of board interactions leading to collective leadership enacted inside the board room are discussed in sections 6.3 and 6.4 respectively.

Figure 13: Board leadership framework



Author 04/2022

The above framework of board leadership aside from connecting the different elements, indicates the explanatory flow developed in this study for understanding how people enact and experience leadership. Notably the framework concludes with the deeper construct of ‘Acting as a responsible charity board member’ (Author, 2021). It is this kind of overall positioning that shapes other kinds of positions that people may take up. Arguably the term captures Harre’s idea (1995) that people continually struggle to present themselves (their thoughts and actions) as acceptable within a local moral order.

6.2.1. Two forms of accountability

In this study, the interview protocol (appendix 1) invites participants to consider their board's approach to accountability to stakeholders (question 5 of 'board goals'). Notwithstanding this invitation, accountability in this research is notably the most spontaneous and pervasive theme talked about by trustees in stage 1 when interviewed about their/the board's leadership. As previously detailed in section 5.1.3 findings make visible trustees' experience of leadership in forms of talk in interview from different aspects with which to understand nonprofit board leadership. These are illustrated in three inductively generated themes: applying accountability, engaging with team tensions, and managing resources.

Combining the archetypes of 'innovative agent' and 'constructive integrator' with the concept of accountability, makes visible the range and complexity of leadership positions that trustees can find themselves in. They also uncover the patterns of leadership that emerge when accountability is integrated with leadership agency and positioning. These patterns are illustrated in table 31 (below).

Table 31: Accountability positioning and type of agency

Participant Vignette No.	Main focus External / Internal /Combined	Expressive accountability	Instrumental accountability	Key aspects of positioning	Nature of leadership agency
Board 1					
Chair V1	Innovative agent	High	High	Self-positioning as responsible	The negotiator Leadership jointly driven by expressive

	External and internal focus high			Other-positioning of schools; riders and their carers to share responsibility	accountability to the mission and pivoting between moving parts of the safeguarding system
Director FR V2	Innovative agent Internal focus high	High	Moderate	Tacitly positions self as expert Other-positioning: gives director authority Board as responsible	The willing expert. Leadership driven by commitment to mission and high level knowledge
Secretary V5	Constructive integrator External focus high	Moderate	High	Self-positioning as accountable Other-positioning of chair and board as accountable	The guardian of volunteers Leadership driven by recognising the moving parts of accountability and when to escalate issues to the board
Board 2					
Treasurer V1	Innovative agent High External focus high	Moderate	High	Self-positioning as experienced chair Explicit positioning of intention to appoint identified applicants	The Strategist leadership driven by constitutional regulation regarding board and the resources required to perform in future
Retiring chair V3	Innovative agent	Moderate	High	Self-positioning as governance	The Investor leadership driven by

	Combined internal and external focus External focus high			expert in accountability	pivoting between commitment to mission and governance responsibility for individuals, board, and membership
Treasurer V4	Constructive integrator Moderate Combined Internal and external focus low	Low	Low	Third order positioning (speaking of someone who is not present) Accountive positioning Other- positioning of the chair, trustee 2, and the board team	The Conflicted bystander Leadership dilemma driven by alignment to self-regulation of an established team and the innovation of one member rather than a new chair
Chair V5	Innovative agent Combined external and internal focus External focus high	High	Moderate (includes legal accountability to terms of the legacy)	Tacitly constructed positioning of chair and coach as experts	The trustworthy officials Leadership driven by joint accountability to the multiple communities in two different structures
Co- ordinating trustee V6	Constructive integrator Combined internal and external focus high	High	High	Self- positioning as responsible for volunteer administration	The custodian of team standards Leadership driven by accountability to the moving parts of the volunteer administration system

Legend – strength of commitment to different accountability: high, moderate, or low.

The external/internal focus corresponds to outside or inside the boardroom. Author 03/2022

Knutsen and Brower (2010) acknowledge the complexity of multiple accountability for nonprofit organisations which they distinguish in two forms. First, ‘instrumental accountability’ to the organisation’s resource suppliers such as funders and control mechanisms of reporting and monitoring. Second, ‘expressive accountability’, the organisation’s accountability to the community, the organisation mission, and its clients. This study explored accountability in research objective 1.4/2. Findings indicate that trustees are balancing multiple forms of both ‘instrumental’ and ‘expressive’ accountability.

6.2.2. Two forms of leadership agency

Leadership agency of trustees common to both boards show that trustees take up two archetypes of leadership. First, those who proactively make things happen aligned to ideas of accountability by acting as an ‘innovative agent’. Such trustees take up agency and ethical commitment to meet social expectations of others. They do this out of ascribing to an ethical view of what they should be doing and tend to be externally focused, although not exclusively. Second, there are those who act as a ‘constructive integrator’. Such trustees essentially hold the board to account by ensuring that tasks and projects are accommodated within established practices of the board and contemporary contingencies. Interestingly, findings show that trustees can switch between these different forms of leadership agency, and shift their focus on innovation or integration over time as they navigate unfolding contexts.

Leadership archetypes are understood first, through the concept of agency as a discursive presentation (Harre, 1995). These representations of different kinds of agency are consistent with the idea of agency as a discursive presentation, which has been central to the

development of positioning theory. Second, they are anchored in the agentic picture of the concept of ‘person’ as ‘active beings using all sorts of tools including their own brains, for carrying on their life projects according to local norms and standards’ (Harre, 1999, p. 43). In this study both are helpful in focussing on what individual trustees are actually doing, ‘in context and in the full concreteness of their situation’ (Harre, 1995, p. 136).

Table 32: Differentiating archetypes of leadership

Archetype of leadership	Characteristics
Innovative agent	<p>Orientation towards the mission</p> <p>Mainly external or internal focus – can be both</p> <p>Inclination towards opportunity</p> <p>Independence within the board</p> <p>Agency – self-assigns agentic powers and accepts responsibility for actions</p>
Constructive integrator	<p>Orientation towards process and regulation</p> <p>Mainly internal focus – can be both</p> <p>Inclination towards risk avoidance</p> <p>Holds the board to account</p> <p>Agency – Accepts agentic powers and assigned responsibility by others</p>

Author 06/2022

6.2.3. Forms of positioning

As previously explained in chapter II, section 2.4.4, the concept of positioning is defined in three ways. First, a dynamic alternative to the static concept of role. Second, the discursive construction of personal stories that make someone's actions intelligible and within which other members of a conversation have available places. Third, individuals can take up places within a moral order defined as the cluster of rights and duties associated with particular positions embedded in a storyline (Harré and Van Langenhove, 1991). In the above framework, the dynamic nature of positioning interacts with both concepts of leadership agency and accountability as they unfold, move, and are negotiated, thus sustaining a dynamic picture of leadership. Employing positioning in this study makes visible the everyday interactions and discourses through which trustees construct leadership outside and inside the boardroom.

6.2.4. Negotiating leadership in meetings

Board meetings in this study are considered as social episodes within a particular structure and systematic sequences of consequential actions that are distinct from everyday conversations (Hirvonen, 2016, drawing on Harre, 1993). Similar to prepositioned roles of elected office bearers, the conventions of board meetings are predetermined by the constitution. In this section, the framework illustrates the relationship between positioning, the three-stage 'negotiation process' (introduced in chapter 5 section 5.4.1), and the mechanics of the board working through the decision-making episodes of the emerging storylines (summarised in table 35). Here the study focuses on how trustees negotiate different positions in decision-making episodes, and navigate board relations through

discursive practices which address the research questions in chapter I. Table 36 illustrates positions taken up by trustees in the three-stage negotiation. An underlying principle at work across all patterns of negotiation is that of boards working together to ensure shared understanding.

6.2.5. How elements of the framework interact

As set out in 5.1.3, accountability in this study means ‘acting as a responsible charity board member’ (Author, 2021). It is a key element in the leadership framework in that it is this kind of overall positioning that shapes other kinds of positions that people may take up. In this thesis it is argued that this term captures Harre’s idea (1995) that people continually struggle to present themselves (their thoughts and actions) as acceptable within a local moral order. It could be considered the start of a dynamic process of leadership in and of itself. The framework represents how this unfolds. First, a perception of, or positioning in relation to a form of accountability prompts leadership action. Second, trustees then adopt a form of leadership agency by positioning themselves as acting independently as an ‘innovative agent’ or interdependently as a ‘constructive integrator’. Trustees then employ self-/other-positioning to assign, accept, or repudiate responsibility for the task. Whichever form of leadership agency is adopted when it comes to the boardroom, trustees justify and negotiate implementing prior leadership actions outside the boardroom. The final subsection of explaining the framework moves inside the boardroom to focus on the ‘three-stage negotiation process’.

6.3. Integrating findings with theory – outside the boardroom

This section focuses on integrating empirical findings from outside the boardroom with the nonprofit board literature and the concepts of interest reviewed in chapter II. The discussion builds on the findings, detailed in some depth in chapter V, summarised as forms of leadership, forms of accountability, and forms of positioning in section 5.3.1. It explains the more detailed forms of leadership in table 31 in terms of the two leadership archetypes, forms of accountability, and positioning. To do this, it distinguishes how the concepts of interest reviewed in chapter II interact with these findings so as to integrate knowledge from different aspects of the leadership framework in section 6.2 (above). The section proceeds as follows. First, it distinguishes the archetypes of leadership developed in this study then discusses how they interact with different ‘forms of accountability’ and various ‘forms of positioning’ made visible in chapter V.

It is apparent from findings, interpreted by inductive and abductive modes of logic, that noteworthy and multiple forms of leadership leading to important decisions take place outside the boardroom in addition to interactions within the boardroom. The extent of leadership activity outside the boardroom is surprising and supports findings of Pugliese, Nicholson and Bezemer (2015) who adopt similar methods to the present study. Multiple forms of leadership originate with individuals, dyads of trustees, dyads of trustees and federation actors, and team influence which immediately sets up the distinction between independent action and interdependent leadership. It is common across these forms of leadership that trustees take and assign, and accept responsibility for actions (Harre, 1995). However, in terms of implementing decisions, while trustees can progress these outside the

boardroom, the final decision is negotiated face to face in board decision-making episodes (see section 6.4).

Characteristics of archetypes are summarised in table 32 in section 6.2.2. Notably, an important idea reflected in the findings is that trustees can shift their focus on innovation or integration over time as they navigate different unfolding contexts.

What needs to be explained in this research is the pull between individual action taken up by trustees and the interdependent leadership of the board. While independent action is welcomed by the board, it has to be justified or negotiated in subsequent board meetings. In turn, the interdependent leadership of the board rests on its willingness ‘to rely on leadership by multiple team members’ (Mielonen, 2011, p. 214).

In this section, it is argued that findings outside the boardroom, taken together, advance our understanding of trustees’ experience of leadership through a deeper explanatory construct of trustees ‘acting as responsible charity board members’ which seems to guide them not only in taking up independent leadership action but also positioning themselves when this should become interdependent leadership (Author, 2021). This dilemma is well-illustrated in the ‘conflicted bystander’.

It is argued that part of the reason for this pull between different forms of leadership is the unfolding context. Therefore, while transparent accountability to funders (Thompson and Williams, 2014) is well recognised, for boards relying on donors and occasional legacies, there are multiple other ways in which boards need to be accountable. Despite this concern

there is lack of empirical work about how nonprofit boards actually function in practice (Cornforth 2014, 2012), and by implication the means by which they are accountable.

By way of an orientation to section 6.3, table 33 (below) performs two functions. First, it shows the elements of the leadership framework interacting. Second, it illustrates the patterns of leadership that have emerged by applying the archetypes of ‘innovative agent’ and ‘constructive integrator’ to trustees’ accountability, informed by positioning. In this study, board effectiveness is viewed as closely aligned to accountability, rather than the preoccupation of forecasting the financial health of an organisation (Hodge and Piccolo, 2011). Table 33 in section 6.3.1 integrates forms of accountability with literature, including a tabled overview of accountability and leadership agency.

6.3.1. Forms of accountability

This section focuses on integrating findings of the leadership archetypes of ‘innovative agent’ and ‘constructive integrator’ with the concept of accountability with the purpose of making visible the range of accountability and positions that trustees can find themselves in.

The second research objective set out in chapter I, 1.4, number 2, explores the multiple ways in which accountability might occur (Liket and Maas, 2015) aside from accountability to funders (Thompson and Williams, 2014). To this end, the study employs the research question: what are the forms of accountability that trustees draw on to enact independent and interdependent leadership? It is apparent that there are different forms of accountability at work in this research in addition to the general management and administration of these incorporated charities.

As set out in the literature review chapter (II), section 2.3.2, there are different ways to differentiate accountability (e.g. Kearns, 1994; Morrison and Salipante, 2007). However, given increasing demand for transparent accountability, this study looks to the ideas of Knutsen and Brower (2010) to understand the multiple forms of dynamic accountability enacted in these nonprofit boards.

Nonprofit accountability differentiated as ‘expressive accountability’ is characterised as value-oriented to the benefit of the community, mission, and patrons, and ‘instrumental accountability’ is characterised as outcome oriented to the benefit of resource providers such as donors and government. The paradox is that ‘expressive accountability’ is self-imposed responsibility to the community, drawing on three normative dynamics: political values, religious beliefs, and service philosophy. However, no external ‘accounter’ demands these expressive accountabilities, although the beneficiaries can be the community and patrons. Therefore, organisations balancing multiple accountabilities are vulnerable, resulting from the lack of direct enforcement mechanisms. Essentially, no external mechanism will explicitly require expressive accountability from an organisation if the organisation itself does not embrace such a form of accountability (Knutsen and Brower, 2010, p. 600). Findings indicate trustees balancing multiple forms of both ‘instrumental’ and ‘expressive’ accountability. It is argued that this resonates with the idea of a ‘service philosophy’ (Knutsen and Brower, 2010) underpinning the more dynamic nature of accountability found in trustees balancing clients’ interests along with federation and regulatory requirements.

The leadership activity of trustees acting as ‘innovative agents’ is explained by different forms of accountability. For example, trustees’ ‘expressive accountability’ to clients and

their carers is widespread and helps us to understand how accountability works in these boards. While ‘instrumental accountability’ is present in the accountability to the federation. in terms of their membership agreement, this is not considered as upward accountability (Knutsen and Brower, 2010) given that each board is an independent charity. However, reporting to external entities, such as Companies House and the Charity Commission, is considered as upward accountability in terms of legal reporting and charitable purpose regulation. Inductive analysis shows accountability in the form of trustees acting as a ‘responsible charity board member’ outside the boardroom (Author, 2021). The following overview indicates multiple accountability framed by leadership agency.

Table 33: Overview of multiple accountability and leadership agency

Form of accountability	Innovative agents (5) (innovators)	Constructive integrators (3) (integrators)
Expressive accountability	High commitment (3) Moderate commitment (2)	High commitment (1) Moderate commitment (1) Low commitment (1)
Instrumental accountability	High commitment (3) Moderate commitment (2)	High commitment (2) Low commitment (1)

Author 03/2022

In bringing out the similarities and differences between the various ‘innovator’ and ‘integrator’ examples, it is noteworthy that there is one illustration in each archetype where both high commitment to ‘expressive accountability’ and ‘instrumental accountability’ is indicated. These are ‘the negotiator’ in board 1 and ‘the custodian of team standards’ in board 2. The other variations bring out the influence of the particular context. For example, in ‘the willing expert’ ‘instrumental accountability’ is reflected as moderate. It is argued that

this is a reflection of the trustee's recent appointment and the narrow focus of his responsibility for fundraising in this portfolio board. However, his expressive accountability is high, influenced 1) by his shared values with the board in that he is a client parent, and 2) sharing his translatable knowledge in developing a new online fundraising system for the board and supporting trustees in how to navigate the new system.

In this research, expressive accountability to the community being served relates to the client riders and their carers. It tends to drive leadership activity, and in so doing, it illustrates trustees' commitment to the mission of the organisation and accountability to their clients. In four out of five exemplars 'innovative agents' are empowered by their prepositioned role combined with 'expressive accountability' (Knutsen and Brower, 2010). However, while 'expressive accountability' is present in each case, its strength varies. In two cases it is interpreted as a high commitment. However, it is interpreted as a moderate commitment in two other cases (vignette 1, 'treasurer' and vignette 3, 'retiring chair' in board 2). These exemplars also reflect a high commitment to 'instrumental accountability'. It is argued that the dominance of 'instrumental accountability' here is due to the particular internal focus and the community being served. Namely, the board and group members attending the Annual General Meeting members rather than the wider community of the client riders and their carers. Furthermore, 'expressive accountability' in these examples is sometimes combined with the construct of self-leadership (Manz, 1986): the idea that individuals and teams self-regulate, and that proactivity is conceptualised as the active initiation of change. (Hauschildt and Konradt, 2012). Trustees' action stems from recognising situations that require 'self-starting future-oriented action' with the aim to change the situation. It is argued that the underlying principle is trustees' focus on balancing sustainability and safeguarding

with financial probity which typifies trustees' proactivity outside the boardroom. Assigning and accepting personal responsibility is a key element of not only what it means to act as an 'innovative agent' or 'constructive integrator' but also recognising when different forms of accountability are required or might be helpful.

The leadership activity of trustees acting as 'innovative agents' and 'constructive integrators' is explained by different forms of accountability. For example, trustees' 'expressive accountability' to clients and their carers is widespread and helps us to understand how accountability works in these boards. While 'instrumental accountability' is present in the accountability to the federation in terms of their membership agreement, this is not considered as upward accountability (Knutsen and Brower, 2010) given that each board is an independent charity. However, this reporting to external entities such as Companies House and the Charity Commission is considered as upward accountability in terms of legal reporting and charitable purpose regulation. Inductive analysis in stage 1 shows accountability in the form of trustees acting as a 'responsible charity board member' (Author, 2021).

6.3.2. Forms of leadership – innovative agents

The discussion is framed by research sub-question 1: what are the individual and shared processes through which leadership is enacted? As described in section 6.2.1, trustees take up two archetypes of leadership agency aligned to accountability. Findings make visible trustees taking up leadership agency as 'innovative agents' or 'constructive integrators' and sometimes both. Trustees acting as 'innovative agents' tend to be focussed externally on the organisation's mission; however, they can also take an internal focus on process and

regulation and sometimes switch between the two. This section now sets out some further differentiation of trustees taking up leadership agency within the categories of ‘innovative agent’ and ‘constructive integrator’, as already introduced on the basis of the vignettes analysed. These more detailed forms of leadership are summarised in table 34 (below).

Table 34: Type of leadership agency

Innovative agents	Constructive integrators
The negotiator The willing expert The strategist The investor The trustworthy officials	The guardian of volunteers The conflicted bystander The custodian of team standards

Author 04/2022

Trustees’ agency is, however, more fluid than this distinct dichotomy of innovation and integration suggests, in that trustees shift between the two archetypes. In particular, although highly independent leadership action tends to take an external focus it can be combined with, or triggered by an internal focus as in ‘the investor’. Often it occurs at the crossroads of trustees’ self-assigning, and accepting ‘agentive powers’ and responsibility for a particular task (Harre, 1995) while enacting self-leadership (Manz, 1986). In this study, trustees acting as ‘innovative agents’ are characterised as focussing on the board’s mission. Innovation flows from the trustee’s perception of a situation or standard that requires proactive action to remedy the situation (Hauschildt and Konradt, 2012; Manz, 1986). This employs a way of

thinking that seeks to make new connections, reach across organisational boundaries, and bring practices together in different ways.

The construct of self-leadership is present across the dataset. It is illustrated in trustees' leadership actions that are both externally and internally focussed and relates to forms of accountability and trustees' positioning. While individual leadership action can be driven by a trustee's sense of personal responsibility, given that the chairs of the participating boards are responsible for all governance processes (Hudson, 2017), findings show that independent action can situate their boards in external systems of governance and influence on future-oriented activity.

This idea of boards functioning in wider systems resonates with Cornforth (2012). Exemplars of 'the negotiator' and 'the trustworthy officials' illustrate two prepositioned chairs reaching outside their boards to share accountability for complex tasks. Here both chairs' leadership of acting as 'innovative agents' is combined with the concept of self-leadership (Manz, 1986) with the purpose of enacting both 'expressive' and 'instrumental accountability' (Knutsen and Brower, 2010).

It is apparent from findings that these chairs are driven by self-leadership with the purpose of influencing external systems and decision makers across organisation boundaries. In vignette 1 (board 1), the chair is attempting to integrate resources, practices and accountability of the charity with those of residential schools to influence standards of risk assessments. In vignette 5 (board 2), the chair forms a dyad with a federation county coach to create a transparent solution to allocate funds across organisation boundaries. To achieve their goals, however, both chairs recognise that they can control only part of the process

(Haggard and Tsikaris, 2009) and other actors influence the decision. For example, the proposed decision in vignette 5 is put before the board for a final decision. A wider picture of leadership agency interacting with accountability can be found in table 28.

There are three concepts at work in these illustrations. First, these chairs illustrate different dimensions of agency that enable them to reach outside their boards to engage with external actors. In terms of Harre's agentic framework (1995), they assign 'agentive powers' (p. 123) to others to share leadership and accountability for the leadership actions they are proposing which include jointly agreeing solutions. Second self-leadership helps us to understand chairs' leadership in perceiving a problem that needs to be solved followed by their self-influence to put strategies in place to address what has to be done (Manz, 1992; 1986). Furthermore understanding chairs' independence in reaching out to work across organisation boundaries makes visible proactivity theorized in self-leadership (Hauschildt and Konradt, 2012). In particular the idea that individuals or teams self-regulate (see 'constructive integrators' for team influence). Third, findings resonate with the concept of positioning (Harré and Van Langenhove, 1999; 1991) in that they are dynamic in their action and the discursive construction of personal stories make trustees actions intelligible and visible. Particularly, the positions available to 'other participants of the conversation' and what it means to take up a position (Davies and Harre, 1990, p. 262).

It is argued that both chairs' leadership is based on their sense-making of carrying out their roles in accordance with taking up places within a moral order associated with particular positions embedded in a storyline. In this research, the local moral order is that of an overall guiding position of acting as a 'responsible charity board member' (Author, 2021) who (1)

perceives that standards or prosocial behaviour can be met through their self-influence in putting together strategies to address any actual or potential discrepancy in standards (Manz, 1986); and (2) by initiating actions that accept responsibility for future accountability (Harre, 1995). Notably, both chairs simultaneously enact instrumental and expressive accountability in their respective boards (Knutsen and Brower, 2010). In particular, vignette 1 (board 1) shows the chair adhering to external federation requirements, while also seeking to construct accountability goals in a dialogue with schools which can be defined as external stakeholders (Williams and Taylor, 2013). The dyad in vignette 5 (board 2) creates a transparent method of allocating legacy funds to several groups in the county with the purpose that there is full accountability across two structures. First, to the chair's board and second, to the county committee of the 'UK Federation', illustrating that the dimensions of 'instrumental accountability' can be compatible with 'expressive accountability' rather than accepting the idea that it is invariably imposed upon it, as discussed by Knutsen and Brower, 2010).

Turning now to an internal focus, it is notable that trustees' acting as 'innovative agents', for example, 'the willing expert' and 'the investor', while taking an internal focus are similar in that they also assign themselves agentive powers and exercise proactive self-leadership to evaluate present circumstances and set future direction. These two exemplars make visible innovation that is driven by trustees sharing translatable knowledge and expertise with other board members. This resonates with (1) the concept of self-leadership, particularly self-influence (Manz, 1986); and (2) shared leadership (Pearce and Conger, 2003) as 'an emergent state where team members collectively lead each other' (Avolio et al., 2009, p. 421

In conclusion this section offers empirical data from two top teams in context. It makes visible the extent of leadership activity outside the boardroom, echoing the findings of Pugliese, Nicholson and Bezemer (2015). In particular, the part played by dyads reflects a minimal form of shared leadership. The archetype of ‘innovative agent’ makes visible self-leadership and the important part it can play externally and internally through capable proactivity by individuals. Overall, this section makes visible trustees ‘acting as responsible charity board members’ by integrating findings from ‘innovative agents’. Contrastingly, the next section, 6.3.3, integrates findings from ‘constructive integrators’.

6.3.3. Forms of leadership – ‘constructive integrators’

Findings show that it is common in both boards for trustees to take and assign agentic powers to themselves and ‘others’ (Harre, 1995) and accept responsibility for tasks employing both archetypes of leadership. However, the extent to which ‘others’ accept or repudiate agentic powers assigned to them is opaque. In contrast to the previous section trustees here experience leadership as a ‘constructive integrator’. Similar to the archetype of ‘innovative agent’ the term ‘constructive integrator’ is intended to capture Harre’s (1995) idea that people continually struggle to present themselves (their thoughts and actions) as acceptable within a local moral order of ‘acting as responsible charity board members’. ‘Constructive integrators’ are orientated to process and regulation rather than the group’s mission, as in the case of ‘innovative agents’.

While trustees’ independent action tends to be associated with acting as ‘innovative agents’ and interdependent leadership is associated with ‘constructive integrators’, they are not exclusive to these archetypes of leadership. Therefore, independent action can be taken up

by trustees acting as ‘constructive integrators’ and vice versa. What seems different is the focus that prompts their proactivity. While highly independent ‘innovative agents’ tend to influence more strategic issues, ‘constructive integrators’ are concerned with operational processes. Here trustees take up both independent and dyadic forms of leadership that draw attention to the temporary nature of sharing leadership outside the boardroom.

The following exemplars of vignette 5, ‘the guardian of volunteers’ (board 1) and vignette 6 ‘the custodian of team standards’ (board 2), are similar in that enacting leadership is internally focussed and concerned with volunteers’ wellbeing and operating needs. The significance of trustees being prepared to carry out hands-on independent leadership in both these volunteer-led boards is apparent from individuals’ accounts of daily/weekly operational activities outside the boardroom. These exemplars make visible what it means to be ‘a responsible charity board member’, exercising this form of leadership agency (Author, 2021). Specifically, trustees present themselves as agents personally responsible for volunteer communications and systems of administration. In the words of Harre (1995), ‘Taking responsibility for an action is something I do, not something I know or discover about myself’ (p. 124).

Vignette 5 (board 1) makes visible the idea that trustees can take up temporary orientations to agency which they reinvent as they navigate different unfolding contexts, such as when volunteers are unable to attend giving short notice. Findings show the temporary nature of dyads and by implication a minimal form of shared leadership (Pearce and Conger, 2003) which is focussed on addressing present-oriented (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998) volunteer issues. The dyad of the chair and secretary are responding to changing circumstances to solve

problems that are operational and where the process is (1) familiar and recurring; (2) supported by complementary skills in equine and business knowledge; and (3) in the context of established board communications.

What is significant here, is that while the dyad is empowered by their prepositioned roles of chair and secretary, findings show that it is the secretary's positioning that makes visible interdependent leadership. For example, her deliberate self-positioning and deliberate other-positioning of the chair in the dyad; the indirect positioning of the volunteer trustee as responsible; and the board locates them in a scenario of caring for volunteers. The secretary here accepts the agentic powers assigned to her by the chair and takes responsibility for problem solving volunteers' email queries, working independently and at other times in a dyad with the chair. Her self-positioning and other-positioning of the chair locates them in a dyad of sharing leadership, accepting personal responsibility for addressing volunteers' concerns with the purpose of ensuring that the board retains volunteers. This claim is supported in transcripts of other trustee interviews. The secretary resolves volunteers' concerns in three ways. First, independently as they occur; second, as part of the dyad with the chair; and third, in reporting to the board. However, it is in her self-positioning (Harre and Van Langenhove, 1999; 1991) that findings point to her taking personal responsibility for tasks and the temporary nature of leadership that emerges as she responds to volunteers' email queries by working independently and at other times in a dyad with the chair. For example, she states 'if somebody might make a comment that they were unhappy about something then that would be something that AXX [chair] and I would be accountable for'. Here the secretary accepts agentic powers assigned by the chair (Harre, 1995). However, she also positions herself as part of a collective ('self' and others as authors of action)

(Moore, et al., 2012; Haggard and Tsakiris, 2009) when she assigns agentive powers to the volunteer trustee to take up particular responsibility for safety and maintaining relationships with volunteers. This is exemplified when she states, ‘we have a volunteer trustee – it’s her responsibility to talk to the volunteers ... make sure they have been through safeguarding’. Her other-positioning of the board as the control mechanism for volunteer issues is a form of ‘instrumental accountability’ which she is adhering to. This exemplar points towards shared leadership (Pearce and Conger, 2003) in that the secretary enacts different forms of leadership; for example, by independently influencing others, by taking up leadership responsibility as part of a dyad with the chair, and by acting in accordance with the board’s discursive practices.

In vignette 6 (board 2) the trustee volunteer co-ordinator is directly engaged in allocating circa 96 volunteers on a daily basis in the manner of a commercial recruitment agency ‘temporary staff desk’. What is significant here is how trustees in non prepositioned roles position themselves to take personal responsibility (and accountability) for internal administrative processes for volunteers, either independently or in dyads. For example, the trustee responsible for volunteers has assigned and accepted agentive powers and accepts responsibility for actions associated with updating the central data base system of administering volunteers: ‘I’m responsible ... I am not going to pretend that it’s an easy role because it isn’t’.

However, she also employs deliberate other-positioning of ride organisers to provide timely information for the system. This claim is supported in interview transcripts of other trustees who are called upon to form ad hoc dyads of leadership at the ‘drop of a hat’.

Monitoring the processes that keep services running is at the heart of what it means to act as a 'responsible charity board member' in board 2. For example, securing a 'disclosure and barring service' (DBS) check for each volunteer to enable them to work with vulnerable adults and children is a form of instrumental accountability (Knutsen and Brower, 2010) by observing the control mechanism of onboarding volunteers and associated reporting not only to the board but also legal entities. Trustees and volunteers exercise a minimal form of shared leadership in dyads, often put together at the 'drop of a hat' and empowered by their own agency and 'expressive accountability' to the community (Knutsen and Brower, 2010) of volunteers.

These exemplars show the temporary nature of individual leadership and dyadic forms of leadership conceptualised as a minimal form of shared leadership (Pearce and Conger, 2003) which is focussed on addressing present-oriented volunteer issues (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). In so doing, they are responding to changing circumstances to solve problems that are operational and where the process is (1) familiar and recurring; (2) supported by complementary skills in equine and business knowledge; and (3) established board communications.

Multiple forms of leadership and accountability are demonstrated by both boards related to volunteers and influenced by their respective contexts (Studer, 2016; O'Toole and Grey 2016; Studer and von Schnurbein, 2013). Before closing this section, a third exemplar has been selected which illustrates a conflict of interest for the treasurer who finds herself positioned by others in an event which straddles both the boardroom and outside it.

Vignette 4 (board 2) is a third-party account by the then treasurer (interviewee) of how the board team navigated the interplay between independent leadership actions of a trustee acting as an ‘innovative agent’ following a board decision not to purchase bicentennial T-shirts. ‘The conflicted bystander’ is the treasurer attempting to act as a ‘constructive integrator’. The dilemma for the treasurer is whether to support somebody else’s innovative actions and align herself to the board team and the prospect of revisiting the issue. Alternatively, to support the newly elected chair who had presumed that the board decision was final. There appear to be two competing narratives of leadership at different levels. First, the trustee’s independent action of offering leadership as an ‘innovative agent’ points to the idea of shared leadership emerging (Pearce and Conger, 2003), in that she has an expectation that her influence is welcome and constructive. This points to the board’s willingness to rely on leadership from multiple trustees, not only those in prepositioned constitutional roles. It identifies the team as a central source of influence that points to trustees interrelating as a source of leadership.

It is apparent that the independent leadership comes from the trustee who assigns herself agentive powers and accepts responsibility to obtain quotes for ‘T-shirts’. In this way, she is proactively controlling future events (Moore et al., 2012) by seeking to influence the chair/board to change the board decision. When a board majority subsequently agreed with the trustee, the then chair was unwilling to change his position which suggests that the board team did not ascribe agentive powers to the chair to enable him to review his position and/or save face. According to the treasurer, the chair was unable to support the decision, he consequently resigned in accordance with the constitution.

Positioning theory (Harre and Van Langenhove, 1991) makes visible important insights of how the treasurer (interviewee) makes sense of this contentious issue and her own experience of leadership as a ‘constructive integrator’. She is struggling to take up self-positioning or exercise self-leadership as a result of being positioned in a team decision by a third party who enacted independent leadership. The treasurer employs other-positioning of the chair as ‘very good’, while simultaneously characterising him as inflexible and authoritarian in his approach. She is also using indirect positioning to argue that the chair in question didn’t like the way it [the board] had been run.

Findings suggest a form of latent conflict leading to (1) the independent action of the trustee outside the boardroom; and (2) the unintended consequence of the chair’s resignation (see findings chapter (V) for full text). In making sense of the different dimensions here the study draws first on the literatures of teams (Katzenbach and Smith, 1993) and the notion that interdependence, shared purpose, and use of individual skills is significant and characterises discipline in teams, together with the idea that each team member is severally and jointly accountable. Furthermore group conflict (Deutsch, (1949) in O’Neill, Allen, and Hastings, 2013). These scholars clearly set out the origins of cooperative, competitive, and avoidance team behaviours that originate with the social interdependence theory of conflict management of Deutsch (1949). Notably, the notion that while interdependence naturally leads to conflict it is the individual’s response to that conflict, in the form of cooperation, competition or avoidance, which is important for team effectiveness. Deutsch (1994) and Jehn (1995) help us to understand how the chair is excluded from this team. Deutsch’s theory of moving from ‘differentiation’ to ‘integration’ focuses on the concepts of competition versus cooperation: the idea that teams adopting a cooperative motivational orientation are

considered likely to be more successful than those adopting a competitive or avoiding orientation in relation to combining efforts. In this exemplar, the treasurer is positioned as jointly and severally accountable for the team decision (Katzenbach and Smith, 1993) initiated by the trustee acting as an ‘innovative agent’ and a competitive orientation.

A cooperative orientation would have allowed for positive interest in the welfare of the chair as well as the team. Relating this view to the research question, it seems that how individuals take up and experience leadership can sometimes be trumped by collective leadership processes which can also take the form of conflict over means and ends of leadership, which in turn can lead to the departure of one or more board members.

While the chair’s resignation might appear as forced positioning (Harre and Moghaddam, 2003) in that he has been prepositioned by the constitution, that’s not to say that a different chair might have assigned himself/herself agentive powers to take up a different position. It appears that the team did not take account of (1) the unintended consequence of one ‘innovative agent’ (trustee) obtaining quotes leading to the chair’s resignation; and (2) did not future proof the board by considering the potential loss of future access to the various contacts and funding that a former managing director of a significant UK company is likely to have. While there is a faint echo of unproductive conflict here (Deutsch, 1994) which doesn’t fit with the high ‘expressive accountability’ in this board, the significance of this finding is that individual experiences of leadership are shaped by team dynamics, even in the case of elected office bearers. There is no evidence of difficult conversations with volunteers revealed in the entire dataset. However, this account in ‘vignette 4’ (board 2) suggests that a difficult conversation was required but was avoided by the board.

It is apparent that ‘constructive integrators’ enact leadership outside the boardroom in dyads of constitutionally elected office bearers in board 1, with a more mixed picture in board 2 where dyads of trustees are complemented by dyads of volunteers with the purpose of keeping the services running across two riding establishments.

Taken together these three exemplars from across both boards provide insights about how ‘constructive integrators’ enact interdependent leadership in both boards in two different forms. Such leadership is found in sharing of leadership in dyads of trustees and across the entire board team. As set out in 5.3.1, dyads in this study are called teams within teams. They are viewed as carrying out the same basic teamwork as that of three or more team members (Kozlowski and Ilgen, 2006). Arguably, dyads reflect a consistent minimal form of shared leadership in that they are first shaped by both individuals presenting themselves as agents in taking up and accepting responsibility for specific tasks (Harre, 1995) before then sharing complementary knowledge and information.

6.3.4. Forms of positioning

Findings make visible trustees’ experience of leadership and in so doing offer different aspects with which to understand nonprofit board leadership. The findings demonstrate how trustees construct leadership and take up different positions in forms of talk in interview (see overview of vignettes in table 20; specifically, stage 1, vignettes 1, 2, and 5 (board 1) and vignettes 1.1, 3, 4, 5, and 6 (board 2)).

Positioning analysis is important and helpful, which is illustrated with the examples in table 20. In addition, a more composite picture of positioning interacting with accountability can

be found in table 31. This makes visible examples of innovating agency and constructive integration and how positioning analysis explains how people not only arrive at different forms of leadership, expressing different kinds of accountability, but also how they pivot between them. What is common across both archetypes of leadership agency is that trustees assign themselves agentic powers to take responsibility for certain tasks. ‘Innovative agents’ are oriented towards the mission and ‘constructive integrators’ are oriented towards process and regulation. The following examples illustrate trustees acting as ‘innovative agents’ before moving on to ‘constructive integrators’.

‘Innovative agents’

In vignette 1 (board 1) the chair acting as an ‘innovative agent’ is employing expressive accountability to the group’s mission. She takes an external focus employing both self-/other-positioning of schools and is required to pivot between the moving parts of two safeguarding systems, moving from independent leadership to a more collective form of leadership with schools and riders and their carers with the purpose to share responsibility. Contrastingly, in vignette 5 (board 2) the dyad of the chair and coach acting as ‘innovative agents’ starts by sharing leadership. They assign agentic powers to themselves and tacitly construct expert positions as they allocate a legacy. They employ both expressive accountability, in that they are crafting a transparent process of accountability to multiple communities, but they are also enacting instrumental accountability in complying with the legal accountability for the terms of a legacy.

In contrast, the self-positioning of the treasurer in vignette 1 (board 2) as an experienced chair, and her explicit positioning of intending to appoint identified applicants as new

trustees while acting as an ‘innovative agent’, is driven by constitutional regulation of the board structure and is employing ‘instrumental accountability’ to recruit new trustees. Acting as an ‘innovative agent’ can also take an internal focus (see table 31). In vignette 3 (board 2) the self-positioning of the chair as a governance expert in accountability leads to her pivoting between the mission and expressive accountability to the board and group members while simultaneously employing ‘instrumental accountability’ to ensure statutory procedures of governance are observed at the annual general meeting.

‘Constructive integrators’

A common thread that runs through both ‘innovative agents’ and ‘constructive integrators’ is their self-positioning as accountable. For example, vignette 5 (board 1) makes visible the secretary enacting independent leadership; shared leadership in the form of a dyad with the chair; and collective leadership as she pivots between the moving parts of accountability to volunteers and employs self-/other-positioning to reflect when accountability moves to become the responsibility of the board. She employs instrumental accountability to the processes and procedures of communicating and retaining volunteers. A feature of ‘constructive integrators’ is their self-positioning and taking up personal responsibility: ‘I’m responsible’. In vignette 6 (board 2) the volunteer co-ordinator is employing both expressive accountability to riders, carers, and volunteers in ensuring services go ahead with the appropriate number of certified volunteers. She is pivoting to employ instrumental accountability to statutory instruments of DBS checks and the moving parts of the volunteer administration system.

6.3.5. Summary of section 6.3

This section focussed on trustees experience of leadership made visible in talk in eight vignettes outside the boardroom. Findings were integrated with the practice of accountability and the concept of leadership agency and other concepts of interest reviewed in Chapter (II). This integration was made visible through the lens of positioning theory as set out in the 'board leadership framework' in section 6.2. Methodologically speaking the positioning triangle (see section 3.4, 'analysis in practice', for details of how it is applied in practice in this study) provides the framework for a deeper construct of what it means to be a trustee and act as a 'responsible charity board member'. The triangle can be engaged from any one of the apexes of 'position', 'speech acts' or 'storyline' (McVee et al., 2018; Hirvonen, 2016; Harre and Moghaddam, 2003). In this section the triangle was engaged from the apex of position.

This constructionist-interpretivist approach offers a particular approach of applying positioning theory and Harre's (1995) particular conceptualisation of agency to illuminate the everyday processes of trustees constructing leadership in talk in board teams but has not yet been applied in that way (see gap 1 in section 2.5.1). Agency as a discursive presentation (Harre, 1995) is 'not a psychology of choosing but one of executing a choice once made' (p. 120). It occurs when trustees assign 'agentive powers' (Harre, 1995) to 'self' and 'others' to take up responsibility for tasks. As formerly discussed, when trustees accept responsibility for tasks, either as an 'innovative agent' or 'constructive integrator', findings show this is not fixed and trustees can shift from innovation or integration over time as they navigate different unfolding contexts. This is illustrated in the above examples and can be found in

the negotiator (vignette 1, board 1). The idea of shifting forms of leadership fit with the research aim to advance our understanding of the elusive nature of shared leadership (Pearce and Conger, 2003). Findings in this study make visible trustees employing self-positioning as they take up independent action. However, this is often accompanied by self-leadership (Manz, 1986) which as formerly discussed, plays an important part in the leadership of trustees who take up leadership as ‘innovative agents’.

It is apparent from findings outside the boardroom that leadership is diverse and present in both boards in two different forms. It is found in independent leadership of trustees and sharing of leadership both in dyads of trustees and across the entire board. As set out in 5.3.1, the dyads here are called teams within teams, viewed as carrying out the same basic teamwork as that of three or more team members (Kozlowski and Ilgen, 2006). Arguably, dyads reflect a minimal form of shared leadership in that they are shaped first by both individuals presenting themselves as agents in taking up and accepting responsibility for specific tasks (Harre, 1995) before then sharing complementary knowledge and information. Positioning theory (Harre and Van Langenhove, 1999; 1991; Harre 1995), particular conceptualisation of agency, illuminate the ways through which people construct and enact leadership in board teams but has not yet been applied in that way.

6.4. Making sense of leadership inside the boardroom

Section 6.4 moves inside the boardroom to explore how leadership is constructed in trustees’ interactions in meetings through the lens of positioning. First the board leadership framework of Figure 13 (see section 6.2) orientates the section.

This section introduces the three-stage negotiation process of ‘getting the storyline underway’ ‘getting to the point’ and ‘getting shared understanding’ by which individual and collective leadership are negotiated in decision-making episodes of emerging storylines from observation of three meetings. These reflect both strategic and operational agenda items on which decisions were reached. Table 36 provides an overview of this process which summarises the following: the patterns of negotiation; the negotiation strategy adopted; the multiple positions adopted by trustees in different stages; and leadership actions and the focus of activity.

As formerly noted, one of the contemporary challenges of shared leadership (Pearce and Conger, 2003) is to better understand its dynamic nature in ‘real-life’ contexts outside simulation games (Drescher et al., 2014). Findings here, while tentative, show interesting aspects about how leadership shifts in decision-making episodes. Across both boards there is evidence of trustees holding the board to account.

Board meetings in this study are considered as social episodes within a particular structure and systematic sequences of consequential actions that are distinct from everyday conversations (Hirvonen, 2016, drawing on Harre, 1993). Similar to prepositioned roles of elected office bearers, the conventions of board meetings are predetermined by the constitution. However, in positioning theory (PT) storylines, positions, and rights and duties are considered aspects of PT which act as the beginning of ‘dynamic social life’ (McVee et al., 2021, p. 3).

Positions in this study are defined as a ‘cluster of rights and duties to perform certain actions with a certain significance as acts, but which also may include prohibitions or denials of

access' to other positions (Harre and Moghaddam, 2003, pp. 5–6) (see further information on PT in literature review chapter II). Consequently, as positions are fluid and contestable, it enables us to a) explore more dynamic leadership activity; and b) to better understand the relationship between independent action and interdependent leadership as trustees make things happen while holding the board and individual trustees to account.

In the meetings that were observed, board conventions were not disputed. For example, at the board meeting of June 2019 (board 2) the first agenda item was the election of office bearers following the AGM on 7 June 2019. During this process the treasurer, (architect of the recruitment of new trustees) was elected chair. However, the positioning analysis reveals how the newly elected chair's position is immediately and robustly contested by a trustee in vignette 1.2 (board 2). This example illustrates that board conventions interpreted by employing a PT perspective offer a more dynamic platform for different storylines to emerge. In summary, the prepositioned right of the chair to lead in each board was not challenged. However, their positioning in different storylines was questioned, and challenged board decision making in meetings provided an opportunity to see how this occurs in practice. Of the five decision-making episodes that were observed, the relevant chair primed their boards on three occasions. In board 1, the treasurer primed the board in vignette 4, and in board 2, the secretary primed the board in vignette 2.

Empirical work here focuses on trustees a) negotiating different positions in decision-making episodes; and b) navigating board relations through discursive practices to address the research question set out in chapter I. The emerging storylines interpreted from observation of three board meetings are summarised in the following table. The overarching storylines

describe the main decision-making episodes within which the micro storylines set out how the positions are adopted and negotiated. This is followed by an overview of the three-stage negotiation, indicating positions taken up by trustees.

Table 35: Emerging storyline structure

Emerging structure	Board 1	Board 2
Overarching storylines	Seizing a commercial opportunity	Developing a new service
Micro storylines	The tenancy agreement Business rates Developing financial policy	Recruiting new trustees The mechanical horse

Author /2021

6.4.1. Negotiating leadership

What is interesting is first how trustees assign themselves agentive powers to lead in particular ways in interactions. For example, taking up temporary leadership in establishing the storyline of each episode and repositioning it in later stages. Furthermore, those who accept agentive powers assigned to them take responsibility for the emerging storyline and ultimately the interdependent leadership responsibility for board decisions. The following table provides an overview of the three-stage ‘negotiation process’ together with the negotiation strategies employed by trustees; their positioning and leadership action revealed in trustees’ interactions in four storylines (5 vignettes) within these stages. An underlying principle at work across all patterns of negotiation is that of working together to ensure shared understanding. Following this overview, an elaboration is provided on how these storylines answer the research question.

Typical stages in negotiation include preparation, presentation and justification, bargaining, offers, and counter-offers (Zohar, 2015). In this study, the discussion is framed around three stages of negotiation related to the emerging storylines to make sense of each decision-making episode, which is considered a single negotiation conducted within the framework of an existing and continuous relationship.

Table 36: Overview of three-stage negotiation process

Overall pattern of negotiation	Negotiation strategy and stages	Positioning	Leadership actions	Focus of activity
Board 1 Vignette				
Accomplishing shared responsibility Tenancy agreement V3 Actors: Chair (IA) Trustee (CI) Board	Negotiation strategy Using personal credibility to influence the board to accept change Stage 1 Getting the storyline of the episode underway	Chair: Self- positioning as expert Accountive positioning and indirect positioning of others Trustees: Nodding as the chair speaks Acknowledging the work done on behalf of the board Establishing the storyline	Priming the board Mapping the decision to be made Sharing provisional thinking Chair draws on own knowledge to frame and share relevant information Connects dimensions of the proposed tenancy and promotes the advantage of a 5-year contract	Leading the board towards accepting changing circumstances
	Stage 2	Trustee:	Temporary leadership Trustee's	Complexity of emerging storyline not disguised

	Getting to the point	<p>Taking up temporal leadership</p> <p>Tacitly creates position of expert to clarify the storyline</p> <p>Chair:</p> <p>Sustains the storyline after questions answered</p>	<p>questioning of the chair's information</p> <p>Accommodating views of others</p> <p>Chair (CI) providing additional factual information and reaffirms the tenure of new 5-year contract</p>	Chair acts as (CI) in explaining the legal disadvantage to board
	<p>Stage 3</p> <p>Getting shared understanding across the board</p>	<p>Chair:</p> <p>indirect positioning of board as the decision maker, other-positioning of trustees to confirm they are content with the agreement</p> <p>Trustees:</p> <p>Accept responsibility 'Yeh'</p> <p>Congratulatory tone</p>	<p>Board:</p> <p>Accepting responsibility for the draft contract, expressing appreciation</p> <p>Chair:</p> <p>Recognising when to shift to joint construct of board leadership</p>	Working together to ensure everyone has a shared understanding
<p>Business Rates V4</p> <p>Actor</p> <p>Chair (IA)</p> <p>Trustee (IA)</p>	<p>Negotiation strategy as above</p> <p>Stage 1</p> <p>Getting the storyline underway</p>	<p>Chair:</p> <p>Self-positioning as expert and other-positioning of local council and regulatory tariffs</p>	<p>Priming the board by transparent reporting on options</p> <p>Explaining tariffs and financial implications for the board</p>	Bringing together sources of influence for board to make the decision
	<p>Stage 2</p> <p>Getting to the point</p>	<p>Chair:</p> <p>Self-positioning and other-positioning of board in application for</p>	<p>Trustee's action influences the board towards approving the proposal</p>	Board poised to approve the proposal.

		100% charity relief for rates Trustee: Tacitly assumes position of expert by seconding the proposal		
	Stage 3 Getting shared understanding across the board	Chair: Explicit positioning to confirm everyone has shared understanding of rates	Board endorses the proposal Independent narrative of chair shifts to become joint narrative of the board	Board approves application for rates relief Becomes storyline of the board
<p>Consolidating expert opinion with board views</p> <p>Developing financial policy - V5</p> <p>Actors: Treasurer (IA) Chair (CI) Board</p>	<p>Negotiation strategy</p> <p>Consulting the board to re-affirm expert authority</p> <p>Stage 1</p> <p>Getting storyline underway</p>	<p>Treasurer (IA):</p> <p>Accountive positioning on discussions with the chair, bank, and federation (IA)</p> <p>Explicit positioning of board as decision maker</p> <p>Chair:</p> <p>Other-positioning of treasurer as expert by chair and board</p>	<p>Sharing factual information to situate the board in the decision</p> <p>Treasurer draws on own knowledge to map the decision</p> <p>Transparent reporting of specialist advice</p>	Board re-affirms treasurer's credentials as expert
	Stage 2 Getting to the point	Chair: Tacitly assumes position of expert in questioning the treasurer's initial position and asking for his view	<p>Treasurer (CI):</p> <p>Answers questions</p> <p>Provides more factual information about tax free levels for charities</p> <p>Extends own storyline to</p>	Board situated in decision-making position with updated information about its obligations and financial regulation

			include advice from federation (CI)	
	Stage 3 Getting shared understanding across the board	Chair: Adopts prepositioned role to frame the discussion following her customary practice Treasurer: Deliberate self-positioning of expert	Gives financial opinion when asked by the chair before seeking the views of other trustees Treasurer: Taking responsibility for new policy Guiding the board	Treasurer reauthorised by the board to proceed
Board 2				
Cooperative conflict V1.2 (recruiting new trustees) Actors: Chair (IA) Trustee (CI)	Negotiation strategy To present an opposing storyline Stage 1 Getting the storyline underway	Chair: Self-positioning as expert Accountive positioning for prior acts Trustee (CI): Tacitly constructs expert position in her questioning of the chair	Trustee taking up temporary leadership Exercises agency in promoting an opposing storyline	Chair justifying her leadership action
	Stage 2 Getting to the point	Trustee: Other-positioning of applicant breaks storyline Repositioning storyline Navigating between two opposing narratives	Chair agrees to carry out further checks on applicant for treasurer (IA) Trustee concerned about financial competence (CI) Appeasement	Competency of applicants for trustee

	Stage 3 Getting shared understanding	Mutual positioning of actions to be taken	Chair accepts responsibility Finding common ground agree actions on way forward	Further informal interview
Unravelling the maze of a capital project The mechanical horse V2 Actors: Secretary (IA), (CI) Chair (IA) Trustee (CI)	Negotiation strategy Pausing the project for reassessment Stage 1 Getting the storyline underway	Taking temporary control of the project Secretary (IA) Tacitly assumes position of expert Questions the board on the feasibility of project	Secretary: Temporary leadership Proactivity Priming the board by tabling a feasibility paper Sharing expertise by summarising concerns and outstanding issues	Revisiting the feasibility of the project
	Stage 2 Getting to the point	Secretary: Self-positioning as expert to re-evaluate project (CI) Chair: Tacitly assumes leadership by drawing on knowledge and experience to reshape the project (IA) Trustee (CI): Tacitly assumes position of expert by questioning project for wheel-chair users	Secretary: Focussing on records (CI) Chair: Getting more information IA) Trustee: Concerned about building house on land not owned (CI)	Reviewing current information e.g. fees Reshaping project
	Stage 3	Chair: Tacitly assumes leadership	Secretary's individual narrative of	Board tasks realigned to reshape the project

	Getting shared understanding	position by setting out next steps	project feasibility becomes board narrative Accommodating all views	
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Legend: IA – ‘innovative ‘agent’/CI – ‘constructive integrator’

Author 04/2022

The above illustrations enable us to look at the relationship between the leadership agency of ‘innovative agents’ and ‘constructive integrators’ in three defined stages. Furthermore to identify both the temporal nature of leadership and the temporary nature of leadership as they emerge.

Analyses of positioning inside the boardroom summarised in the above overview makes four important points. First interactions between the leadership agency of ‘innovative agents’ and ‘constructive integrators’ tend to occur in stages 1 and 2 of the negotiation. For example in vignette 3 stage 1 the chair is proposing a new tenancy agreement having acted as an ‘innovative agent’ outside the boardroom. In turn the trustee acting as a ‘constructive integrator’ in stage 2 tacitly assumes an expert position to question the chair about the new tenancy contract while simultaneously acknowledging the chair’s good work on behalf of the board. Analysis identifies ‘instrumental accountability’ (Knutsen and Brower, 2010) as the trustee seeks further information from the chair about the new tenancy contract; while also enacting ‘expressive accountability’ in recognising the chair’s efforts outside the boardroom. ‘Expressive accountability’ is further reinforced when the trustee seconds the chair’s proposal once her questions have been addressed and other trustees smile, nod and express their support in a congratulatory comment of ‘yeah’. The finding that positioning

can also be non-verbal communication was unexpected in this study and while it is fleeting it echoes the findings of Meschitti, (2019).

The second point is that chairs tend to employ the same positions across each stage. Specifically, self-/other-positioning; accountive positioning; and tacitly assuming the position of expert. The self-positioning of chairs as experts, resonates with Hirvonen (2016) and his findings from small-group management boards. Providing information while positioned as an expert in this study echoes Hirvonen. However it is different in that it makes visible both chairs reporting actions taken on behalf of the board; framing discussion of the agenda item; and importantly sharing their provisional thinking rather than issuing instructions as in Hirvonen's study. Arguably information sharing is also a form of accountive positioning which is employed by both chairs across stages of the negotiation process. Meschitti (2019) argues that accountive positioning contributes to 'epistemic primacy' defined as a 'power position which gives a special privilege in shaping the local moral order' (p. 639). However findings in this study demonstrate that it is for each trustee to assign themselves and accept agentive powers in the local moral order of what it means to be a 'responsible charity board member' and take up positions of responsibility accordingly. This is nicely illustrated in vignette 3 (board 1). The chair's accountive positioning in 'stage 1' of the negotiation creates a position in the local moral order of acting as a 'responsible charity board member' for the trustee to take up in 'stage 2'.

The trustee tacitly assumes the position of expert as she clarifies factual information in the storyline of the new tenancy agreement. She then takes up sequential (temporal) and temporary leadership, albeit fleeting, in 'stage 2'. In 'stage 3' the chair then employs other-

positioning to assign agentive powers to the board as the decision-maker. The board subsequently accepts and takes responsibility for approving the new contract thus echoing Harre's idea (1995) that individuals who accept agentive powers assigned to them take responsibility for tasks. In this emerging storyline arguably responsibility for the new tenancy agreement is taken up in different stages by different trustees. Namely the chair, the trustee and then the board when responsibility becomes shared in 'stage 3'.

The third point is how trustees assign themselves agentive powers to lead in interactions. For example in 'stage 1' of vignette 1.2 (board 2) the trustee acting as a 'constructive integrator' tacitly assumes the position of expert by questioning the chair about her proposed applicant for treasurer. The trustee takes up temporary leadership by promoting an opposing storyline which then becomes the subject of the negotiation. What is interesting in this example is the change in the chair's accountive positioning in 'stage 1' to mutual positioning in 'stage 3'.

The fourth point is the distinct forms of positioning taken up by trustees in stage 3 of the negotiation. In vignette 3 (board 1) the board is positioned by the chair as the decision-maker. In vignette 4 (board 1) The chair's explicit positioning of trustees requires them to confirm approval of business rates and the application for rates relief as a charity. In vignette 1.2 (board 2) the chair employs mutual positioning to confirm shared understanding of future actions related to the recruitment of trustees. In vignette 2 (board 2) the chair tacitly assumes the leadership position by setting out the next steps. Finally in vignette 5 (board 1) what is different is that before the treasurer can consult the board having indicated his intention the chair assigns agentive powers to the treasurer to give his opinion on the new financial policy.

The treasurer accepts the responsibility for the new policy before seeking the views of other trustees thus creating a position for other trustees to take up in the local moral order of ‘acting as a responsible charity board member’ in relation to financial matters. Before concluding section 6.4 table 37 (below) summarises trustees’ positioning in different stages of the negotiation.

Table 37: Overview of trustees’ positioning in each stage of negotiation

Positioning stage 1	Positioning stage 2	Positioning stage 3
Self-positioning of expert (3) Accountive positioning (3) Other-positioning (2) Tacit positioning of expert (2) Indirect positioning of board (1) Explicit positioning (1)	Tacitly assumes position of expert (2) Self-positioning of expert (1) Tacitly assumes leadership position (1) Other-positioning of applicants	Indirect positioning of board (1) Mutual positioning on action to be taken (1) Deliberate self-positioning of expert (1) Explicit positioning to confirm understanding (1) Tacitly assumes leadership position (1)

Author /04/2022

6.4.2. Summary of section 6.4

This section focussed on trustees’ experience of leadership made visible in three board meetings inside the boardroom. Their experience was further made visible in their interactions in emerging storylines of ‘seizing a commercial opportunity’ in board 1 (within which there are three micro storylines) and ‘developing a new service’ in board 2 (within which there are two micro storylines (see figure 4). These represent both individual and board team actions arising from the three-stage negotiation process. Storylines were integrated with the practice of accountability and the concept of leadership agency and other

concepts of interest reviewed in Chapter (II). This integration was made visible through the lens of positioning theory (Harre and Van Langenhove, 1999; 1991) as set out in the 'board leadership framework' in section 6.2. Methodologically speaking the positioning triangle (see section 3.4, 'analysis in practice', for details of how it is applied in practice in this study) provides the framework for these storylines to emerge. Further to make visible a deeper construct of what it means to be a trustee and act as a 'responsible charity board member'. The triangle can be engaged from any one of the apexes of 'position', 'speech acts' or 'storyline' (McVee et al., 2018; Hirvonen, 2016; Harre and Moghaddam, 2003). In this section the triangle was engaged from the apex of 'storyline'.

The archetypes of leadership agency in the forms of 'innovative agent' and 'constructive integrator' are visible enacting different forms of leadership. In particular examples of how storylines are initiated by trustees acting as 'innovative agents' and 'constructive integrators' taking up leadership that is fleetingly temporal and temporary with the purpose of holding other board members, and the board to account. The overview in table 36 illustrates four negotiation strategies employed by trustees of (1) personal credibility; (2) consulting the board; (3) blocking an elected chair's recruitment proposal; and (4) pausing to reset a capital project.

Contemporary conversation of applying positioning to leadership includes a focus on resources that participants bring to interactions (Meschitti, 2019). The negotiation strategy of personal credibility employed by the chair and treasurer acting as 'innovative agents' in vignette 5 (board 1) chimes with Meschitti's idea that 'participants bring particular resources

to interactions’ (p. 621). Thus the experience and expertise of these office bearers in board governance and financial matters can also be viewed as a resource available to the board.

Other negotiation strategies of (1) pausing to reset a capital project; and (2) robustly arguing an opposing storyline illustrate trustees respectively acting as an ‘innovative agent’ (oriented to mission) and a ‘constructive integrator’ (oriented to process and regulation) within the local moral order of ‘acting as a responsible charity board member’. This section focussed on trustees experience in interactions in decision-making episodes inside the boardroom. It applied positioning theory and Harre’s (1995) particular conceptualisation of agency to illuminate the interactions through which trustees construct leadership in two board teams but has not yet been applied in that way (see gaps 2 and 3 in section 2.5.1). In summary focussing on the value that positioning brings to constructionist-interpretivist studies of board teams, the findings presented in this section make visible how leadership emerges in interactions and shifts between trustees enacting different forms of leadership agency in this small study.

6.5. Conclusion of the chapter

The overarching research question of this study is - How do individuals in the context of two nonprofit federated boards take up and make sense of leadership and enact accountability? A key element of the proposed ‘board leadership framework’ (see figure 13 section 6.2) is the notion of trustees ‘acting as a responsible charity board member’. This kind of overall positioning arguably shapes other varieties of positions that people may take up (Author 2021). As identified in section 6.2 the framework integrates the individual and team aspects. It conceptually integrates the elements of agency as a discursive presentation and the practice

of accountability with positioning theory (Harre and Van Langenhove, 1999; 1991) through which insights of board leadership are made visible from three aspects with the purpose of answering the research question.

First the leadership framework introduced in figure 13 in section 6.2 illustrates the individual and team aspects in the dimensions of the practice of accountability, and forms of leadership agency together with positioning through which insights of trustees' experience of leadership both outside and inside the boardroom are made visible. Together these give insight into the archetypes of leadership taken up by trustees acting as innovative agents and constructive integrators. Second shared leadership of two teams that constitute trustee boards is apparent in both sections 6.3 and 6.4 as trustees take up responsibility for leadership tasks in the minimal form of dyadic leadership enacted by various dyads. Third shared leadership is apparent in trustees' experience of leadership in interactions as they negotiate leadership in board decision-making episodes. Findings from clear empirical data of this interpretivist study should contribute to the gaps identified in literature in section 2.5.1. The contribution of the study is set out in the conclusion chapter VII.

Chapter VII Conclusions

7.1. Introduction

This chapter will conclude the study by summarising key research findings in relation to the research objectives and questions, discussing the value and contribution thereof. It will propose practical implications and reflect on the research process before evaluating the study from three criteria. The limitations of the study will then be reviewed and opportunities for future research proposed.

The purpose of this study is to explore nonprofit board leadership from an interpretivist perspective; in particular, trustees experience of leadership in talk in interview and in their interactions as they take up and negotiate leadership inside the boardroom.

Findings first make visible the ways that trustees talk about experiencing leadership in interview in three inductively generated themes. Second trustees experience of taking up leadership in actual board decision making episodes is observed in three meetings. Leadership is further made visible as it is negotiated in trustees' interactions in a three-stage negotiation process. In summary findings show trustees take up two forms of leadership agency. Particularly the archetypes of 'innovative agent' and 'constructive integrator' which help to address the research objectives.

7.2. How the research questions have been addressed

There are five objectives which underpin the stated purpose of this study. These are set out below followed by the research questions which addressed them.

1. The first objective of this exploratory study is to advance understanding of nonprofit board leadership from a constructionist-interpretivist perspective in order to diminish the gap in literature about how leadership actually works in practice (Cornforth, 2014; Cornforth, 2012; Widmer, 1993).
2. The second objective is to explore the multiple ways in which accountability might occur (Liket and Maas, 2015) aside from accountability to funders (Thompson and Williams, 2014).
3. The third objective is to advance our understanding of the dynamic nature of ‘shared leadership’ (Pearce and Conger, 2003) from an empirical study that employs positioning theory (Harre and Van Langenhove, 1999; 1991) to address the gaps in literature resulting from studies which employed student populations and simulation games (He and Hu, 2021; Drescher et al., 2014).
4. The fourth objective is to extend positioning literature of how position-oriented analysis proceeds at individual and board level by applying positioning theory to empirical analyses (Korobov, 2010). First, in relation to interview data; second, in relation to sequential analysis of social interactions in the boardroom and by illuminating the strategies that trustees employ to negotiate positions (Deppermann, 2013).
5. The fifth objective is to contribute to innovative methodological and analytical studies by combining an interpretive sense-making case study (Welch et al., 2011, p. 747) with a hybrid analytical approach (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006) that employs thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2019), positioning theory (Harre and Van Langenhove, 1999;

1991), and a framework of leadership differentiated by independent action and interdependent leadership.

The overarching research question posed by this constructionist-interpretivist study is: how do individuals in the context of two nonprofit federated boards take up and make sense of leadership and enact accountability? This rests on three sub-questions: what are the individual and shared processes through which leadership is enacted? What are the forms of accountability that trustees draw on to enact independent and interdependent leadership? and the two-part question, how can positioning theory help to illuminate the dynamic nature of shared leadership and how does position-oriented analysis proceed at individual and board level?

7.3. Contribution to knowledge

This research contributes to the field of nonprofit board leadership both in terms of theory and practice. Primarily, it offers an empirical study from the rare perspective of a qualitative case study (QCS) informed by a constructionist epistemology in order to offer an interpretation that acknowledges the common-sense understanding of participants as well as an academic interpretation (Gephart, 2013). It offers a contextualised account of what it means to be a volunteer trustee in two federated boards in England. The leadership framework introduced in figure 13 in section 6.2 illustrates the individual and team aspects in the dimensions of the practice of accountability, and forms of leadership agency together with positioning through which insights of trustees' experience of leadership both outside and inside the boardroom are illuminated. Together these give insight into the 'shared' leadership of two teams that constitute trustee boards with the purpose of answering the

research questions. The relationship between independent action and interdependent leadership is shaped both outside and inside the boardroom by trustees acting as ‘innovative agents’ or ‘constructive integrators’.

7.3.1. Aspect 1 – Nonprofit board leadership from an interpretivist perspective

The first contribution of this interpretivist study extends nonprofit literature from a non-positivist orientation (Cornforth, 2014). It extends the focus on research from inside the boardroom and adds evidence to studies about the importance of board members interactions in the boardroom (Van Puyvelde et al., 2018., Pugliese, Nicholson and Bezemer, 2015). However, the research design of the present study is different. Specifically, by conceptualising boards as teams before applying a hybrid analytical approach which includes positioning theory to bridge the gap between individual and board levels of analysis of data. This empirical study contributes to literature in relation to the importance of interactions in the boardroom from an exploratory perspective. It produces data from detailed analyses of the ways and mechanisms in which these boards enact multiple accountability. This research is closer to the methodology of Pugliese, Nicholson and Bezemer (2015) and their inside view of board dynamics, albeit through observations of corporate board meetings.

The present empirical study finds support for the idea that much decision making takes place outside the boardroom across the data set of two boards. It contributes evidence of how nonprofit board leadership occurs in practice in these horizontal authority structures.

This study takes account of the views of individuals and board decision-making episodes, and brings these together with theories of positioning: pluralist ideas of accountability, and

a conceptualisation of shared leadership that can take different forms. This is accomplished by a) viewing leadership as a process moving outside constitutionally prepositioned roles; b) by focussing on leadership constructed through established routines and ways of working; and c) by analysing trustees' interactions in meetings as a way of understanding the dynamics of leadership and how people experience taking up leadership in their interactions and actual leadership activity. In other words, it illuminates the leadership action of individual trustees and collective enactment of board decision making.

7.3.2. Aspect 2 – Insight into multiple forms of accountability engaged by trustees

The second contribution adds evidence to studies of multiple forms of accountability (Knutsen and Brower, 2010) by trustees in 'real-life' contexts of two nonprofit boards. These multiple forms of accountability recognise that trustees discharge regulatory obligations while simultaneously balancing their commitment to clients in a way that reflects the constitutional purpose and mission of these incorporated charities.

7.3.3. Aspect 3 – Insight into the dynamic nature of shared leadership

The third contribution adds evidence to studies of shared leadership originally conceptualised by (Pearce and Conger, 2003). In particular, the temporal and temporary nature of the concept (He and Hu, 2021; Lorinkova and Bartol, 2020; Drescher et al., 2014; Mielonen, 2011) in 'real life' settings. In this study, positioning theory makes visible the dynamic nature of leadership in trustees' experience of leadership in talk and in their board interactions in negotiations in actual board decision-making episodes. However, we also see

the influence of self-leadership enacted in the pull between trustees' independent action and interdependent leadership, revealing how leadership shifts as it is negotiated.

7.3.4. Aspect 4 – Insight into how position-oriented analysis proceeds

The fourth contribution of this study is to extend positioning literature. There is a relative lack of theorisation and empirical research in relation to applying positioning theory to analyses of talk (Korobov, 2010) and detailed sequential analysis of authentic social interaction, but also the strategies employed to negotiate positions (Deppermann, 2013).

Applying positioning theory to the analysis of empirical data in a board context adds evidence to empirical studies of how position-oriented analysis proceeds. Specifically, the study looked at how different trustees use positioning of findings and how this differentiates the type of leadership they enact. Stage 2 examined how trustees use positioning as they interact within the boardroom. Specifically the factors that prompt trustees to take a) 'independent action' as 'innovative agents' or 'constructive integrators'; and b) makes visible a more dynamic and socially informed picture of independent action and interdependent board leadership emerging through unfolding storylines of decision-making episodes in board meetings. In particular how trustees move between independent and interdependent leadership that is temporary leadership. Insights from this study provide good empirical data for peer review and clarity around analytical procedures an acknowledged gap in literature (McVee, 2018).

7.3.5. Aspect 5 – Understanding from an innovative methodological approach

The fifth contribution of this study offers an innovative methodological approach: the combination of an ‘interpretive sensemaking’ case study in the idiographic tradition of social science (Welch et al., 2011) with a hybrid analytical approach of thematic coding, positioning, and a typology of leadership categorised as ‘independent action’ and ‘interdependent leadership’. This study contributes to leadership studies that combine both inductive and theory-based analysis and interpretation. Arguably, this study allows more dynamic dimensions of leadership to emerge.

7.4. Implications for practice

Adopting case study research provides an opportunity to generate in-depth understanding of a specific case that is anchored in a detailed investigation. This is a recognised strength of case study research (Hartley, 2004). While this research is not seeking to generalise findings, it has generated knowledge of how leadership emerges in the micro processes of two nonprofit federated boards that can influence other cases and not only the practices of other nonprofit boards but also top teams in other sectors.

Focussing on trustees experience of leadership in talk and observation of their interactions in board meetings, this study has made visible two kinds of leadership agency. Specifically, trustees who proactively make things happen acting as ‘innovative agents’ oriented towards the charity’s mission and those who act as ‘constructive integrators’ oriented towards process and regulation. While this case study has advanced our understanding of nonprofit

board leadership and the concepts of interest from an interpretive perspective, as set out in the findings chapter V, they also have some practical implications.

There are three practical implications. First, is the value of the horizontal authority structure of the board. Second, is the value of translatable knowledge. Third, is the value of good human resource (HR) practice. These practical implications are explained below.

1. Horizontal structure of board

The first practical implication relates to the horizontal authority structure of the board in which the chair is characterised as *primus inter pares* (first among equals) (Gabrielsson, Huse and Minichilli, 2007) and does not hold instruction authority over the other trustees. It is this design that creates an environment of teamwork where differences in authority are downplayed (Vandewaerde et al., 2011) or softened. Therefore shared leadership (Pearce and Conger, 2003) is both desirable and more likely as co-operation and teamwork is unlikely to be disrupted by too directive office bearers.

Teams with diverse skills that represent roles, disciplines, and professions can create work domains and associated accountability for individuals. This study assumes boards can be considered teams as they are interdependent individuals who can self-regulate their behaviour as they work on relatively whole tasks (Vandewaerde et al., 2011).

The horizontal authority structure enables the dynamic nature of leadership to emerge and gives trustees the freedom to pivot between acting as ‘innovative agents’ and ‘constructive integrators’. This underscores the importance of board trustees having a mix of knowledge and perspective when they recognise something needs to be done, and they take up

leadership to address it. However, this structure also enables accountability for the task to move from the individual who has taken up responsibility to then become a board responsibility when it is shared.

This study proposes that significant informal leadership action relevant to everyday board leadership often emerges outside the boardroom and is essential for effective board functioning. For example, vignettes ‘recruiting new trustees’ and ‘sharing leadership across organisation boundaries’.

2. Translatable knowledge

The second practical implication is the value of translatable knowledge, particularly in relation to managing projects. Both boards in this study are confronted with unanticipated projects to be managed; however, the experiences are quite different. In board 1 the experienced dyad of the chair, and deputy whose translatable professional knowledge of contract negotiation secures a new primary tenancy agreement that is approved in one board meeting. The apparent speed with which the agreement is negotiated and approved underscores the value of translatable knowledge. Therefore, while much of the work was carried out outside the boardroom, the chair ensured that the board was updated by email at each stage.

In board 2, however, there is slow progress on the complex ‘mechanical horse’ project that is partly funded by legacies. This is despite individual action by trustees in relation to land use, projects costs, professional fees, and lottery funding. The absence of a feasibility report at the start of the project underscores the importance of clarifying the

terms and pre-existing conditions of the project in writing, together with the board goals and a record of actions undertaken on behalf of the board.

Having been mentored by the retiring chair the secretary assigns herself agentive powers and accepts responsibility for independent leadership action. Acting as an 'innovative agent' during a board meeting, she tables a feasibility paper that she has prepared setting out her concerns about the project aims and its implementation. This opens up a frank board discussion and a reframing of the project and future actions, drawing on the translatable knowledge of the chair and other trustees.

This study suggests that a complex project undertaken by a volunteer board should be underpinned by a feasibility study from the start. Moreover, such projects should be carried out by a sub-committee reporting to the board regularly. In this way the routine work of the board is not swamped by the project.

3. Good human resource (HR) practice

The third practical implication is the value of good HR practices. There are several examples in this study where good HR practices make a positive difference. While this exploratory study is not about board effectiveness, particular HR practices underscore the importance of good established HR practice for board effectiveness. For example, the induction meeting of the fundraising trustee (board 1) which resulted in a new online system within two weeks of this meeting. Furthermore the mentoring of the new secretary (board 2) resulted in her independent leadership of preparing a feasibility paper to progress the 'mechanical horse' project. Finally the treasurer's consultative approach

(board 1) to developing financial policy to manage the regulatory requirements of the charity and the new commercial venture resulted in the board's reaffirmation of his own role and expertise. Overall these practices underscore the importance of sharing knowledge and information and should contribute to board effectiveness.

It is worth noting that both boards are rich in professional knowledge and expertise, thus for trustees to carry out the above HR practices was well within their experience from other settings. However, other boards may not have the same level of confidence without some familiarisation/training in HR practices.

This study recommends that nonprofit boards provide new trustees with some guiding principles in the form of a 'welcome note'. Such a document should set out what it means to take up leadership in the absence of salaried employees in a nonprofit board. It should set out board expectations of how to pass on knowledge, exercise independent leadership, and negotiate in a cooperative manner to resolve incompatibilities.

7.5. Reflection on the research process

There is no commonly agreed definition of reflexivity (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, 2015). It is a contested area with different schemes of criteria offered as alternatives to ideas of reliability and validity in quantitative research (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Views include: reflexivity as a principle stressing that qualitative researchers are part of the social world they are studying (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007); and the notion that the researcher is 'part of the data' through the choices they make associated with their study (Richards, 2015, p. 37).). In this interpretive research, I recognise that understanding social process requires

‘getting inside the world of those generating it and we can never assume the interpretive researcher has a value-neutral stance’ (Malaurent and Avison, 2017, p. 920). Therefore transparency is an essential ingredient in facilitating readers’ access to the research process. To this end I acknowledge that I have shaped the data in the vignettes I have selected and the diary record I have made. For example in vignette 1.2 (board 2) my diary reads ‘gosh that’s robust’ as the trustee acting as a ‘constructive integrator’ holds the chair to account.

7.5.1. Research design

This research can be argued as innovative because it departs from the positivist orientation reported in much of the literature in relation to the study of board leadership. By taking a constructionist-interpretivist approach, this study offers an alternative understanding of nonprofit board leadership.

As set out in the ‘case organisation’, chapter IV, this single case study of two similar but different boards in one nonprofit UK federation, not only offers an ideal context to study shared leadership (Pearce and Conger, 2003) in top teams flowing from the horizontal authority structure of nonprofit boards, it also enables a research design which offers the opportunity for different voices to be heard (Carson, Tesluk and Marrone, 2007) in an environment where individual contribution is valued.

As a novice researcher, in hindsight there are two things that could have been done differently. First, it would have been better to introduce the prospect of securing access to the federation board much earlier, as opposed to waiting for access to the organisation’s thriving/surviving framework to materialise. If granted, this would have avoided the

restrictions of Covid 19 in March 2020 which removed the prospect of my continuing to negotiate access to observe the federation board. Consequently, the disadvantage of this design is that the understanding of the federation board and the way it functions is through insights from the national senior management team of directors and of course, local board teams. Second, less time could have been spent prospecting for inner city London groups to participate in the study, notwithstanding the fact that their regional chair was very supportive and keen on this project. Prospecting included submitting various papers for different boards to consider in addition to the information pack contained in the research proposal approved by the UK Federation.

7.5.2. Engagement and fieldwork

As formerly mentioned in 3.5.2 the more transparent the interaction between the researcher and the research, the more likely the findings will be received as credible. Therefore, the researcher is an active person whose own values and experiences shape the research approach together with the choices that are made (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, 2015; Creswell 2007; Patton, 2002). In other words, multiple-layered construction of knowledge is gathered and interpreted by the researcher while accepting further knowledge construction is taken up by the reader (Stake, 1995). I entered the fieldwork as an ‘outsider’ with ‘access to different sorts of information’ (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, p. 87). ‘Insider’ knowledge was gathered from a pilot study in the same organisation and foreshadowed interviews with various group and regional chairs. I also drew on my professional HR knowledge and board experience as a trustee and Company Secretary to a UK nonprofit board of professional legal services. This jigsaw helped to make sense of and

interpret the insights shared by the board members. On reflection, there are things that could have been done differently. In particular, follow-up interviews with trustees were interrupted by Covid 19 in March 2020. At that time, the federation had a small number of staff on furlough, however, the organisation and groups went into lock-down. While communication with the federation and participating boards was maintained by email during 2020 and 2021, it was difficult to reach anyone. Thus, there is some regret that Skype calls were not set up for the follow up interviews.

7.6. Evaluation of the study

As set out in the methodology chapter (III), this case study is anchored in the qualitative tradition. It is the basis from which I lay claim to the quality of the research criteria of credibility, trustworthiness, and believability of the findings. Specifically, through the transparent methods adopted in this research (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson, 2015) and the detailed presentation and analysis of data.

Trustworthiness is a central tenet of all research in generating valid and reliable knowledge. Validity, reliability, and ethics are foremost concerns as each researcher ‘wants to contribute knowledge to the field that is believable and trustworthy (Merriam and Tisdell, 2015, p. 265). However, achieving this purpose in a qualitative study based on a worldview that is different to traditional research, requires careful consideration of criteria. It has been argued that the evaluation of qualitative interpretive research is contested around aspects such as evidence, criteria, and utility across social science research (Denzin and Lincoln, 2012). The quality of a study can be assessed from various positions. While external validity continues to be an ongoing topic of debate (Merriam and Tisdell, 2015), internal validity is recognised

as a strength of qualitative research (Bryman and Bell, 2011). This is achieved by using triangulation, confirming interpretations with participants, and inviting comments from peers on emerging findings. To convince and reveal the quality of the present constructionist research design, Lincoln and Guba (1985) have been drawn on for the criterion credibility which encompasses transferability together with trustworthiness. This evaluation forms part of a commitment to the findings here. There are three criteria applied to this study, listed below:

- Criterion 1 – credibility
- Criterion 2 – transferability
- Criterion 3 – trustworthiness

7.6.1. Criterion 1 – credibility

Credibility, the first criterion parallels validity (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Credibility here is evident in the multiple viewpoints of trustees and what it means to experience leadership at individual and interdependent levels. Second, the interpretation and reconstruction of trustees' multiple realities are anchored in their original constructions. The feasibility of this interpretation rests on a transparent methodology and findings interpretation.

In this research credibility is achieved by adopting different methods including interview, observation, and textual analysis. Given this research adopted a constructionist theoretical orientation, employing different methods is about reaching multiple perspectives and their multiple realities rather than the quantitative comparison of using different methods to triangulate data to reach a correct position. Third, findings from interview data collected

prior to December 2019 were confirmed with available trustees. A respondent validation process was carried out in relation to themes surfaced in interview. This work took place at the end of 2019. However, Covid 19 interrupted this process early in 2020, so not all trustee interviews were validated in this way, despite three invitations having been issued. Fourth, internal validity considered to be a strength of qualitative research (LeCompte and Goertz, 1982 in Bryman and Bell, 2011) rests on my engagement with the organisation from 2016 – 2019 and the insights that enabled me to develop a congruent picture of concepts and observations.

7.6.2. Criterion 2 – transferability

Lincoln and Guba (1985) consider transferability as part of credibility. As it is an issue that attracts a lot of questioning for qualitative researchers, its relevance is evaluated in this study. Transferability concerns the generalizability of the findings. In this study it is addressed by explanations of understandings and a contribution to substantive theory, particular to the substance of the data and the transparency of its processes. While this case study does not present a ‘thick description’, it provides detailed procedures to ensure transparency about how the study was carried out at each stage of the process. Thereby enabling the reader to form their own view about what knowledge is transferable.

While the ‘case organisation’ chapter (IV) provides access to the context of these nonprofit boards, the methodology chapter (III) sets out the ontological and epistemological perspectives and the assumptions that shaped the various research processes of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. The methodology chapter also provides detailed information about how procedures are documented and stored (Miles and Huberman, 1994;

Patton, 2002). The findings chapter (V) makes explicit the connection between data and literature in order for the reader to track the research process and arrive at their own interpretation of the trustworthiness of the study and possible transferable knowledge.

7.6.3. Criterion 3 – trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of a qualitative study depends on the credibility of the researcher along with a rigorous approach to methods (Patton, 2015). Irrespective of the type of research, validity and reliability are concerns that can be approached through careful attention to criteria. Therefore, the job of the ‘qualitative researcher is to provide the reader with enough detail to show that the author’s conclusion makes sense’, unlike the quantitative researcher who ‘must convince the reader that procedures have been followed faithfully because very little concrete description of what anyone does is provided’ (Firestone, 1987, p. 19). Further to the details set out under the credibility criterion, this evaluation is concluded by confirming that the study has been conducted in good faith, without bias and in an ethical manner. Three methods were employed to gather information and cross check findings. Data collected from interview, observation, and textual analysis were analysed by a hybrid analytical process of thematic coding and positioning, and a typology of ‘independent action’ and ‘interdependent leadership’. The combination of inductively generated themes and theory-based interpretation, satisfy the requirement that this research is plausible and links to ongoing interest among other researchers. In particular, nonprofit board leadership, position-oriented analysis, hybrid methodologies, and the dynamic nature of shared leadership. Also believability, in that findings achieved through transparent methods, importantly take account of different voices to be heard (Carson, Tesluk and Marrone, 2007)

in an environment characterised by social mission, a volunteer led board, and unpaid volunteers,

7.7. Limitations of the study

This small study offers insight into trustees' experience of leadership in talk and in their board interactions in actual decision-making episodes. However, it comes with some limitations. First, an interesting aspect of exploratory research from a constructionist-interpretivist perspective, is that there are many ways open to the researcher. Thus, I find myself wondering how many questions remain unanswered by this study. Nevertheless, this research provides valuable insights from a rare interpretivist study of board leadership, albeit bound by particular board contexts; for example, two volunteer led boards with no employees at time of data collection. Second, while I had broad criteria in mind as to what would be a suitable case, in practice the selection was made through the process of gaining access and establishing during the course of that the case was appropriate for my research aims and proposed methodology. The case selection was derived from regional chairs' interest in response to a federation email. Following this process which included foreshadowing interviews, two boards in different shires of England chose to participate in the research. Third, while the research design takes account of trustees' decision making outside the boardroom, it does not allow for a full appreciation of non-trustees involvement in leadership dyads or as advisors. Finally, the study does not gain perspectives from all trustees. At the time of data collection, one trustee in each board did not grant me an interview. Additionally, the study does not provide a federation board perspective, originally

an element of the research design, as access in principle was not continued following the retirement of the then chair.

In terms of the theory of nonprofit board leadership, it is apparent from the literature that if one accepts that a 'board can only legally execute power as a group' (Pugliese, Nicholson and Bezemer 2015, p.19) then there is a clear need for further empirical studies of interdependent forms of everyday leadership processes and interactions over time. This is a promising area for further research.

Notwithstanding its limitations, it is argued that this study takes a step in this direction. However, it starts from a fundamentally different perspective to that of Puyvelde et al. (2018) and Pugliese, Nicholson and Bezemer, 2015) in that it views boards as teams, and is interested in how trustees and board teams actually share and take up leadership as opposed to focussing on individual leaders' relationships and competencies (e.g. chair/CEO) and the impact of interactions on board effectiveness.

7.8. Suggestions for future research

Exploring trustees experience of leadership in talk and in board interactions in practice from an interpretivist perspective has generated insight into what it means to 'act as a responsible charity board member' in taking up leadership in two volunteer-led nonprofit boards. This study has also identified gaps in the literatures of shared leadership (Pearce and Conger, 2003), self-leadership (Manz, 1986), teamwork (Katzenbach and Smith, 1993); positioning theory (Harre and Van Langenhove, 1999; 1991), and its associated form of agency as a discursive presentation (Harre, 1995) that could form the basis of future research in board

teams. It is hoped that this small interpretivist study has contributed to ongoing empirical efforts. To this end the leadership framework developed in this research may be useful.

Potentially the most valuable contribution of this study is the impact of trustees' different forms of leadership agency on their nonprofit boards. By employing positioning theory this interpretivist study offers a fresh lens through which to explore how board leadership works in practice. In this study, trustees acting as 'innovative agents' and 'constructive integrators' who can move around board constitutional roles and mechanisms, offer a more dynamic picture of decision making which takes account of what is happening outside and inside the boardroom.

A promising area for future research is boardroom interactions. Research should take a longitudinal approach to explore in more depth trustees' boardroom interactions in different settings within multiple federations. For example, while data which informed the descriptive analysis of the 'case organisation' were elucidated from the federation senior management team and regional chairs, the federation board was not the main focus of this study. However it could be the basis of future research. Further it is argued that the voice of regional committees is not fully appreciated in the design of this study, although interviews with regional chairs form part of the data. In turn the federation board is silent in this study, although it formed part of the original design.

In closing this section, I view UK federations as fertile ground to further explore multiple forms and levels of leadership by employing the framework of accountability and leadership agency together with the lens of positioning theory in different settings. For example,

individuals' interactions in board sub-committees, regional committees, and top teams in other contexts.

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▪ **Appendix 1. Interview protocol**

Version – 30 January 2019

Stage 1 Administration

Date and place of interview.....

Name of participantConfidential code.....

Name of boardBoard size.....

Role.....Length of service.....

Interview topics for stage 1

The interview topics are loosely framed and directed towards board members' experiences.

Role and experience

1. Would you mind telling me about your role and experience of leadership in this board?
2. Who helps you to carry out your board role?
3. Who are the main sources of leadership that you rely on for decision making – how do you ensure that decisions are implemented?

Board goals

4. What is your understanding of the board's current goals? Are resources in place to deliver these?
5. How would you describe the board's approach to accountability, specifically, looking after stakeholders' interests? If the board didn't hold meetings what do think would be the implications for stakeholders?
6. How is knowledge and information shared in the boardroom and across the federation?

Relationships – within the board team and across the federation

7. What is your most longstanding/influential working relationship within the board or across the network?

Follow up interview

Stage 2 Administration

Date and place of interview.....

Name of participantConfidential code.....

Name of boardBoard size.....

Role.....Length of service.....

Interview topics for stage 2

1. How was the stage 1 interview – what stands out for you?
2. Do you feel that you shared your ideas about the topics of what leadership means in this board?
3. With hindsight is there anything that you would have said differently or would like to change?

Introduce/validate themes

4. Do the themes offrom your stage 1 interview, reflect what leadership and governance mean for you?

Author 30/01/2019

▪ **Appendix 2. Glossary of terms integral to positioning theory**

Accountive positioning _ explicitly accounting for prior positioning acts as itself a social act

Acts _ the social meaning of actions

Action _ any intentional activity

Body positioning _ locating the body in social and physical context

Duty _ a demand placed by others on the person who owns it

Deliberate self-/other positioning – locating self or other in terms of agency, point of view, or biographical details as a move to gain advantage

Explicit positioning - to carry out a positioning act intentionally and overtly

Forced positioning - positioning someone in the eyes of others against the will of the person so appointed

Gender positioning - to carry out a positioning act in which gender differences are made salient

Illocutionary force _ the act one commits through an utterance (Austin,1962). How to do things with words.

Implicit positioning _ to carry out a positioning act in an unconscious manner

Indirect positioning – using mental, characterological, or moral traits to place a person or group into a position. Also referred to as presumptive positioning

Mutual positioning _ when what one person simultaneously positions self and other or ingroup and outgroup

Local moral order _ the dynamic, collaboratively negotiated cluster of rights and duties associated with particular positions embedded in a storyline

Malignant or malevolent positioning _ when what is said about a person leads others to think about and treat that person in harmful ways

Malignant social psychology positioning _ action that compromises the personhood of an individual and can lead to negative reactions such as hostility and learned helplessness

Meta positioning _ to explicitly reposition. See also accountive positioning and explicit positioning

Moral positioning – positioning someone into a recognizable social role e.g. mother, doctor

Performative positioning _ challenging or revising previous positioning acts. See also second and third order positioning acts

Perlocutionary force _ positioning someone in terms of their individual attributes and particularities (e.g. forgetful, generous, witty) in contrast to positioning by reference to supposed collective attributes such as class or ethnicity

Position _ a cluster of rights and duties that limits the repertoire of possible social acts available to a person or person-like entity such as a corporation as so positioned

Positioning acts _ (first, second, and third order) relationally situating at least two people (self and other) into a local moral order according to some storyline. First order positioning is an initial act of positioning. Second order positioning involves questioning and negotiating a first order positioning act made within the same conversation. Third order positioning is an act of repositioning made in a new context from that in which first order positioning took place

Positioning theory _ concerned with the social and psychological processes by which local moral orders are collaboratively and collectively upheld, and with the way the actions of participants are constrained to flow in accordance with normative and moral systems

Positioning triangle _ a metaphor for understanding the social significance of positioning acts, the three corners of which are positions, acts (such as speech acts), and storylines

Presumptive positioning _ see indirect positioning

Reflexive positioning _ when a person positions herself or himself

Right _ a demand placed on others by a person who believes that these others have a reciprocal duty to satisfy it

Self and other positioning - positioning oneself as contrasted with being positioned by others, and with positioning others

Social force _ See acts

Story lines _ a loose cluster of narrative conventions according to which a social episode unfolds and positions arise

Strategic positioning _ attributions of rights and duties that are to the advantage of the person who performs the positioning acts

Subject positions _ the beliefs concerning possibilities of action, and such psychological accompaniments as feelings and so on of someone positioned in a certain way

(Harre and Moghaddam, 2003)

▪ Appendix 3. Observation contact form

Observation contact form (adapted from Miles and Huberman, 1994)

Administration

Stage:.....

Date of meeting:.....

Board:

Number of board members:

Present:.....

Agenda items:.....

Headings for researcher's observation notes

- What are the main issues or themes that made an impression?
- What are the governance mechanisms that enable accountability?
- What are the contextual influences that shape leadership?
- To what extent shared leadership exists in the board team, if at all?
- How do these impressions/instances relate to the research objectives?
- What else jumped out as being important in this contact?
- What questions remain for exploration in stage 2?
- Summary of information from observation contact.

- **Appendix 4. Research project information leaflet and consent form
for research participants**

Lindsay Wilson-Jones
Department of Public Leadership and Social Enterprise
Centre for Voluntary Sector Leadership (CVSL)
The Open University Business School
Walton Hall
Milton Keynes
MK76AA, UK
Code Ref: IL1B (Board Members)

06 March 2019

Research Project Information Leaflet and Consent Form for Research Participants

Project title: *Sharing Leadership in Top Teams: A Study of Board Leadership in one UK Voluntary Sector Federation*

Principal Researcher: *Lindsay Wilson-Jones, PhD Student*

Dear

I am a PhD student at The Open University. I am researching board leadership and governance in one UK voluntary sector federation and I am exploring the nature and role of shared leadership and leadership processes in network governance and the impact on task complexity and uncertainty from the perspectives of board members and others external to the board.

Introductions to your RDA group have been facilitated by Ed Bracher, Federation CEO; Denise Robinson, Head of Therapy; and Matt Cobble, Group Volunteer Manager. I am going to give you information about the research aims and invite you to be part of this research. You can talk about the research, to anyone you feel comfortable with, before you consent to take part in this project. In the meantime, here is information about the purpose of this research.

Research Purpose

My PhD research explores how board members of 3 – 4 RDA federated boards and others external to these boards, take up leadership and enact governance. It is important to emphasise that my role is not about evaluating or judging individual or board performance. I want to explore what it is like for board members and others within the RDA to lead; who are the sources of formal and informal leadership, and how do these emerge over time. Also, what are the contextual influences, including geographic factors that shape leadership. To do this, I want to learn more about the processes of board leadership; the social interactions between board members and how these boards work as a team in the boardroom, and across the federation, together with analysis of board documents that illustrate each board's work.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. It is your choice whether to participate or not. If you choose to participate, but later change your mind, you can stop participating at any time prior to the analysis of the data gathered from you with no adverse consequences. Also, you can ask for data that you have given

that have not been processed, to be disposed of. Please note that once the data have been anonymised, processed and analysed you will not be able to withdraw from the research.

This research is important, as by having a better understanding of how boards in one UK voluntary sector federation work in practice, we can broaden and share our knowledge about leadership and governance with other organisations. This potentially enables us to help boards avoid reputational damage; work more transparently to fulfil their legal and ethical responsibilities, and protect the interests of their stakeholders, beneficiaries and wider local society.

Invitation to participate in this research

You are being invited to take part in this research because your experience and understanding of what it means to be a board member; an actor in the RDA federation or external to the organisation, can contribute much to our understanding and knowledge about leadership and governance in practice in voluntary sector boards.

Who is carrying out the research?

PhD Student, Lindsay Wilson-Jones is carrying out the research supervised by Dr Carol Jacklin-Jarvis and Prof Richard Holti.

Lindsay has successfully completed a 'Master of Research' degree as training and preparation for this PhD project, together with ongoing training in different research methods and techniques.

What is involved?

The observation and video-recording of two routine board meetings in which you routinely participate and two face to face interviews (digitally recorded) of about 1 hour each. A third element of the research is a desk review of board documents, but this does not involve your active participation. So overall the anticipated time commitment involved, over and above your usual board or functional activity is:

- 1 hour for interview in the first half of 2019 in the week of a routine board meeting;
- 1 hour for interview in the second half of 2019 in the week of a routine board meeting

Anonymity Conditions

My understanding is that the RDA will wish to be named as the participating organisation. However, both your board and the geographic region in which your group provides services will be anonymised and identified only by confidential codes. You will be assigned a participant code from which the data collected from you will be captured in relation to the board or functional category of work that you perform. For example, 'volunteer' 'staff', 'expert', 'actor in federation'. No personal information that might identify you will be used in the thesis, other publication or report, based on this project. Data that you have consented to give will be anonymised and stored electronically on The Open University Open Research Data Online (ORDO) and disposed of after 10 years. The audio-record of your interview along with the video-record of meetings observed for this project will be transcribed and anonymised, and any other data that identifies you will be disposed of at the end of three years of successful completion of the PhD.

Confidentiality

You have a right to expect that the information you provide will be treated confidentially. Your participation will be treated in accordance with the GDPR (The EU General Data Protection Regulation, 2016/679). The project is registered under code 4306 for data protection compliance.

Personal information will not be shared with anyone outside of the research team of Lindsay Wilson-Jones; Dr Carol Jacklin-Jarvis and Prof Richard Holti. Data will be stored electronically under password protected files in the OU server system. Paper notes will be locked in the researcher's desk and shredded as soon as all data is stored electronically on OU secure servers.

University Approvals

This research project has been reviewed by and received a favourable opinion from the OU Human Research Ethics Committee – HREC reference number HREC/3001/Wilson-Jones.

<http://www.open.ac.uk/research/ethics/>

Risk

An OU checklist conducted as part of the ethics application process, does not suggest potential harm for your participation.

Closing

The lawful basis for processing your data is explicit 'Informed Consent'.

Contacts

Contact person for questions about the project should be directed to:

Lindsay Wilson-Jones (Mrs)
PhD Student
Centre for Voluntary Sector Leadership (CVSL)
Department of Public Leadership and Social Enterprise
Faculty of Business and Law
Lindsay.wilson-jones@open.ac.uk

Contacts for raising any concerns about the project should be directed to Dr Carol Jacklin-Jarvis in the first instance

Lead Supervisor

Dr Carol Jacklin-Jarvis
Lecturer in Management
Centre for Voluntary Sector Leadership (CVSL)
Department of Public Leadership and Social Enterprise
Faculty of Business and Law
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Second Supervisor

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Richard.holti@open.ac.uk

Informed Consent

Sharing Leadership in Top Teams: A Study of Board Leadership in one UK Voluntary Sector Federation

Please tick the appropriate boxes

1. Taking part in the study

I have read and understood the study information datedor it has been read to me.

Yes

No

I have been able to ask questions about the study and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Yes

No

I consent voluntarily to be a participant to be a participant in this study and Understand that I can refuse to answer questions and I can withdraw from the study at any time up until data that have been gathered from me is anonymised at the point of transcription without having to give a reason.

Yes

No

I understand that taking part in the study involves two 1-hour interviews a few months apart and participation in two routine board meetings that will be videoed. Individual interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed by the researcher, where possible. Alternatively anonymised audio-recordings will be transcribed by a professional transcription service known to the OU. Similarly video recordings of meetings being observed will be transcribed by the researcher or a professional transcription service. Please indicate your consent to the following:

- I agree to participate in two interviews

Yes

No

- I agree to both interviews being audio-recorded

Yes

No

- I agree to board meetings being video- recorded

Yes

No

- I agree to photos being taken during the observation of meetings

Yes

No

2. Use of the information in the study

I understand that information I provide will be available for access for 10 years by other researchers. Planned outputs include publication in academic journals and professional journals and websites; reports and book chapters.

Yes

No

I understand that personal information collected about me that can identify me, such as my name or where I live, will not be shared beyond the researcher and the supervision team.

Yes

No

I understand that my data will be stored in Open Research Data Online for 10 years when it will be destroyed.

Yes

No

I understand that publications will be listed in the Open Research Online repository

Yes

No

I agree that my anonymised information can be quoted in research outputs

Yes

No

I wish to receive a summary of the research findings

3. Signatures

Name of Participant [IN
CAPITALS]

Signature

Date

For participants unable to sign their name, mark the box instead of signing

☐

I have witnessed the accurate reading of the consent form with the potential participant and the individual has had the opportunity to ask questions. I confirm that the individual has given consent freely.

Name of Witness [IN
CAPITALS]

Date

This research project has been reviewed by and received a favourable opinion, from the OU Human Research Ethics Committee – HREC reference number HREC/3001/Wilson-Jones.

<http://www.open.ac.uk/research/ethics>