

IDENTITY IN PRACTICE
A SOCIOCULTURAL EXPLORATION OF
LEADERSHIP LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

This thesis presents a narrative study of leadership identity from a sociocultural perspective. Drawing on Bakhtinian, Vygotskian and Bourdieusian perspectives as a lens to conceptualise identity – Holland et al's (1998) *Agency and Identity in Cultural Worlds* (figured worlds) – and argues that learning and development are intrinsically linked to identity construction as individuals, cultural forms, and social positions, come together in co-development, as identity in practice.

A thematic analysis, presented as stories from practice, illuminates and explores the contexts of identity construction, as narrated through: early life, childhood and youth; formal study and training; '*learning moments*' from organisational life reflecting tensions of power, discourse and policy; and the influence of 'good' and 'bad' leaders – as heroes and villains – of leadership worlds.

Overall, a struggle between rhetorical discourses of leadership and organisational realities presented many contradictions to practice as identity work involved putting on '*a professional mask*' to '*act the part*' of a '*tough*' invulnerable leader. Living life in the '*gap*' between discourse and organisational realities was then often narrated as '*a bit of a mess*' as stories of tension, resistance and negotiation featured alongside reflections on the complexity of organisational life and the '*collision*' of professional and personal expectations. However, at times, leadership identity work also reflected a chance to '*play the game*' and improvise new possibilities for practice narrated through stories of: '*free-wheeling*', '*winning*' and '*rebellious*' against '*bureaucratic*' cultures; '*fighting for the underdog*' against '*aggressive, self-interested*' autocrats; challenging gender positioning in a '*man's world*'; and navigating '*the dark side of leadership*' as a '*good*' ethical leader authentically and emotionally '*hidden*' behind the veil of identity performance.

In offering life history accounts that highlight the tensions, and the possibilities, of leadership identity work in practice, this research presents insights and contributions to growing debates across leadership studies, leadership and management development research, and the educational leadership field. Overall this thesis argues that identity work is an integral aspect of leadership practice, learning and development.

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Dedication

To my 'quiet' supporters along the way; my family and friends – my loved ones – near and far, in my memories, across the oceans and within the stars, for everything you have taught me about living, surviving and thriving, I dedicate this thesis to you for such treasured companionship, patience, support, love and understanding. Without you, this journey would not have been possible.

Dr Fiona Creaby

11 November 2016

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Declaration of Authorship

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Chapter One

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

This research is interested in the study of leadership identity from sociological traditions, as a reciprocal relationship between self and society (Stets and Burke, 2003; Holland et al, 1998). As *'a social and cultural lens emphasizes leadership discourse, communication, and relational stances'* (Fairhurst, 2011:495), this research is underpinned by constructionist and dialogical perspectives and draws on a sociocultural lens through a narrative inquiry to explore the oral life histories of three education practitioners who have held organisational leadership roles throughout their careers. It offers an exploration of leadership identity that is uncommon across leadership and management development (LMD) debates and the educational leadership field, aiming to contribute insights to the development of leadership practice and the contexts of its enactment.

Leadership, as a vastly debated and heavily researched concept, is an interdisciplinary area of study with discussion across 'mainstream' fields such as organisation theory, management science, and human resources, as well as across the humanities and the social sciences, including fields such as psychology, political science, economics, and education (Carroll et al, 2015; Gunter, 2012b; Gronn, 2011; Grint, 2005a). The study of identity from sociological traditions is a developing perspective amongst leadership scholars in more recent times (Ford, 2015a, Alvesson, 2011). Despite this growing interest, research following these perspectives is limited across mainstream fields and the humanities, including education (Carroll, 2015; Western, 2013; Sinclair, 2011).

With a long history of debate, leadership has remained a rather contested topic (Day and Atonakis, 2012). Before briefly exploring major perspectives across leadership debates to situate the context of this research, my rationale and motivations for this study will be introduced along with my own background. This chapter then moves to outline the research focus and questions that have directed this study before closing with a chapter reading guide.

1.1 Rationale for the study

Throughout my personal and professional experiences, I have always been intrigued by the similarities and differences of leadership practice across different contexts and cultures. My undergraduate and postgraduate studies in leadership and management, and in education, along with my academic practice and time spent in leadership roles across various organisations, have contributed to my interests over the years. This has been especially based around how people come to learn, understand and practice leadership my interest in in human development and professional practice as developed.

1.1.1. My background

After around a decade of working within leadership and management roles, predominantly in the not-for-profit and education sectors from middle to senior management level, I moved into Higher Education (HE) taking on a lecturing role in education business management earning fellowship of the Higher Education Academy through the postgraduate study of academic practice. My professional experience includes cross-cultural work, having lived and worked in England and Australia, with time spent in a variety of organisational settings across different sectors, including: Higher Education (HE) as an academic and programme leader; compulsory state schooling as a business manager and senior school leader; childhood education and care as a senior manager; community focused charities as an administrator, manager and project co-ordinator; and consultancy work in leadership and management development in the vocational education and training sector.

1.1.2. My motivations and interests

I began my doctoral research journey as I moved into academic practice, inspired by my colleagues and fellow researchers and my continued interest in leadership development. This thesis is therefore a continuation and deepening of my journey to understand more about leadership practice, learning and development, particularly in relation to culture and context and how this influences practice. I was introduced to a variety of perspectives in the early stages of the doctoral programme, including

discourse analysis, social theories of self and society and psychoanalysis. Despite an initial interest in psychological perspectives, I began to focus on exploring identity from sociological traditions in light of growing interest in this approach entering leadership debate (e.g. Alvesson, 2011; Carroll and Levy, 2010; Fairhurst, 2009; Grint, 2005a). As I engaged increasingly with sociological readings of self and society, such as through the work of George H. Mead (1934), Kenneth J. Gergen (e.g. 2009; 1996) and Vivien Burr (e.g. 2003), I found my interest moving towards sociocultural theory as I increasingly reflected on my own leadership development as a practitioner, as well anecdotal accounts from colleagues and students I have worked with. I began to view identity as integral to leadership practice which, through ongoing experience, is continually developed over time. As I deepened my understanding of sociological traditions around identity, Holland et al's (1998) '*Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds*' (figured worlds) became a key text within this research due to its sociocultural framework on identity in practice. As chapter two (*literature review and theoretical framework*) explores, Holland et al (1998) bring together perspectives from cultural studies, anthropology, social psychology, social constructivism, linguistics, sociology and sociohistorical schools of thought around learning and social development to explore identity.

Holland et al (1998) draw on Bakhtinian, Vygotskian and Bourdieusian notions to discuss identity development as they argue for a perspective that frames identity as a performance of multiple selves in social worlds, continually developed through social engagement over time and discursively influenced by cultural models, relations of power and social positions of status and privilege. Therefore, through Holland et al's (1998) framework, identity is argued within this research as constantly reforming in practice, where performances respond to various discursive social scripts, yet can also develop over time as new ways of being are learned and improvised which can present new possibilities for practice. Hence, it appreciates leadership practice as an on-going development of identity work in contexts of practice, whereby those contexts are influential to and influenced by identity work, thus underpinning the reciprocal relationship between self and society (Holland et al, 1998). Overall, as a leadership and management educator, Holland et al's (1998) theoretical framework appeals to me as it facilitates the appreciation of a wide range of perspectives that encourages reflexivity and development in leadership practice, as chapter two will explore further.

1.2 *Situating the context of research*

As noted at the start of this chapter, leadership is a highly contested concept, with several major perspectives growing in mainstream debates that conceptualise leadership in different ways. It is useful to offer a brief overview of some perspectives here, to outline terms that the chapter two and chapter three (*methodology*) will traverse, and to help situate this research in the leadership debate.

Functionalist, constructionist, dialogical and critical perspectives will be briefly explored before moving to an overview of current thinking around identity, educational leadership and development as relevant to this research before moving to outline the focus of this research and its questions.

1.2.1. *Leadership perspectives*

Functionalist perspectives

Although leadership is a highly contested topic, with many competing discourses, there is growing consensus amongst scholars around the dominance of ‘functionalist’ leadership thinking across wider debates (Western, 2013; Ford et al, 2010). ‘Functionalist’ perspectives, sometimes referred to as normative, traditional or classical theories, focus on individualistic leader-centric approaches (Carroll, 2015) and place emphasis on the ‘function’ of leadership, concerned with effectively achieving outputs or outcomes, rather than on the process of it. Therefore, leadership has predominantly been understood in performative terms based around organisational success and the performance of ‘effective leaders’, placing much attention to the ‘leader’ role historically (Crevani, 2015; Morrison, 2013; Mabey, 2013; Alvesson and Spicer 2011). However, there is increasing criticism of these discourses as leadership is increasingly argued as a social process within organisations, that are themselves argued as complex social realities (Collison, 2011; Fairhurst, 2011; Bligh, 2011; Alvesson, 2011; Cunliffe, 2009). In terms of this criticism, there is growing debate around the performative influence of such discourses to practice through increasing pressure on practitioners to

produce a distinct fixed leadership identity, which is usually rhetorically posited through moralising, and often heroic, masculinized discourses (Ford, 2015b; Collinson, 2011; Lumby and English, 2009; Sinclair, 2007) as chapter two will explore.

Constructionist perspectives

Social constructionism is a concept that draws on multiple ideas and an array of perspectives and methods, as discussed in depth by Burr (2015), and Gergen (2009), and by Fairhurst and Grant (2010) specifically in relation to leadership. As chapter 2 and 3 will explore, social constructionism *'rejects the notion of absolute truth and objectivity in favour of the plurality of meaning'* (Ford, 2015a:243). Hence, there is no objective 'truth' to leadership as meaning is subjective and understood as socially and culturally constructed and reproduced through social interaction (Fairhurst and Grant, 2010; Ospina et al, 2012b; Grint, 2010a). This is important to leadership practice as it argues individuals and social worlds are interwoven whereby leadership is a relational social process and must be understood in context in relation to historical and cultural symbolic meaning, which is contested and under constant negotiation (Burr, 2015; Mabey, 2013; Fairhurst and Grant, 2010; Grint, 2000). Therefore, leadership identity is understood as a socially constructed performance negotiated in the contexts of social worlds (Mabey 2013; Gergen, 2009).

Dialogical perspectives

Dialogical perspectives often draw on social constructionism and poststructuralist thinking (Carroll, 2015). Poststructuralism is a perspective emerging in leadership debate (Carroll, 2015; Ford, 2015a) and is primarily concerned with the significance of context and the role of discourse and language in constructing and shaping social practice (Burr, 2015; Ford, 2015a). As realities are socially and culturally constructed (sociocultural), multiple 'truths' (discourses) compete for dominance, negotiated in contexts of cultural and historical (sociohistorical) significance where discourses are the very *'tools that build the self in contexts of power'* (Holland et al, 1998:27). Dialogical perspectives then consider leadership as interactive and 'in-dialogue' as on-going

negotiation of identity performance, which is contextually and discursively influenced (Ford, 2015a; Burr, 2015). Dialogical perspectives are also interested in how identities are constructed, regulated and disciplined through discursive expectations (Carroll, 2015; Mabey, 2013; Fairhurst and Grant, 2010). As discourse *'is a site of variability, disagreement and potential conflict'* (Burr, 2015:63), the focus is then on identity as a dialogical performance of the self, which is fragmented, fluid and contradictory (Ford, 2015a; Mabey, 2013; Fairhurst and Grant, 2010). Therefore, dialogical perspectives are focused on the messy, paradoxical and conflictual nature of practice in social worlds and how these practices have come about through discursive means (Mabey, 2013).

Critical perspectives

Critical perspectives, also known as critical leadership studies 'CLS', or critical theory 'CT' (Ford, 2015a; Western, 2013; Collison, 2011; Fairhurst and Grant, 2010) is also a growing area of debate within leadership studies. Being critical is to *'take a more radical, reflective and questioning stance'* (Western, 2013:5) that unsettles, and challenges 'taken-for-granted' notions from mainstream functionalist traditions. Critical perspectives are quite diverse, often drawing on social constructionist and poststructuralist thinking to question social, cultural and historical conditions and unveiling power dynamics in leadership practice (Ford, 2015a; Western, 2013; Ospina et al (2012a). The focus is often on notions of knowledge-production, power and resistance, in looking for new possibilities through the implications of social action (Western, 2013; Mabey, 2013). Thus, critical perspectives often explore matters at wider societal macro-level through issues of social positioning and the basis and purpose of knowledge-production at wider state, policy and sector level (Ford, 2015a). The aim is to explore implications of policy, power and social structure on practitioners and the influences of this to identity regulation as they seek to challenge orthodoxy and bring about systemic change (Ford, 2015a; Mabey, 2013; Western, 2013; Gunter, 2009; 2012a).

1.2.2. Identity and leadership development

As this research understands identity as socially constructed and developed in practice over time through experience – as heuristically developed (Holland et al, 1998) – it is thus intrinsically linked to leadership development. Development and Learning are increasingly argued as integral aspects of leadership, whereby learning is understood as acquiring knowledge and skills, and development is understood as to advance, expand and grow over time (Carroll, 2015). As Day et al (2014) argues, leadership practice is a longitudinal process of human development involving a complex set of processes, hence there is a *'need to focus on development as much as leadership to shed light on how this process unfolds'* (2014:64). Therefore, as Holland et al's (1998) conception of identity appreciates human development in this way, as a heuristic development of leader-selves in practice over time, as Gee (2011) argues, it is a helpful way to frame identity to understand leadership and development in practice.

The major perspective historically drawn upon in much leadership development literature and research follows dominant functionalist leadership discourses and is focused on the 'leader' role and the cognitive functions of individuals in that role (Day and Sin, 2011; Mabey and Finch-Lees, 2008). Other perspectives are beginning to emerge, including the study of identity and reflexivity is increasingly argued for (Carroll, 2015; Day et al, 2014; Mabey, 2013). Reflexivity involves going beyond self-reflection to explore and unsettle taken-for-granted assumptions about discourse, practice and the world (Cunliffe, 2009). In taking this approach it can illuminate the *'tension, struggle, and ambiguity of leadership identity construction processes'* (Fairhurst and Grant, 2010:192) placing the emphasis on on-going development.

Following Simkins (2012), throughout this study I use the term 'leadership and management development', abbreviated often as LMD, to refer to leadership learning and development. This includes both *'developing individual leaders and developing effective leadership processes'* (Day et al, 2014:64) through formal activities like qualifications, accredited programmes of study and training, and informal activities, such as on-the-job training, mentoring and coaching, evaluation and consultancy, personal study and reflection and so forth.

1.2.3. Educational Leadership

Leadership is very much a part of the global education policy language and the increasing complexities of providing high quality education standards is increasingly cited across sectors in the education field (Napier, 2014; Ball, 2013; Gunter, 2001). Debate around turbulence and uncertainty is increasing in across the field internationally in light of globalisation, policy reforms, funding changes and increasing market competition (Shapiro and Woods, 2015; Bolden et al, 2014; Apple, 2010; Glatter, 2009; Bryman, 2007). Hence, a point of interest for this research is how leadership is understood alongside this sense of uncertainty and complexity within education, in what is increasingly discussed as a rapidly changing context (Morrison, 2013; Fullan and Scott, 2009). These issues, and the importance of education in society, have been explored in depth within different sectors, such as by Fullan (e.g. 2010; 2003), Apple (e.g. 2012; 2010), Ball (e.g. 2013; 2012; 2010), Gunter (e.g. 2013a; 2012b; 2001b) and Glatter (e.g. 2012; 2009).

Leadership thinking across sectors in education historically draws from ‘mainstream’ fields, such as organisational theory and management, predominantly relying on functionalist discourses (Bush, 2011). Therefore, in education, leadership has been placed hand-in-hand with effectiveness as ‘the’ way to improve education standards as Simkins (2012), Bolden et al (2012), Fitzgerald and Gunter (2008) and Bush (2008) argue. This is a trend that is reflected internationally in education as leadership is attuned to notions of education reform as a mechanism for change (Gunter, 2013a; Apple, 2011; Ball, 2010). The importance of this here is in relation to how leadership is essentialised in education, positing ‘leaders’ as ‘effective’ change-agents in a performative sense, leading educational improvements for better outcomes, yet is increasingly cited as difficult in the complexity of education provision and the growing turbulence cited across the field (Woods and Simkins, 2014; Morrison, 2013; Gunter, 2012b; Ball, 2010; 2006). Indeed, as an increasing tension within practice, functionalist prescriptions that do not appreciate context were cited across the education field globally as a dilemma at the 2015 British Educational, Management and Administration Society (BELMAS) conference. Many presenters articulated the need to explore practitioner experiences of conflicting discourses of values and ethics as they raised the increasing complexity

faced within education systems from different country contexts. This was in addition to many arguments for the need to critically explore the impact of policy on role expectations and the influence of power, discourse and knowledge production in increasingly changing policy contexts. Indeed, educational leadership *'is a crowded and busy terrain [...] in terms of policy texts that seek to redefine roles and tasks in schools as leadership'* (Gunter, 2009:94).

Therefore, exploring the very nature of 'reality' and the conflicts and paradoxes that exist around ethics and values is argued as increasingly important across the education field globally (Torrence and Humes, 2015; Hammersley-Fletcher, 2015; Hatcher, 2012, Gunter, 2012; Hartley 2007). Indeed, research into practitioner lived experience is increasingly being called for to help to provide rich accounts and insights into practice and context, as a way to explore these tensions (Simkins, 2012). Hence, approaches that appreciate dialogical, reflexive and critical exploration of practice, identity, context and leadership development are being increasingly argued for within the field (e.g. by Woods and Simkins, 2014; Simkins, 2012; Close and Raynor, 2010).

1.2.4. What about management...?

When discussing leadership throughout this thesis, particularly during the analysis of practitioner narratives, the term 'management' often comes into play. Historically, as Ladkin (2015) explains, leadership often dominates as a preferred term within mainstream literature, having evolved from 'management' to 'leadership' from the 1990s. The two terms are often used interchangeably within education language from a global perspective, appearing also as 'administration' and 'management' across sectors and contexts, with 'leadership' the dominant term in England (Gunter, 2012; Bush, 2011).

As the focus here is on leadership identity work, and the debate around management and leadership has been had elsewhere (e.g. Western, 2013; Bush, 2011; Hallinger, 2003, Crawford, 2003; Blackmore, 1999; Glatter, 1999), it is felt unnecessary to discuss the debate between the two at any length here, however, it is useful to briefly acknowledge the discursive interplay between the two concepts when it comes to the

functioning of organisations (Crawford, 2014). In mainstream discourse, leadership is often linked to notions of change, chaos, unpredictability and creativity; management to notions of control, stability, coordinating and organising through rational responses to known problems (Carroll et al, 2015; Ladkin, 2015; Bush, 2011; Western, 2013; Grint, 2005b). Furthermore, leadership is often linked to softer or covert forms of power, like influence, whereas management is often linked to harder or more overt forms of power, such as position power and authority-based structures of control (Carroll et al, 2015; Western, 2013; Weber, 1978). As Western (2013) argues, management can often be seen as the derogatory 'other' to leadership illuminating a discursive and contextually driven set of assumptions around what happens in the functioning of organisations, which comes back to discourse and power. In fields where 'managerialism' or forms of bureaucratic control create tensions to practitioner creativity and agency, such as argued increasingly within compulsory education (e.g. by Courtney and Gunter, 2015; Woods et al, 2013; Gunter et al, 2012) as chapter 2 will explore, the concept of 'management' can be seen as a form of control through imposing discourses of power that are understood as constraining practice. As Karlberg argues:

As a relational force, power constructs social organization and hierarchy by producing discourses and truths, by imposing discipline and order, and by shaping human desires and subjectivities

(Karlberg, 2005:4)

The power of discourse is important, as Karlberg highlights, as it shapes what individuals think and what individuals can do. Indeed, words like 'leadership' and 'leader' and 'management' and 'manager' *do* and *say* things to persons within the world and are not benign as words alone (Ford and Harding, 2008). The influence of discourse is a theme throughout this thesis which will be revisited in chapter 2. Overall, management and leadership as concepts are both understood here as important to organisational function (Western, 2013; Yukl, 2013; Bush, 2011) and as interrelated and necessary to one another, as Crawford (2003) argues, yet the meaning between the two is appreciated as discursive and contextually driven. Thus, when leadership is discussed throughout this thesis, particularly educational leadership, this does not negate the importance, nor the influence and presence, of management in organisational life and leadership identity work.

1.3 Research focus and aims

This section briefly outlines a summary of the research and the research questions that guide this study. The statement of research, below, is presented as a reminder at various sections of this thesis to aid the discussion, including; the data analysis chapter introduction and the final chapter, where the research questions are answered.

1.3.1. The research statement

This research is interested in the exploration of leadership identity as a relationship between self and society. Appreciating leadership as a discursively influenced social construction, situated in the social worlds of organisations, this study is a narrative inquiry, drawing on a sociocultural lens – Holland et al's (1998) identity in practice – to appreciate the importance of social constructivism, dialogism and relations of power in identity construction and leadership practice.

Through the analysis of practitioner stories, its aim is to offer an exploration of leadership identity that contributes to the growing body of knowledge within leadership and management development (LMD) research, wider leadership debates, and the educational leadership field.

1.3.2. The research Questions

- 1. What do stories of leadership practice offer as influential to the construction and development of leadership identity?*
- 2. What insights does the study of identity, from a sociocultural perspective, offer to wider leadership and management development debates, that informs the educational leadership field?*

1.4 Overview of the chapters

This chapter (one) has introduced the research context, how this research is situated within leadership studies and the educational leadership field, offered the rationale and motivations for the study and outlined the research focus and questions.

Chapter two (*Discussion of literature and theory*) is organised into two main sections. Firstly, it explores leadership as a wide discourse and secondly, it discusses the theoretical stance on identity taken in this research through Holland et al's (1998) identity in practice theory drawing on key aspects of the framework that inform the data analysis. Outlining how this approach can help explore leadership identity work, it argues this lens as a relatively uncommon approach in leadership identity study. Indeed, the study of identity from critical sociocultural perspectives, like figured worlds, is limited across the wider debates, and particularly limited in educational leadership discussions, thus outlining what it could add to the field.

Chapter three (*Methodology*) discusses the methodological approach of the research. Outlining the exploration of lived experience through narrative inquiry, it discusses the methods of data collection and the analytical approach – thematic analysis – offering reflections on the approach taken and how the data is arranged, interpreted and read. The chapter also discusses the reflexivity of the study, its multi-vocality and co-constructed nature, and outlines the ethical considerations taken along with a discussion of my position as the researcher.

Chapter four (*Data analysis*) as the largest section of thesis, is broken down into several sub-chapters to aid the flow and coherence of the analysis. It begins with an introductory sub-chapter, with a reminder of the research focus and questions, and introduces the participants, Vivienne, Patrick and James, through brief contextual statements that outline their backgrounds to situate them within the context of the research. Five further sub-chapters then follow which explore their stories thematically through the themes that emerged during the data analysis phase. This chapter then concludes with a brief summary that leads the reader into the final chapter of the thesis.

Chapter five (*Conclusion and reflections*) is the final chapter of the thesis and offers an overview of the research. The first section of the chapter highlights the main findings in relation to the research questions outlining the contributions and implications the research offers to the educational leadership field and broader LMD discussions and outlines further work that would be useful to undertake in order to expand on this research. Bringing this thesis to a close, the second section of the chapter offers my conclusions and reflections on the research, and my own learning journey and development through the EdD, along with some future areas of interest developed through the research.

Following chapter five are the references and appendices. The appendices provide supplemental chapter information, where relevant, as referred to by each chapter, including the participant invitation and ethical consent information.

Chapter Summary

Overall, leadership has been introduced here as a contested concept, with many streams of discussion, and my focus has been situated within developing contemporary and critical debates as constructionist and dialogical. The rationale for the study reflects my own professional and academic development and interests as well as considering how this research can contribute the debates within LMD research and educational leadership. Chapter two (review of literature and theory), which follows, further supports the research aims, by deepening understanding of the relevant leadership thinking and the theoretical framework on identity in practice.

Chapter Two

Discussion of literature and theory

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CHAPTER TWO

Discussion of literature and theory

Chapter Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings from an academic review of leadership and identity literature and explores the theoretical framework employed within this research. These discussions are organised into two sections: *Leadership: reviewing the literature*; and *Identity in practice: framing a sociocultural perspective*.

Firstly, in section one (*leadership*), the findings from the academic literature review of leadership theory, research and debate is discussed, drawn from mainstream leadership discussions across several fields including: management science, organisational studies and human resources; and communications, humanities and the social sciences, including psychology and sociology, as well as the educational leadership field.

Secondly, in section 2.2, the study of identity is explored, firstly by briefly discussing how leadership literature has conceptualised identity, then secondly moves to explore the theoretical framework on identity from Holland et al's (1998) key text: *Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds* discussing how this can be useful for exploring leadership identity.

The chapter then comes to a close with a brief summary of the main points raised and moves on to chapter three: *methodology*.

2.1 *Leadership: reviewing the literature*

Despite the vast amount of research conducted, leadership cannot be universally defined and there are many contradicting discourses around it. As Day and Atonakis (2012) argue, this has become an increasing consensus across many leadership scholars e.g. Ford et al (2015a), Yukl (2013), Alvesson and Spicer (2011), Fairhurst (2009), Uhl-Bien et al (2012) and Grint (2005a). Thus, as a socially constructed and contested concept, the multiple discourses that discuss leadership take particular stances on understanding and positing its practice, which were highlighted in the introductory chapter (chapter one): functionalist, constructionist, dialogical and critical. To explore these many discourses of leadership, this section of the chapter is broken down into three sub-sections, ending with a summary before moving to the second part of the chapter.

The first sub-section (2.1.1) highlights leadership as a discursive concept, articulating what is meant by 'discourse' here in this research. It explores how leadership has become embedded in societal and institutionalized thinking due to the dominance of functionalist thinking, particularly around notions attached to the leader role, as briefly highlighted in the introductory chapter.

The second sub-section (2.1.2) then moves to a discussion around dominant discourses of leadership and leadership and management development (LMD) appear historically as predominantly functionalist in perspective with a strong presence in mainstream studies, such as organisational theory and management.

The third sub-section (2.1.3) explores contemporary discussions developing across leadership debates, emerging predominantly from the social sciences drawing on constructionist, dialogical and critical perspectives as noted in the introductory chapter. These debates are explored in relation to the often discursive notions posited by functionalist perspectives and this section highlights the current calls for contemporary perspectives within LMD research and educational leadership that appreciate complexity and fluidity in practice. A brief summary (2.1.4) then closes this section, moving the chapter to the second section, 2.2: *Identity: a sociocultural perspective*.

2.1.1. Leadership: a constructed and discursive concept

Before discussing the various dominant discourses historically and currently present across the leadership debate, and the developing emerging perspectives, the term 'discourse' is briefly outlined to explain the stance taken on what is meant by the term. The study of discourse is a widely debated area across the social sciences employing various theories and analytical approaches. Therefore, it is important to briefly explain what is meant by discourse in the context of this research and how it relates to leadership practice. Discourse often refers to communication, such as the study of linguistics, language and text (Gee, 2011). However, discourse can also relate to ways of thinking, being and acting in the world through common shared assumptions, expectations and perceptions (Western, 2013). It is the latter, which is of interest here as discourse is argued to imply '*an institutionalised way of thinking – a taken-for-granted (or normative) way of being*' (Western, 2013:512). Following the perspectives of Western (2013), Gee (e.g. 2011), Butler (e.g. 2004) and Fairhurst (e.g. 2009; 2011) discourse in this sense defines the limits of what is acceptable within practice and what is not (Butler, 2004). In taking Butler's view, the influence of leadership discourse to everyday life offers that this involves an orchestration of specific acts and imitations that embody notions of what doing leadership involves, such as being a 'leader', as meaningful within particular contexts. The importance of acknowledging the meaning of discourse here is because '*leadership has its own discourses, which shape how we think about leadership*' (Western, 2008:149). As Holland et al offer:

'socially constructed selves... are subject to positioning by whatever powerful discourses they happen to encounter... [this] conceives that discourses and practices to be the tools that build the self in contexts of power, rather than of stable interpretations of world and values that have been imparted to the person through enculturation.'

(Holland et al, 1998:27)

As leadership scholars such as Fairhurst (2009) and Crevani et al (2010) argue, leadership is highly discursive and performative and in this sense '*performativity draws on the notion that words are not just words, they do things*' Cunliffe (2009:10). Thus, discourses of leadership are influential to practice as the notions attached to them shape how

practitioners think about leadership through how they accept, challenge or resist specific embodiments of it. As Cunliffe (2011) further argues, these normative assumptions (norms) influence the construction of leadership identities as individuals seek to become '*a certain kind of person*' (Gee, 2011:30) in leadership worlds. This idea of norms and discourse are part of the underpinning argument within Holland et al's (1998) identity in practice – figured worlds – which will be explored in more depth section 2.2.2. This prelude to the importance of discourse leads now to highlight the influence of functionalist and individualistic thinking across leadership literature before moving to a brief exploration of the dominant discourses historically present throughout academic literature (sub-section 2.1.2).

Over 30 years ago, Meindl et al (1985:78) expressed the concern that leadership was '*largely elusive and enigmatic...*' with '*highly romanticized, heroic views of leadership*' often present from observers and participants of organisational life. Within this romanticized construct the role of 'leader' has often been posited through notions of greatness, righteousness, charisma, strength, resilience, courage, self-sacrifice, vision, fearlessness and invulnerability (Ford, 2015a; Ladkin, 2010). There has been much attention to strong narratives as rather fixed notions attached to leader effectiveness often linked to the achievement of organisational success, change and transformation (Sinclair, 2011; Ladkin, 2010; Malby, (2007). This is particularly present within discourses from industry aimed at organisational business leaders where prominent leaders have become brands and role-models with their particular attributes linked to organisational success (McLaren, 2013). Furthermore, this is also a strong moralising discourse within wider society through how leaders appear in popular culture through media, advertising and entertainment (Western, 2013; McLaren, 2010).

At a broader societal level, leaders are often caricatured as heroes or villains based on their ability to achieve success for the endeavours they lead, appearing often as stories of 'good or bad' leaders (Bligh et al, 2011; Collinson, 2011; Ladkin, 2010; Sinclair, 2007). In this sense, leadership appears as having '*colonized many fields of social endeavour ranging from... large corporations to self-direction in everyday life*' (Alvesson and Spicer, 2012:384). The importance of highlighting this, is that wider discourse is a powerful wide-ranging story, spanning many life-worlds evolving through time and thus constituting what has become a '*societal discourse around leadership*' (Crevani et al,

2010:78). Indeed, leadership has *'deep societal significance...with its own myths such as the 'great leader'* (Crawford, 2003:63). Thus, many powerful narratives around the purpose, function and enactment of the leader role are argued as commonplace across literature and practice (e.g. Alvesson and Spicer, 2012; Ladkin, 2010; Fairhurst, 2009; Meindl et al, 1985). These narratives, as several scholars term (e.g. Ford, 2015; Carroll 2015) have become embedded within various discourses of leadership with many asserting this as 'the' prescribed way to practice leadership as a leader within organisations (Western, 2013; Fairhurst, 2011; Grint 2005a). The prescribed 'greatness' often attached to leadership, reflects practitioners' attempts to navigate the many narratives and expectations placed upon them in the face of a still powerful simplistic *'one-size-fits-all hero leader'* discourse (Western, 2013:226). Therefore, wide discursive influences and societal notions are important to note as the assumptions attached to leadership and role of 'leaders' are interwoven through many life-worlds (Crevani et al, 2007; Grint, 2005a). Moreover,

'the right man at the top answer emerges frequently in our society... it will be hard for research to overcome the myths about the power of leaders to change organisational outcomes, because leadership has become so romanticised within our society.'

(Malby, 2007:3)

As Malby suggests, research is still challenged by this story as it appears as overly dominant in many debates as functionalist perspectives are still a societal way of conceptualising leadership (Ford, 2015b). As Grint (2011) argues, these myths and narratives around 'the leader at the top' often perceive that persons within those roles are the ones who can solve every problem as they have all the answers and will tell others what to do. These notions often place leaders as the overarching force within organisations underpinning hierarchical roles, top-down approaches and positions of formal authority, often placing followers often in subservient roles (Bligh et al, 2011). Furthermore, as Ford argues, leadership discourses often contain *'strong elements of masculinity that that act to strengthen male identities'* which reproduce *'asymmetrical gender relations in organisational life'* (2015a:243). As Ford further argues, much literature emphasises leader identity as a *'masculine competitive, aggressive, controlling and self-reliant individualist'* (2015a:243) notion. Indeed, as Sinclair and Evans (2015) argue research has increased since the 1990s exploring how leadership cultures have

been often '*dominated by masculine norms, such as valuing heroism and stoicism*' and thus rejecting vulnerability and weakness. (Sinclair and Evans, 2015:139). Hence, there is still a powerful narrative of a '*perfect being or super-hero model*' leader (Ford, 2015a:248) and continued pressure on practitioners to produce a distinct fixed leadership identity, which is becoming more problematic in the increasing complex and ambiguous social worlds of leadership practice (Sinclair, 2011; Lumby and English, 2009). These criticisms will be explored further, in section 2.1.3 (*calls for new approaches...*). Overall, it is impossible to ignore the many ways in which leadership appears and is enacted in everyday life hence the acknowledgement of this here in this section. Next, the following sub-section (2.1.2) will briefly explore the dominant discourses appearing throughout the literature review across several fields to gain a sense of historic and current influences to how it has been understood and researched and thus influences practice.

2.1.2: Dominant discourses of leadership

There has been much attention given to connections between leader effectiveness and organisational success through '*the primary question of what makes an effective leader*' (Collinson, 2011:182). However, the answer to this question has remained somewhat elusive (Day and Atonakis, 2012). Many approaches have sought to define the attributes, traits and behaviours as to what makes a great leader (Grint, 2011; Sinclair, 2007), e.g. trait/character theories, situational and contingency theories and psychometric testing. This focus on effectiveness has often been for the pursuit of efficiency and organisational success. For instance, Western (2013) describes this as '*the controller*' discourse where the purpose of leadership can be understood as the '*control of resources to maximise efficiency*' (2013:158). This discourse appeared as particularly dominant during the twentieth century during industrialisation, particularly through bureaucratic and scientific management theories such as Fordism and Taylorism and notions of Weberian bureaucracy (Handy, 1993; Weber, 1978). However, as Western (2013) asserts, this discourse is now currently more recognisable within audit and target cultures driven by accountability and improvement agendas through the use of performance measures. Within industry and business, stories of organisational success

and improvement are prevalent (Malby, 2007). This is also seen within academic literature from the education field where leadership has become a particularly dominant discourse, for instance in the UK since the 1990s, due to its increasing association with transformational change (Ball, 2012).

As chapter one (introduction) noted, leadership has become part of education policy language (Gunter, 2009) and as within business and industry, leadership has been placed hand-in-hand with notions of effectiveness as 'the' way to improve education standards, particularly in compulsory schooling in England for example (Ball, 2010). Also reflected internationally in the education field, as Gunter (2012b) and Morrison (2013) highlight, leadership is attuned to notions of education reform as a mechanism for change. Indeed, international comparisons of educational achievement have resulted in an increasing sense of performance competition in a more globalised education market, as Torrance and Humes (2015) argue. This has meant that leadership has become a strong rhetoric within political climates linked to education reform and seen as a way to drive economic transformations. Yet this often '*exists in a vacuum*' as Apple (2011:29-30) argues as this rhetoric does not consider the influence of broader social structures of power, instead looking predominantly to institutionalised education policies that are seen as the answer to societal issues of inequality. For instance, as many scholars highlight (e.g. Ball, 2013; 2012; Apple, 2012; Lumby, 2009; Gunter, 2012b; 2014), the pressures articulated by practitioners in school settings are increasing as political agenda continues to place expectations on school leaders to continually improve institutions through performance measures and popular discourses of leadership practice. As Morrison (2013) highlights, struggles ensue as practitioners are expected to continually sustain broad performance standards at the same time as transforming their schools in local settings through a continuous flow of new ideas. As Apple (2012; 2010) argues, this is set within wider assumptions that institutional policies will solve wider social issues, which create tensions in local settings where responses require variation.

Indeed, a considerable historical focus on the role of leadership and change is present across literature through theories such as transformational and charismatic leadership, which is underpinned by rather strong and romanticised notions of what leaders do (Collinson, 2011). The term 'heroic leadership' is often used to describe this within

literature and, as discussed in the last section, it has received much criticism due to unrealistic and unsustainable expectations of leaders e.g. by Carroll et al (2015), Alvesson (2015; 2011), Ladkin (2010), Fairhurst (2009), Ford (2006), and Grint (e.g. 2011;2005b). Western (2013) subsumes the many discourses that posit leader ideals as 'The Messiah' discourse of leadership which he argues is focused on building strong cultures and visions yet still asserts the presence of a '*heroic*' leader (Western, 2013:226). Within these transformational and 'messiah' discourses, leaders are often portrayed as providing strong direction to subservient followers through charismatic performances for the purpose of achieving new levels of success (Grint, 2005a). This romanticised performance is increasingly criticised as difficult to sustain (e.g. Malby, 2007 and Ford, 2015b; 2006) with the potential for negative forms of narcissism to grow that can create destructive tendencies and dysfunctional cultures within organisations (Tourish, 2013; Grint, 2011; Bolden, 2007; Kets de Vries, 2014; 2006b; 2005). In response to the increasing concern around narcissistic cultures in organisations (O'Reilly et al, 2014; Kets de Vries and Balasz, 2011) discourses around corporate social responsibility and moral leadership grew considerably during the last decade whereby issues of leader authenticity, resilience, values and ethics have been argued in juxtaposition to notions of charisma, invulnerability and vision (Board, 2016; Tourish, 2013). As Western (2013) asserts, authenticity within leadership can be understood as a new breed of introverted heroic leader, as a '*humble leader*' (2013:47) and despite claiming very different approaches, these still emphasise leaders and their actions in functionalist ways. This appears through prescriptive notions of self-assessment and the resilience, ethics, values and emotions a leader should possess and how they '*ought to behave*' (Brown and Trevino, 2006:596).

Similarly, notions of servant leadership whereby the leader places the needs of follower first have emerged as a values-driven discourse around self-sacrifice, often presenting leadership behaviour and qualities at the forefront (Greenleaf, 2002). As Tourish (2013) argues, these moral and ethical discourses have often positioned moral, authentic and servant forms of leadership as a 'steward' of sorts to govern the potential impact that organisations could have on wider society. However, they have still placed considerable pressure on the role of leaders through notions of 'good', 'great' and 'successful' with underpinning values remaining as a social construction of 'right' and 'wrong' as argued

by Advares-Yorno (2016), Grint (2011) and Alvesson (2011). However, As Tourish (2013) argues, there is limited attention paid to the values that underpin practice. Instead, as Tourish (2013) argues, LMD discourse has primarily focused ways to create a desired image by positing uncontested 'norms' of what a good authentic leader is and ought to be rather than complicating and deconstructing the contradictory nature of how values actually come to the fore, which will be explored further in the next section (2.1.3). There are also other dominant discourses that consider more the relational aspects of leadership and followership and motivational, coaching and participative forms of leadership (Collinson, 2011). As an interest in followership is growing across leadership debate (Crevani, 2015; Uhl-Bien et al, 2012), these approaches take a more cognitive and behavioural approach to leadership, and as Collinson (2011) further adds, they focus on notions of individualism, personal growth and democracy e.g. transactional leadership, leader-member exchange, coaching and motivation theory. Western (2013) refers to these approaches as 'The Therapist' discourse of leadership which he explains asserts a basis that '*happy workers are more productive workers*' (2013:158) yet explains that these notions again predominantly focus on the role of leaders and what they do to create these cultures. Indeed, despite a growing interest in relational leadership moving away from the leader-centric focus, the dominant view across literature presents followers as subservient and there has been wide criticism for the lack of appreciation of context within relational leadership debates (Collinson, 2011).

Overall, as criticisms of functionalists discourses have grown since the turn of the twenty-first century, leadership has been increasingly argued as a systemic process that cannot sit with any one individual.

As more and more leadership scholars try to think themselves out of or beyond the heroic impulse that came to dominate the field for the last quarter century or so, a number of post-heroic alternatives are currently under consideration

(Gronn, 2011:437)

As Gronn reflects, and Bolden (2016; 2011) also argues, there are a variety of discourses that now argue leadership as shared, collective and dispersed throughout systems and across persons in a wider sense, or as networks and connections as Western explains (2013). Within these more contemporary approaches, as Collinson (2011) explains,

leadership practices are understood as less hierarchical as they consider notions of shared power, which the next section moves to explore shortly (2.1.3). However, before moving to this, a discourse of note here for its popularity and dominance, particularly in English compulsory education sector, is 'distributed leadership'. Although essentially argued as a social and relational process situated in contexts of activity (Gronn, 2000; Engestrom, 1999; Holland et al, 1998), it has become a popular discourse across leadership debates over the last fifteen years, as political agenda in the education system has positioned distributed notions of leadership within policy language (Lumby, 2013; Gronn, 2010). As Hartley (2010) argues, distributed Leadership has been pushed as 'the' way to improve education following the 'waning' of more transformational approaches thus pushing a more collaborative story of leadership into schools. However, as Gronn (2015; 2009) explains, distributed leadership is a contested construct experiencing much conceptual confusion in how it can be achieved and analysed. Hence, there is a '*discursive struggle*' (Fairhurst, 2009:1624) around the concept of distribution, which is echoed by Lumby (2013), and highlighted by Chreim (2015) through her recent study in organisational leadership. In education for example, Fairhurst (2009) argues that this struggle relates to discursive expectations surrounding the accountabilities of school leader and teacher roles in the hierarchical context of the English education system. Furthermore, as Bolden (2009) argues, the role of the English Headteacher as the head of the school has emerged through some studies as a facilitator that must 'allow' distributed leadership to flourish. This greatly reflects the dominance of hierarchical 'top-down' thinking in education in the England. Therefore, as Gronn (2009; 2011) argues, this conceptual struggle requires a re-thinking of leadership as a 'configuration' of different approaches. As there are many discourses of practice within leadership and organisational realities that problematize these approaches, what is then needed, as Western (2013) argues, are approaches that appreciate the existence of multiple discourses in complex realities.

Overall, dominant functionalist thinking within leadership has continually reconstituted a fixed leader identity that does not appreciate the context or complexity of social life in organisations (Fairhurst and Grant, 2010). This is becoming problematic in education as competing and shifting discourses of leadership have created conceptual confusion whereby the meaning of leadership is often inconsistent and contradictory, (Collison,

2011; Day and Atonakis, 2012). This is increasingly argued alongside the increasing appreciation complexity of organisational life as social worlds of competing perspectives, discourses, filled with contestation and contradiction (Bolden, 2016; Torrence and Humes, 2015; Alvesson, 2011). Therefore, trying to create a unified view of how to 'be' a leader does not sit well within leadership practice which is a fluid variable social performance, as the more contemporary perspectives argue, which the next sub-section now moves to explore.

2.1.3: Calls for new approaches in leadership thinking and development

Through the increasing debate around the complexity of organisational life and the conceptualisation of leadership as a social process, there is '*a growing orientation to sociology*' (Hartley, 2010:272) across leadership debates. As noted in chapter one, streams of literature are emerging in the mainstream debates that looks more towards social constructionist, dialogical and critical perspectives drawing on approaches from the social sciences to understand leadership practice (Fairhurst and Grant, 2010). Before exploring this literature in relation to identity, it is important to note that constructionist approaches can be '*notoriously diverse*' as Grint and Jackson (2010:3) argue, as noted in chapter one, including a focus on context and discourse in identity construction and regulation (Burr, 2015). There is also an interesting interchange of language appearing through the terms 'constructionism' and 'constructivism' from works that discuss the social construction of leadership, as Grint (2005b) and Fairhurst and Grant (2010) note which warrants a brief exploration of this here in relation to identity construction.

The two terms – constructionism and constructivism – often appear interchangeably in literature exploring the social construction of reality as Burr (2015) and Andrews (2012) argue. As Charmaz (2006) explains, both terms are often placed together under the term 'constructivism' which is often associated with the work of Piaget (e.g. 1972) and Vygotsky (e.g. 1978) on social learning and development (Burr, 2015;2003;). Indeed, to argue for their framework on identity in practice, Holland et al (1998) draw heavily on the various works of Vygotsky (e.g. 1978, 1986) when discussing constructivism as an important part of identity construction and the ongoing development of social selves, noting the influence of social constructionist thinking as they draw on Gergen (e.g.

1984). Andrews (2012:39) explains that constructivism asserts that *'each individual mentally constructs the world of experience through cognitive processes'* while social constructionism *'has a social rather than an individual focus'*. As Crotty (1998) further offers, social constructionism *'emphasises the hold our culture has on us: it shapes the way in which we see things... and gives us a quite definite view of the world'* whereas social constructivism *'points out the unique experience of each of us'* (Crotty, 1998:59) within those social worlds, and are therefore both important factors in making meaning (Clarke, 2008; Fairhurst and Grant, 2010). As such, the two are important to consider together (Pearce, 1995; Holland et al, 1998). Overall, leadership appreciated from a social constructionist perspective is important as it reflects the nature of social life in organisations, as Crevani (2015) highlights:

'Social constructionism is a theoretical approach based on an ontological position that considers social realities as continuously being brought to life in meaning-making processes over time, thus not having any 'objective' existence in themselves. Meanings, institutions and social practices are therefore never fixed and are always under reconstruction. ...hence, the meanings... and practices... are not fixed but are contested and possible to change'

(Crevani, 2015:192)

In contemporary debates, there are different approaches and discourses that reflect social constructionist perspectives, such as 'relational leadership', 'shared' or 'collective' leadership and those centred on relational processes and followership (Uhl-Bien et al, 2012; Cunliffe and Erickson, 2011; Crevani, 2011; Ospina and Sorenson, 2006). This has also included distributed leadership (Gronn, 2000), as noted in the last section, which has seen some conceptual confusion and a sense of functionalist prescription to it as a tool for organisational success in education. Other terms such as 'discursive leadership' (Fairhurst, 2009) as well 'critical leadership studies' (Ford, 2015a) have all emerged in ways that understand leadership as a contested social constructed practice, concerned with the construction of meaning and knowledge, relations of power and problematizing taken-for-granted normative assumptions in dominant mainstream leadership thinking as Crevani (2015) articulates.

As functionalist discourses continue to essentialise leadership in individualistic ways, these more critical discussions problematise the performative nature of these approaches within the growing ambiguity of an increasingly globalised world (e.g. as argued by Alvesson and Spicer 2011; Carroll et al, 2015; Day et al, 2014; Morrison, 2013). As Western (2013) argues, there is a need to move away from this functionalist view and recognise both the local and the wider social discourses around how leadership is understood and how this influences practice. As Sinclair (2011) argues the pressure on practitioners to market and brand themselves is prevalent, thus there is a need to avoid romanticising leadership as solitary through *'a fixed identity or role, instead encouraging an awareness of multiple roles'* (Edwards et al, 2013:4). As Ackerman and Maslin-Ostrowski (2002) argue leadership lives are determined mostly by role expectations, which Lumby (2013) argues are focused too often on rational norms and notions of what a leader is. As Gunter and Ribbins (2002) argue, being a leader and leadership are not about appropriate behaviours and technical tasks. Indeed, it is about *'paradox, dilemma and debate, not uncritical skills transmission and simplistic solution-seeking...'* (Close and Raynor, 2010:222). As organisations are understood as in a constant and dynamic state of flux they are too complex for a total comprehension by a prescribed leader skill-set, as Bligh et al argue (2011:1059). Therefore, the dominance of a 'perfect' ideal prescribed identity through a set of 'authentic' behaviours, styles and solutions falls short in terms of sustainability and pressures that then mount in the unpredictability of organisational life, particularly in education (Collinson, 2011; Sinclair, 2011). Instead, as Glatter argues

'[the] ability to live with uncertainty and learn from mistakes, agility, adaptability, preparedness to distribute leadership, work across boundaries and build trusting relationships [which] are likely to become even more important in the future based on current contextual trends...'

(Glatter, 2009:226)

Glatter's points above are echoed by many leadership scholars, e.g. Clarke (2015), Western (2013), Woods and Simkins (2012); Fairhurst (2011), Day and Sin (2011) and Hartley (2009). In this sense, it is important to explore this *'dominant writing on leadership and the hype around leadership development in contemporary organisations'* (Edwards et al, 2013:4). In many leadership development programmes, however, there is still a considerable focus on *'reifying the individual and rationalising leadership into*

individual traits, competencies, skills and behaviours that can be learnt' (Western, 2013: 306). Thus, many notions offer rather fixed notions and particular ways of being, as Ladkin (2015) and Ford (2015a) highlight and there is a strong need to move away from monolithic – singular fixed – views of identity (Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003) due to the '*strong bases of identity*' (Ford, 2015a:248) these 'moralizing' functionalist discourses create. Hence, the interest in the study of identity from sociological traditions is beginning to grow across leadership debates (Lumby and English, 2013; 2009).

However, LMD activities, including formal study across mainstream fields and the social sciences have predominantly followed functionalist leadership discourse through a focus on leader development and prescriptive methods that posit how to become a successful organisational leader (Day et al, 2014; Mabey, 2013; Close and Raynor, 2010). Therefore, the main theoretical approaches have focused on building leadership capacity to maximise productivity through prescribed skill-sets, competencies and techniques, and behavioural strategies and personality factors (Mabey, 2013; Day and Sins, 2011). However, increasingly argued as requiring more than functionalist approaches to leadership practice and LMD activities, there are several calls for other perspectives that appreciate the complexities of organisational life and the uncertainties of leadership practice (Bolden, 2016; Crevani, 2015, Alvesson 2011; Grint, 2005b). This has included an emphasis on the need to appreciate leadership as an on-going and integral aspect of learning and development (Carroll, 2015; Day and Sin, 2011). As Day et al argues:

...there appears to be a widespread misperception that if that the [leadership] field could just identify and agree on the "correct" leadership theory then the development piece would inevitably follow. It turns out that this is not so simple. Developing individual leaders and developing effective leadership processes involve more than simply deciding which leadership theory is to be used to motivate effective development. This is because human development involves a complex set of processes that need to be understood... we need to focus on development as much as leadership to shed light on how this process unfolds.

(Day et al, 2014:64)

Indeed, reflecting Day et al's argument above, what is needed in leadership is a move away from the prescribed certainty of practice to exploring the tensions that emerge from the realities of practice. As many scholars, like Western (2013), Ford (2015a;

2015b; 2006), Lumby and English (2009), Fairhurst (2009) and Sinclair (2011) argue, practitioners and LMD preparation programmes would benefit from exploring leadership in ways that unpack the expectations attached to it in reflexive ways and reflect how it is actually experienced in practice. This requires practitioners, researchers and scholars to analyse their contexts, their experiences and the many meanings attached to leadership, including their own assumptions and expectations that surround it. Thus, narratives of lived experience of leadership that explore daily practice can help to bring the influences on identity construction to the surface and allow for reflexive exploration and a more fluid approach to understanding the complexity of leadership and leader-selves. As Fairhurst (2011) explains:

'discursive approaches to leadership research are less essentializing, preferring instead to focus on the situated and linguistic, cultural construction of leadership'

(Fairhurst, 2011:499).

Relational, reflexive and critical approaches, such as a dialogical and developmental framing of identity as Holland et al (1998) offer, are then helpful for practitioners in addressing and dealing with their own identity work as Sinclair (2011) argues. Identity work, as argued by Sveningsson and Larsson (2006), is concerned with how practitioners are presenting themselves to their worlds within the myriad of discourse attached to leadership. As Watson (2008), argues identity work involves the struggle of trying to shape a relatively coherent identity performance within social milieu of what is deemed as acceptable, and is available, to an individual which reflects an important aspect of Holland et al's (1998) identity in practice framework – the space of authoring – which will be explored in section 2.2.

Indeed, it is argued here that by exploring identity work this can help to expose difficulties and tensions within leadership practice to allow practitioners to challenge their assumptions and consider alternative ways of understanding and enacting leadership (Sveningsson and Larsson, 2006). This resonates with Morrison's (2013) questioning as to whether education practitioners, like school leaders, actually understand the moral and ethical implications behind what it means to practise as an educational leader, and where these morals and ethics have come from and why. It is

these aspects that a sociocultural exploration of identity can illuminate. As noted earlier, Tourish (2013) argues that functionalist norms often posited in leadership discourse and LMD do not take account of the '*dark side*' of leadership practice. Lumby and English (2009) explain this as they elements that are known about leadership practice that are not openly acknowledged as they do not fit with the desired 'good' leader image that much Westernized unitary discourse posits. Hence, dispositions or actions what Tourish terms as 'the dark side', site outside of accepted norms attached to the leader role.

Indeed, notions of 'leader greatness' and an authentic one-dimensional identity are such a powerful story offering an expectation of a leader character which then acts as a rhetoric for practice. Therefore, it is important to focus on sites of practice and ask '*why do people do what they do*' (Gunter and Fitzgerald, 2008:273). This can then help to gain a sense of how particular discourses interplay with various constructions of leadership and how practitioners can navigate them. As Crevani et al (2010) argue, it is necessary to understand that:

'An important aspect of studying leadership in terms of processes, interactions and practices — i.e. as socially constructed, emergent organizing embedded in sociocultural contexts — is that dominating discourses on the nature and quality of leadership must be seen as an inevitable and integral aspect of what is studied. Leadership research is part of a powerful discourse in society that continues to emphasize the individual leader...'

(Crevani et al, 2010:78)

As contradiction is ever-present within the leadership terrain, the pressures placed on the role of leaders has never been so great with such a variety of expectations present (Sinclair; 20011, Alvesson et al, 2008). As Western (2013) asserts, there is large gap between the strong rhetoric of dominant individualistic discourses and the actual lived realities of organisational life. The notion of this space between discourse and reality, this 'gap' that practitioners occupy, is of particular interest to this research in terms of how this space is experienced and negotiated as practitioners attempt to find a way to live alongside this rhetoric within their realities. As the discourses of leadership within industry, academia and wider society all interplay (McLaren, 2013) this requires that social worlds, and social beings, be appreciated for their multiplicity and contradiction. In this sense, individuals are understood as constructing multiple performances of themselves – identities – as they navigate through a myriad of notions attached to

leadership, which is influenced by both local and wider contexts and cultural models (Alvesson, 2011; Sveningsson and Larsson, 2003). Therefore, approaches like Holland et al's (1998) identity in practice that explore the bricolage of identity work can help to bring to the surface the tensions, struggles and ambiguities of everyday leadership practice to the surface and thus allow for deeper exploration of practitioner agency and identity construction (Holland et al, 1998; Ford et al, 2010; Collinson, 2011).

2.1.4: Leadership: section summary

There is much conceptual variance to leadership in which many contrasting discourses, narratives and role expectations compete for dominance. Over time, much has been added to the study of leadership by many of these discourses (Fairhurst, 2009), however, there has been continued focus on functionalist discourses positing powerful leader-role expectations. As argued throughout this chapter section (2.1) the importance of context, and the increasing complexity of the interconnected, globalised world, have been largely ignored in functionalist perspectives. However, developing contemporary perspectives – constructionist, dialogical and critical – explore the contextual and discursive influences to leadership practice and appreciate the relational and dialogical social process of leadership, understood as situated within structures of power and influenced by underpinning cultural models. The study of identity in more sociological terms – as a social construction and dialogical performance – discursively influenced and constructed in context is thus gaining more interest as a way to explore leadership practice and development (Fairhurst and Grant, 2010; Lumby and English, 2013; 2009; Sveningsson and Larsson, 2006). Therefore, the interplay of discourse, practice and identity in sociocultural worlds is indeed important to explore as leadership 'stories' in the local can unveil discourses, local and societal, through the ways in which individuals are shaped by them and attempt to be understood and have agency over their own practice, and the extent to which this is constrained. This idea is particularly interesting and resonates with how Holland et al's (1998) identity in practice (figured worlds) approach, which will now be explored in more depth (2.2).

2.2: Identity in practice: framing a sociocultural perspective

This part of this chapter explores identity from constructionist and dialogical perspectives by drawing on a sociocultural lens: Holland et al's (1998) *Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds* theoretical framework (figured worlds). This sub-chapter begins by offering an overview of the study of identity from sociological traditions (2.2.1) and then moves to explore the theoretical framework (2.2.2), including a brief overview of empirical research employing figured worlds (2.3.3), before closing with a section summary (2.2.4).

2.2.1: The study of identity: an overview

As highlighted in the first part of this chapter, across much of the mainstream literature, leadership is predominantly viewed in functionalist ways that have essentialised it as a concept (Ford, 2006). Despite developing discussion that leadership is a socially constructed and discursive phenomenon (e.g. Ladkin, 2015; Fairhurst 2011; Grint 2011) there are few leadership studies that explore leadership and identity from this perspective (Ford, 2015a). Where identity study has entered mainstream leadership literature, it has appeared as a personal construct placing emphasis on essentialist thinking through psychological and psychodynamic approaches through the study of the mind and behaviour that focus on inner cognitive processes (Carroll and Levy, 2010). Therefore, such perspectives have predominantly centred on psychodynamic assessment and psychometric testing to ascertain an individual's characteristics and attributes, desires and motivations, which are often viewed as historically formed, somewhat fixed and influential to what practitioners do in practice (Cote and Schwartz, 2002). As Charon argues, these perspectives assert that '*behaviour is not a result of situation or social patterns but is personal and trait related...*' (2010:21). Therefore, psychological perspectives posit that identity is constructed from past historical understandings of the self rather than through on-going interaction within social life (Du Gay et al, 2000; Smith and Sparkes, 2008). The focus on individualism in leadership study has leant towards similar approaches in understanding identity. Thus, identity is argued

as an under-theorised concept within leadership literature as social worlds (Sinclair, 2011), and a person's interactions therein, have not been given significance within the study of identity in more mainstream leadership literature (Fairhurst, 2009; Ford, 2015a). In contrast to psychological traditions, the study of identity from sociological traditions places emphasis on how *'people make their social and cultural worlds at the same time these worlds make them'* (Fairhurst and Grant 2010:173). Within the social sciences, identity is a rather complex concept as sociological traditions bring a multitude of perspectives. However, these traditions all begin with what Stets and Burke explain as *'an assumption that there is a reciprocal relationship between the self and society'* (2003:128). Therefore, as Gee (2011:30) explains, to become a certain kind of person in the world:

...one cannot have an identity of any sort without some interpretive system under-writing the recognition of that identity... the interpretive system may be people's historically and culturally different views of nature; it may be the norms, traditions, and rules of institutions, it may be the discourse and dialogue of others, or it may be the workings of affinity groups.'

(Gee, 2000: 107-108)

Social worlds are then sites for being and becoming and, as Gee argues above, they underpin identity construction. As individuals 'figure' (Holland et al, 1998) the many fluid and complex life-worlds around them and their position within, their development is then not only a cognitive function. It is a form social learning and development located both within the immediate sociocultural setting and the context of wider society and cultural models (Holland et al, 1998). Drawing on major theoretical and philosophical standpoints across anthropology, cultural studies, social psychology, social theories of learning and development, constructivism, sociology, and linguistics, Holland et al draw predominantly on Bakhtinian, Vygotskian and Bourdieusian notions to argue for a perspective on identity that goes beyond cultural studies by framing identity as dialogical performances of multiple selves, developed through social engagement. They conceptualise identity as form of social learning and development that *'combines the intimate or personal world with the collective space of cultural forms and social relations'* (1998:5), influenced by notions of power, rank and status and how these are organised in social worlds.

As these perspectives appreciate the multiplicity and ongoing development and reformation of identity in the complexity of social life (Carroll and Levy, 2010; Grint, 2000) they contrast with psychological constructs which posit a stable fixed singular identity. In popular leadership discourse, this has often resulted in a 'desired' leader image often cast as a one-dimensional '*effective*' and '*great*' leader (Sinclair, 2011:508) as the first part of this chapter explored. Indeed, where the study of identity has appeared in leadership literature, it has been predominantly essentialised, or located in the mind of the person, often in rather fixed and prescribed ways, through a set of attributes, styles or behaviours to be enacted to construct a more commonly accepted 'leader' (Fairhurst, 2011). Although these more individualistic approaches have contributed much understanding to the leadership field over time, as Fairhurst (2009) argues, there is growing criticism that they offer '*a wave of popular advice on how to craft personas, lives and legacies to be an 'authentic' leader*' (Sinclair, 2011: 509). This is particularly argued in LMD research (e.g. Lumby and English, 2009), which continues to posit a rather fixed view on leader identity and leader-centrism in practice through imposing role expectations. Therefore, adding a further perspective on identity is argued here as useful to the leadership debate.

2.2.2: *Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds*

This section introduces Holland et al's (1998) *Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds* as a framework with many theoretical and philosophical avenues of exploration as it encompasses several perspectives on self and society, as outlined in chapter one (*introduction*). The basis of Holland et al's (1998) work is how identity is the pivot between persons as both products of social worlds and agents in the production of them. They argue that identity is a form of heuristic developmental learning that '*combines the intimate and personal world with the collective space of cultural forms and social relations*' (1998:5). Therefore, as individuals interact with cultural forms (discourses and practices) in social contexts with others, that are organised around positions of power, status and privilege in relation to those others (in Bourdieusian terms), they continually construct understanding of the world and themselves – subjectively forming and reforming – as they continued to engage over time as a form

of co-development (Holland et al, 1998). In this sense identity is a plural concept and neither static nor coherent, instead identities are the 'pivots' between agency and structure as persons construct their 'being' through social scripts and cultural models yet also 'become' reformed through their interactions as they negotiate their social engagement and selves. Hence, identity is argued as a heuristic development of the self in practice, dialogical performed and Holland et al's (1998) perspective on identity is a both dialogical one (following Bakhtinian dialogism) and a development one (following Vygotskian notions based on social constructivism and sociohistorical perspectives). They further argue identity as '*grounded in practice and activity*' (1998:271), with specific attention given to Bakhtinian dialogism to argue their theory of '*identity in practice*' (1998:271). Much reference to Holland et al's (1998) 'identity in practice' has often been abbreviated to the more common label of 'figured worlds' across the social sciences, however, they explain identity as constructs that can be referenced to several contexts of activity: *figured worlds; positionality; the space of authoring; making worlds*. Overall, Holland et al's (1998) framework is the theoretical lens of choice for this research as it offers an analytical tool through which to explore the many sociocultural influences of narrative, discourse and role expectations to the construction and development of leadership identity in social worlds. Furthermore, it allows exploration of the contexts, and their cultural forms and relations of power, that influence performances of leadership identity and the heuristic development of leadership practice over time.

The main focus of the following discussion that now follows is to introduce the key aspects of Holland et al's identity framework and how they may be helpful in exploring leadership identity. Despite its complexity as a theoretical framework, as chapter five (*conclusions and reflections*) will explore, it is argued to be a very worthwhile theoretical framework due to the depth it can add to the exploration of identity in practice and the influence of discourse, power and narrative to identity construction (Gee, 2011). This will now be explored through the following headings:

- *Figured worlds: Cultural forms, context and history*
- *Positionality: Power, status and position*
- *Authoring selves: Identity work*
- *Identity in practice: Making worlds*

Figured worlds: Cultural forms, context and history

Holland et al explain that a 'figured world' can be understood as '*a socially and culturally constructed realm of interpretation*' (1998:52). They argue for their approach as being broader and more particular than cultural studies, as the focus is on '*the development of identities and agency in relation to practice*' (1998:7). Thus figured worlds can be understood as the context for identity in practice, as a place of 'being' and 'becoming'. Drawing on dialogic perspectives and relations of power, Holland et al argue that meaning is constantly negotiated through social interaction in positional cultural worlds. Therefore, the understanding of objects, acts, practices and roles is shared culturally and reconstituted by social performances that have specified value and position within particular contexts at various times, through historical significance. Within these discourses, '*particular characters and actors are recognized, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others...*' (1998:52). For Holland et al, a figured world is then not only a context for identity performance, but it is importantly a space for social learning and development. However, social worlds in this sense are ambivalent as:

...there can be multiple realities that compete for truth and legitimacy. Material or otherwise, these realities are constructed through social processes in which meanings are negotiated, consensus formed, and contestation is possible. Such a view shows us how meanings that are produced and reproduced on an ongoing basis create structures that are both stable and yet open to change as interactions evolve over time'

(Fairhurst and Grant, 2010:174)

As Fairhurst and Grant argue, within all of these different realities there are many social patterns of structure and cultural narratives that organise worlds as they '*happen, as social process and in historical time*' (Holland et al, 1998:55). Thus, figured worlds are spaces where contradiction is lived on a daily basis, where meaning is constantly renegotiated in a fluid sense and where notions of being can never be fixed or exact from place to place through time. As such, social life is complex and multiple as persons inhabit different social realities (Smith and Sparkes, 2008), such as their family worlds, local communities, social groups, workplaces, political groups and education institutions.

Within all of these different figured worlds there are then many elements that influence the everyday lives of persons which create a multiplicity to life as lived, as the many cultural narratives embedded within discourses of practice are in a constant state of renegotiation. Therefore, individuals can be understood as social actors, as multiple, contextual, temporal and fluid and they perform various dispositions, or identities, as embodiments of meaningful discourses in those worlds, as noted earlier (section 2.2.1). In this sense these performances are narrativized identities, which are a response to the notions posited by discourse and their cultural and normative assumptions. These cultural norms and ways of thinking become powerful narratives and 'figures' (Holland et al, 1998) of expectation within those worlds through the discourses social actors encounter. A figured world is then the context for identity in practice as *'selves are socially constructed through mediation of powerful discourses and their artefacts...'* (Holland et al, 1998:26). Thus, in taking a figured worlds stance to organisational life, the meaning of leadership is then understood to be in a constant state of flux and never fixed and discursively influenced by discourses of dominance, which reflects arguments across the leadership field (e.g. Ford et al, 2015a; Grint, 2011), as raised earlier in the first part of this chapter (section 2.1). Therefore, a figured worlds perspective argues that the historical narratives of leadership and the 'leader' role can become powerful expectations of being within various worlds.

Over time, as individuals continue to imagine and encounter possibilities, they draw in ideas from wider societal notions that posit expectations of 'leaders' through discourses of leadership as well as ideas from *'psychohistorical formations that develop over a person's lifetime, populating intimate terrain and motivating social life'* (Holland et al, 1998:5). Developed through sociohistorical experiences, these 'psychohistorical formations' become part of an individual's history-in-person, which is *'the sediment from past experiences upon which one improvises, using the cultural resources available, in response to the subject positions afforded one in the present'* (1998:18). In this sense, identity performances are responses to the institutionalised ways of thinking (Western, 2013) that are culturally embedded, such as 'leader' role expectations that individualistic discourse imposes, which is dominant across the mainstream leadership field and popular culture (Sinclair, 2011). However, as will be explored within later in *'authoring selves' as identity work*, identity performances can also bring about new

possibilities for practice, resulting in new ways of being over time. This is the paradoxical aspect of identity work that Holland et al argue; persons as both products of social worlds and producers of them.

Positionality: Power, status and position

However, figured worlds are also positional worlds and Holland et al outline the concept of 'positionality' as they argue that social worlds are organised about positions of status and influence. In this sense, social structures within the lived realities of organisations take on elements of rank, status, privilege and entitlement through which individuals understand their own positions in relation to the positions of others. However, a figured worlds perspective also appreciates that the notion of power and position does not end with that sense of legitimate or hierarchical power in the local. Holland et al (1998) appreciate power in terms of the local setting, such as immediate dyadic or group social relations (micro) and organisational structures (meso), as well taking into account broader (macro) issues of power within society, such as gender, race, class, and ethnicity. They draw on Bourdieusian (e.g. 1993;1986) notions of capital in its various forms (economic, cultural, social and symbolic) to explain the social status afforded to and by people. Therefore, issues of status are interwoven through various forms of capital and reflect legitimate power and referent power as individuals seek to position themselves, and are positioned by others, within the social structures of their organisational worlds.

What Holland et al (1998) draw on from Bourdieu is that, although performances of identity involve enacting dispositions of particular relevant narrativized characters, the ability to enact them is mediated by power relations in local and wider terms as inequality is present across many landscapes of being. Just as leadership is a wide discourse, what it means to be a male leader, a female leader or leader of an ethnic group, or to be experienced or a newcomer, or even to have technical expertise, will take on different meanings as related to context and persons present as broader notions of social positioning are embedded within discourses of being as powerful institutionalized ways of thinking. Social positioning then goes far beyond micro relations and the meso structuring of organisational life.

As Bourdieu explains:

'A field is a structured social space, a field of forces, a force field. It contains people who dominate and people who are dominated. Constant, permanent relationships of inequality operate inside this space, which at the same time becomes a space in which the various actors struggle for the transformation or preservation of the field. All the individuals in this universe bring to the competition all the (relative) power at their disposal. It is this power that defines their position in the field and, as a result, their strategies'

(Bourdieu 1998: 40-41)

By drawing on this field of struggles, a 'leader' could understand their role to be 'visionary', which is a narrative often present within leadership discourse, yet find the realities of the positional structure of an organisational means that they are not able to be visionary about their practice and instead must follow a set vision prescribed from elsewhere. Therefore, within leadership practice individuals could become '*embroiled in incidents where their activity was constrained*' (Holland et al, 1998:126) by this field of power. This could indeed be due to the limitations of their social position due to their affordance of and access to particular privilege and status. Thus, the power of the discourses, structures and practices that are present within organisational realities are themselves constraints and possibilities as identity claims are made through certain performances. As such, it brings back the nature of contradiction within social life and the struggle of identity work (Brown, 2015; Sveningsson and Larsson, 2003; Watson, 2008) as individuals navigate the tensions between narratives of expected discourse and their positional realities, such as the 'gap' between the individualistic moralised role expectations and the reality of organisational practice (Western, 2013). These are very significant ideas that will be returned to as part of the later analysis. However, as Holland et al argue, an individual may '*refuse the implicit positioning*' (1998:135) through identity performances in practice as they seek ways of being that challenge particular notions, which is an idea that will be explored further in the next section and subsequently as part of the analysis.

Overall, gaining awareness of various narrative constructs and discourses can be helpful in understanding the limits and potential for influence and agency within practice. So too can exploring the notions of local and wider sources of power negotiated every day

and how this interplays with the narrativized identities embedded within discourses. Holland et al (1998) argue that as practitioners navigate within their various worlds they arrange – or ‘orchestrate’ – their identity performances as required responses to the expectations that seek to position them within the cultural narratives and social structures that make up those worlds. As such, the notion of ‘authoring selves’ (Holland et al, 1998) is an important aspect of identity in practice with figured worlds and their positionality presenting as a useful analytical tool to not only explore what those responses are as practitioners author themselves, but it also offers a way to explore how they are constructing the world around them, and their identities within it.

Thus, stories of themselves – narratives of practice – can offer insights into how practitioners construct their leadership worlds, what has been influential in shaping their understandings and how this has influenced how they understand themselves within it. As highlighted earlier (section 2.1), the gap between the dominant rhetoric of leader role expectation from individualistic discourse and the lived realities of leadership practice (Western, 2013) offers an interesting space to explore in terms of how practitioners understand the discourses and narratives of their worlds and how they author their position in relation to them. Therefore, the ‘space of authoring’ is a useful area of analysis to focus on for this study, which will now be explored in more depth.

Authoring selves: Identity work

To explain human development and agency, Holland et al draw on Vygotskian perspectives of semiotic mediation as *‘the ability for humans to manipulate their worlds and themselves by the mean of symbols’* (1998:49). This notion asserts how aspects of life, such as objects, behaviours, practices and roles, become cultural ‘artefacts’ as meaning is socially attributed to them. These artefacts then become cultural resources that people use to author themselves to others within their worlds, which can offer opportunities for agency as individuals seek to position themselves within particular worlds. They are then the symbolic means to enact ways of being, such as disposition, behaviour, dressing, talking and other forms of communication, action or inaction. The Bakhtinian perspectives that Holland et al draw on argue that as individuals engage and interact within the world around them, they are in a constant dialogue with it as they

tell others, and themselves, who they are at any given moment in space and time through cultural means and acts embodied within particular ways of being – or identities.

As the last sub-section (*positionality*) raised, individuals are influenced, sometimes unbeknownst, by multiple competing discourses that communicate positions of power and authority. Therefore, as leadership is argued as a socially constructed and discursive concept (Fairhurst, 2009), taking a figured worlds stance argues that individuals are faced with contradiction as they ‘do’ leadership work in particular contexts and cultures. As such, the words ‘leadership’ and ‘leader’ *do* and *say* things to persons within those worlds and are not benign as words alone (Ford and Harding, 2008). Thus, individuals respond to these worlds through the meaning attached to leadership, by telling others who they are through various performances of the self, or as Holland et al (1998) outline by identity ‘claims’ that author themselves to the world. As Holland et al discuss how people author themselves to the world, they draw on a Bakhtinian understanding of ‘heteroglossia’ explaining this as multiple, conflicting, and often ‘authoritative’ voices as discourses that determine what is acceptable, and what is not, within particular worlds. As such, an individual is constantly faced with a *‘myriad of responses he or she might make at any particular point, but any of which might be framed in a specific discourse selected from the teeming thousands available’* (Holquist, 2002:69). Therefore, through the heteroglossia of leadership, both in the sense of the multiple discourses present and the multitude of responses that can be made, this posits the problematic nature, tensions and ambiguities of leadership practice as individuals author themselves.

A figured worlds stance posits that practitioners are caught within this space of contradiction and contestation, as they struggle between their own psychohistorical formations, assumptions and expectations (their sociohistorical being as their history-in-person) and the many competing discourses, cultural narratives and social structures they experience, navigate and negotiate on a daily basis. Within this space of struggle, Holland et al draw on Levi-Strauss’ (1966) notions of *‘Bricoleur’* (1998:170) as the self – ‘I’ – as constructed with pre-existing, and often improvised, cultural resources from their social worlds by drawing on various materials and artefacts of meaning from those worlds to produce identities. Hence, as individuals produce this ‘bricolage’ of identities

as performances or *'communications with one another not only convey messages but also always make claims about who we are relative to one another and the nature of our relationships'* (Holland et al, 1998:26). Holland et al argue this through Bakhtin's (1981) work as the *'dialogical self'* within society, explaining that individuals are always in a state of *'addressivity'* and *'answerability'*. Thus, through a constant dialogue with the world, individuals respond to the world, addressing and answering others through their identity claims as they author themselves in various ways depending on the time, place and others present.

'Authoring' is then a necessary interpretive story and a plurality of self in a positional world as individuals author themselves in the same multiple and contradictory way in which the world appears to them. As Holland et al argue:

'The worlds must be answered - authorship is not a choice - but the form of answer is not predetermined. ...authorship is a matter of orchestration: of arranging the identifiable social discourses/practices that are one's resources... in order to craft a response in a time and space defined by others' standpoints in activity.'

(Holland et al, 1998:272)

Authorship is then an orchestration of the self through various identity performances that are accessible to individuals as they go about their daily lives. This is *'identity in practice'* as every expression and utterance a person makes is part of an ongoing chain or network of statements and responses – a narrative – as people address or respond to others within the world. Holland et al explain this *'otherness'* as how an individual *'acquires the ability to take the standpoint of others as she learns to objectify herself by the qualities of her performance in, and commitment to, various social positions'* (1998:4). Building on the work of Mead (1934) and his notion of *'the generalised other'*, Holland et al explain Bakhtin's (1981) dialogical self as a form of inner speech that self-regulates individuals as they continually mediate their behaviour based on the assumptions that have become powerfully embedded within their way of thinking and being, which take on this role of *'the other'*. Within the space of authoring, the orchestration of self is then understood as a way to navigate the confusion this multiplicity offers as an individual takes particular authorial stances on certain ways of being, as an attempt to stabilise their orchestration of self and gain control over their

practices. This can also be understood as '*weaving a narrative*' (Solomon, 2012:176) as individuals narrate their worlds and characters within them, and themselves, to the otherness of the 'audience' around them as a way to be understood. Therefore, narratives of the self can offer insights into how individuals are constructing the world around them, what has been influential to this and how they author themselves in relation to it.

In leadership, this could be understood as the particular identity claims practitioners make as performances that accept or resist particular discourses as they commit to certain notions of what it is to be a leader, such as being 'great', 'visionary', 'collaborative' or 'successful'. In this sense, certain identity performances can become '*habituated, or fossilized*' (Holland et al, 1998:141) as they become deeply embedded within practice and result in almost automatic identity performances, perhaps even as unconscious habit. Therefore, 'ruptures' can occur when taken-for-granted normative assumptions are challenged by change, awareness of other discourses or new ways of being brought into the world by others. This can be extremely uncomfortable for practitioners who have willingly, or unknowingly, become '*ventriloquated*' by the '*authoritative voices*' embedded within particular discourses of practice (Holland et al, 1998:185). This means that, as certain ways of being become habitual and routine, particular identities become expected and assumed by individuals in relation to their own performances and those of others. This can be a confusing, unsettling and challenging process as there is a sense of contradiction and struggle ever present as individuals constantly attempt to orchestrate their identity work.

These tensions can be understood as identity work, as noted earlier, which Watson (2008) argues as involving the '*struggle to come to terms with and, within limits, to influence the various social-identities which pertain to them in the various milieu in which they live their lives*' (Watson, 2008:129). In the sense of '*weaving a narrative*' (Solomon, 2012) individuals position themselves, and others that inhabit or populate the world, in particular positions relevant to the various cultural meanings of the narratives that are present in that world (and are also positioning themselves in a similar fashion). This is an interesting notion as it not only illuminates life as lived '*in a story-shaped world*' (Smith and Sparkes, 2008:6), it also reflects the nature of positionality as individuals tell

stories and claim various positions within those stories. In this sense, as Lumby and English (2013:205) argue, narrating or authoring can be understood as a way of storying the self within a leadership narrative as '*identity is shaped to meet the requirements of sustaining mythic legitimacy*' of the prescribed role of 'leader'. Therefore, figured worlds offers that the stories practitioners tell about themselves in relation to leadership can offer rich insights into their identity work. It is then how leaders construct their stories, and the characters they use within them, that can help to illuminate their worlds, the discourses that have meaning to them, and how they construct themselves – their identities – in relation to that.

Identity in practice: Making worlds

The space of authoring – a contested space of struggle for identity work – is a response to many authoritative voices internalised and embodied over time, resulting in the regulation of identity performance. However, there is also the space of possibility within practice, as discourses are paradoxically the tools of constraint but are also the tools of liberation which can be improvised through identity work to create a modicum of agency within practice. Holland et al (1998) argue this as part of what they term 'serious play' as they draw on constructivist thinking through Vygotskian notions of social learning and development to argue that cultural artefacts – objects of symbolic meaning and social cultural capital in social worlds – can be used to construct performances of the self that improvise, through serious play, practices that can bring about change. As Holland et al (1998:256) argue individuals (and groups) can begin to improvise their responses and create a Bakhtinian '*carnavalesque*' response to cultural models that challenge or break the rules and expectations of that world which can create new imaginaries and practice. Arguing this as '*making worlds*' through serious play (1998:272), along with figured worlds, positionality and the space of authoring, it is a context for identity work. Thus, Holland et al (1998) suggest that identity is not only the performance of reconstituted socially accepted practice, it is also an improvisation of possibilities that can lead to the making of new worlds and of new selves and identities in practice. Indeed, several scholars, such as Grint (2000;2011), Sharma and Grant (2011), and Lumby and English (2009), argue that leader narratives and storytelling play a crucial role in the construction of a leader 'image' as identity is managed during leadership interactions.

Ford (2010) argues a similar perspective in her studies as she explains that '*managers construct multiple, competing and ambiguous narratives of the selves*' within '*discourses and culturally shaped narrative conventions*' (2010:47). Therefore, storytelling is an interesting notion within leadership and understood from the more emerging social constructionist perspectives in the field (e.g. Fairhurst, 2009; Ladkin, 2010) as an important part of leadership identity production. Furthermore, there is increasing discussion of leadership as a performance, through notions of acting and image management, considered as part of identity work (e.g. as argued by Brown, 2015; Grint, 2000; Sveningsson and Larsson, 2006; Lumby and English, 2009). Many of these perspectives reflect the work of Goffman (1959) through his sociological notion of dramaturgy as a form of image management within micro relations. Grint (2010b) argues this image management is the basis of much narration of leader selves as a way to create specific images and performances to perpetuate particular cultural and organisational narratives. As Sharma and Grant (2011) argue, much leadership preparation literature emphasises how leaders can construct stories of themselves to create specific personas to be performed for particular meaning and purpose; to create a construction of leadership reality.

As Lumby and English (2009) argue, many standard leadership 'scripts' presented within Westernised practice are constructed by dominant normative values, trends and politics that assert ways to navigate language and disposition to achieve desired status, legitimacy and credibility that have current relevance and purpose in the world. In a figured worlds sense, the theatrical metaphors of performance and acting are interesting through how Holland et al (1998) offer figured worlds as narrativized or dramatized worlds where cultural narratives act as 'standard plots' of negotiation norms, assumptions, values and expectations. Thus, figured worlds sees individuals as social actors responding to the cultural scripts of their worlds, in relation to systems of power, structure and others present through identity performances. This is the basis of authoring the self, which becomes a performance of identity in response to those narratives both in terms of constraint and in terms of agency. This posits that, as practitioners author themselves through the stories they tell of their identity work, they are making particular identity claims in relation to narrativized characters of 'leader' – as figures of expectations – in those worlds as a way to accept or reject particular

leadership narratives and discourses. Indeed, leadership, is *'a process that entails the capacities to create stories, to understand and evaluate these stories, and to appreciate the struggle among stories'* (Gardner, 1995:22) bringing the matter of identity to the forefront as leaders narrate their experiences and author themselves in the process. The roles and images that leaders portray to enact these stories then become their multiple and fluid selves, their identities or *'faces of leadership'* (Lumby and English, 2009:96). In this sense, identity becomes the mask of performance, put on by practitioners as they manage their image to become a particular version of 'leader'.

As Lumby and English (2009) argue, this image or 'face(s)' will be the most appropriate 'mask' given the contextual situation and cultural expectation at any given time. This can be quite problematic as individuals then enact performances of expectation through identity 'masks' which, as a figured worlds perspective offers, can become a tension as individuals orchestrate these expectations within their inner speech alongside their history-in-person. Therefore, as individuals are shaped by their past experiences and gain new discourses there is always a fluidity to identity performance as practitioners are constantly orchestrating the many 'faces' of leadership identity in response to their worlds. Thus, it can be a regulated performance of expectation, based on the many internalised assumptions of cultural norms.

However, the space of authoring is a space of possibility and improvisation, through the notions of 'serious play' and 'world making' as Holland et al argue. This is not a dominant story across mainstream leadership literature as the traditions have been to enact the expected, despite the deep contradiction this offers as leadership is increasingly argued as a process that deals with the unknown, in spaces of conflict, uncertainty and unpredictability (Grint, 2010; 2005a). Therefore, wearing this rehearsed 'face', with its functionalist reactions to known problems becomes a tension of practice, as increasingly discussed in leadership literature (e.g. Sinclair, 2011; Ford et al, 2008 as discussed earlier). This appears even more interesting when expected 'leader' character dispositions and simplistic narratives become unrealistically caricatured to extremes by powerful functionalist discourses. Indeed, as dominant societal narratives around leadership continue to cast an expected 'hero' of the leadership story – the essentialised 'heroic' leader – there has been little room for other ways of being. Hence, 'antiheroes',

‘villains’, and other archetypal characters are not often present in the dominant leadership ‘story’. Yet antiheroes, as storied characters, are often understood as more representative of ‘real-life’ representing the often put-upon protagonist or likable character who does well within the story but has obvious flaws, imperfections and biases. As such, the antihero is often quite relatable to a specific audience (Jonason et al, 2012) and of course so is the ‘villain’ at times. Therefore, in the face of the unrealistic simplicity of leadership role expectations, heroes, antiheroes and villains will inevitably feature as figurative characters as individual’s figure worlds and counter-worlds (Holland et al, 1998; Bamburg, 2010; Tourish, 2013). Indeed, leadership can never be one singular fixed social performance as individuals interpret meaning in such contradictory ways, whereby one person’s hero is another person’s villain as morals, ethics and values are deeply subjective and variable. Therefore, individuals will move between character positions in leadership practice, interpreted in multiple and contradictory ways by others around them. Hence, more accounts of realistic ‘antiheroes’, ‘villains’ and the many other characters involved in the leadership ‘story’ – as a relational process – are important to seek out and share, to add different perspectives to the understanding of practice. In light of the many arguments raised earlier in this chapter, these contributions would appear evermore vital and could indeed be shared and improvised by practitioners to develop their leadership practice and create new possibilities for the future.

2.2.3: Researching leadership identity in practice

The study of identity has been consistently raised throughout this chapter as a potential contender in response to the growing calls by scholars for an evolution in leadership research (Close and Raynor, 2010). This requires approaches that appreciate the context, complexity and ambiguous realities of leadership practice, such as highlighted by Alvesson and Spicer (2012) who argue that identity study from sociological traditions is at an early stage of theorisation within the leadership field, particularly from sociocultural perspectives. As Sveningsson and Larsson noted a decade ago *‘there are relatively few empirical studies addressing in depth the significance of specific subjective processes of identity constructions in relation to leadership’*. (2006:204) and, although

some studies have emerged, this is still being highlighted as the case a decade later (e.g. Brown, 2015; Ladkin, 2015; Ford, 2015b; Clarke, 2015; Day et al, 2014).

Research that draws on Holland et al's (1998) identity in practice framework, often termed 'figured worlds', are present within more general education and social science literature through research concerned with specific contexts of identity, for instance exploring teacher identities (e.g. Williams, 2011), children's identities (e.g. Barron, 2014) and identities within mathematics (Solomon, 2012). However, discussion of the framework is more limited in mainstream leadership debates and empirical research across wider leadership discussions, including education; employing figured worlds stance in studying leadership identity appears uncommon. Within educational leadership literature, Crawford (2014:188) discussed '*the many selves of leaders*' highlighting how exploring identity from sociological and social psychological perspectives, such as through a figured worlds perspective, could offer new ways for educational leaders to consider their identity.

However, research using figured worlds in educational leadership is uncommon, although as Crawford (2014) recommends, with her view resonating with emerging arguments from those in the mainstream debates globally, such as Fairhurst (2009), Ladkin (2015) and Crevani (2015), figured worlds as a perspective on identity has much to offer to the study of leadership identity. Indeed, LMD research must now '*include the idea of our identities as multiple and potentially contradictory, as constantly being negotiated as they are being performed...*' (Sinclair, 2011:512) as this can offer professionals new ways of understanding practice through reflexivity and an analysis of their own identity work which can help them to '*reflect on, selectively resist and re-direct their energies*' (Sinclair, 2011:512).

Therefore, a figured worlds perspective is argued here as helpful as there is a need to explore 'the mundane' of everyday life through which the notions of practice are constructed in the local, which are '*instances of reproduction of organizational and societal norms*' (Crevani et al, 2010:84). It can create the opportunity to explore the contradictory nature of being a practitioner within organisational realities as it illuminates the '*open, situational and discursive sensitive nature of human subjectivity*'

(Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003:1168) as the basis of being a person in the world. It allows professionals to explore the underpinning meanings, expectations and values, and power relations at play within those worlds as well as the assumptions they bring to leadership practice and the role of 'leader' (Gee, 2011; Fairhurst, 2009; Ladkin, 2010). For example, Sinclair (2011), introducing leadership practitioners to such perspectives on identity over the years, finds that it can be somewhat empowering and liberating to explore identity work in their organisational realities. Sinclair found that being more aware of the discursive influences and structures of power that shape leadership worlds and identities, as well as various historical assumptions attached to leadership, allowed her students greater opportunity to address the tensions and contradictions of practice. In this sense, drawing on a sociocultural lens is argued as a useful tool to help practitioners question assumptions about leadership and how their own practice relates to various discourses and expectations present in their various worlds. This, in turn, leads to moving away from notions of objective research and towards accounts of leadership that are *'close to experienced reality and everyday practice focusing on instances of identity presentations and identity struggles'* (Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003:1165).

Overall, there are many pressures and tensions in leadership practice as identity becomes problematic by the consistent attempt to fix notions of it in an essentialist and universal way despite the complexity and ambiguity of leadership in organisational worlds. Therefore, the leadership field would benefit from research that attends to discomfort, difficulties, tensions and struggles that the realities of leadership practice bring. As there is limited empirical research that employs figured worlds in the study of leadership identity, this research aims to contribute such a study to leadership debates to offer insights in leadership practice more broadly to LMD research and the educational leadership field.

The next sub-section closes this section of the chapter with an overview summary of the main points raised, before moving to a summary of the entire chapter.

2.2.4. Identity: a summary

Holland et al (1998) argue that, as individuals author themselves to the world, they do so in a narrativized and positioned sense as they navigate various expected discourses of being within leadership worlds. As such, they are making identity claims based on the powerful notions contained within the discourses, cultural models and social structures of their worlds. In this sense, they are reconstituting those discourses through their identity in practice. Indeed, the paradoxical entrapment of repetitive behaviour cycles are designed to perpetuate structures of power and discourses of practice as *'identities and agency are formed dialectically and dialogically in these 'as if' worlds'* (Holland et al, 1998:49). This means that as people engage in dialogue and communication with others and they are exposed to or denied access to alternative theories, concepts and practices, they will begin to 'become' and form identities and agency based on their understandings, which can seek to perpetuate systems of power, privilege and control yet can always bring about new ways of being.

However, as Holland et al argue, the very discourses – as tools of constraint and regulation that denote how to be a certain kind of person – can also be the very tools of liberation in those worlds as they are orchestrated and improvised through social practice. Thus, within leadership, authoring a leader-self is a space of contestation, struggle and contradiction as 'leaders' practice in relation to the narratives of expecting being, resulting in identities in practice yet also seek improvisation and agency.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has explored leadership as a multiple, contested and '*most performative discourse*' (Crevani et al, 2010:80). From dominant functionalistic traditions that denote powerful narratives of expectation around the leader role embedded as a societal discourse, to contemporary perspectives that complicate and problematize leadership in different ways – constructionist, dialogical and critical – that appreciate the complex social worlds that leadership practice occurs within. Identity has been argued as an important aspect of exploration for leadership practice and development as it highlights '*the tension, struggle, and ambiguity of leadership identity construction processes*' (Fairhurst and Grant, 2010:192). As such, Holland et al's (1998) identity framework (figured worlds) has been explored and argued as a useful tool of inquiry to illuminate the discursive influences to leadership practice and their impact on practitioner identity work. This was argued due to its appreciation of contextual, sociocultural and historical influences to the construction of identity, which is understood as a dialogical performance and ongoing heuristic development of practice over time, mediated through relations of power, status and position in social worlds.

This chapter has also highlighted the limited research on leadership identity from constructionist, sociocultural and dialogical perspectives, and the need to explore lived experiences of practitioners to illuminate the influences on their identity construction and agency through narrative inquiry. Therefore, chapter three (*methodology*) now follows which explores the methodological approach taken within this research.

Chapter Three

Methodology

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CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Chapter Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology employed in undertaking this research. The first section begins with an overview of how the philosophical stance – matters of ontology, epistemology and axiology – underpins the methodological approach taken. The second section discusses narrative inquiry and life history research in the context of this research. The third section then offers points of consideration within narrative inquiry including trustworthiness, reflexivity, multi-vocality and researcher position. Section four discusses the importance of ethical considerations and outlines the processes undertaken. In section five, the discussion turns to the research methods (interviews) and the processes undertaken, followed by section six which explores the data analysis methodology outlining the rationale thematic analysis and process undertaken. The chapter then closes with a brief summary.

3.1 Philosophical stance

Research is concerned with exploring and understanding the world and is informed by how one views the world around them, how that world can be understood and the very purpose behind understanding it (Cohen et al, 2011). Philosophical issues are then integral to the research process because they constitute what researchers ‘silently think’ about research (Scott and Usher, 1999a).

In order for a researcher to define their approach, and clarify his or her position, it is necessary to identify the philosophical stance, which includes matters of ontology and epistemology as a way to support the methodological position that they subscribe to (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Krauss argues:

'...epistemology is intimately related to ontology and methodology; as ontology involves the philosophy of reality, epistemology addresses how we come to know that reality while methodology identifies the particular practices used to attain knowledge of it'

(Krauss, 2005:758-759)

Therefore, as Cohen et al (2011) also assert, research is a matter of philosophical belief, and is hence not only a technical or processual exercise as it sets the stance of how a researcher approaches the issue of 'truth'. As such involves an element of axiology, in terms of what one believes is ultimately purposeful and valuable about research (Heron and Reason, 1997). Axiology is then considered alongside matters of ontology, which are the assumptions about the nature of reality and existence i.e. what exists and how, as well as to matters of epistemology, which is the way of knowing, researching and understanding i.e. how do I know (Cohen et al, 2011). Epistemology, the nature and grounds of knowledge, depends then on the ontological view; they are intimately related (Krauss, 2005). Hence, if epistemology is the philosophy of knowledge, or how we come to know what we know (Trochim, 2002: online), and ontology defines the philosophy of knowledge in terms of the nature of reality, epistemological questions are important because they enable researchers to generate knowledge and explanations about the ontological components of the social world and assert what is valuable and purposeful about that knowledge (Mason, 1996). Bryman offers that epistemology *'concerns the question of what is (or should be) regarded as acceptable knowledge in a discipline'* (2008:13). Therefore, epistemology is the word that historically defines the standard of evaluating and conceptualising reality and the image of that in the world (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000).

In terms of differing ontological assumptions concerned with the essence of realities, the realist perspective argues for an objective reality that exists external to and regardless of individual comprehension (Burr, 2015; Cohen et al, 2011). Conversely, relativism argues that there can be multiple representations of 'reality' in which 'reality' is in itself a multiple construct (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). At one extreme, researchers may argue that knowledge is hard, real and capable of being transmitted in a tangible form, as with the positivist paradigm (Trochim, 2002). Whereas at the other extreme it can be argued that knowledge is subjective and is based on experience and insight, as

within the interpretivist paradigm (Denscombe, 2003). Therefore, the epistemology of the research and the ontological stance that informs it need to be made explicit because it *'holds up the methods and procedures of the natural sciences for producing valid knowledge claims'* (Scott and Usher, 1999a:12). Methodology is thus the combination of the philosophy and the methods, strategy and design for undertaking research. Therefore, in summary:

Ontology: *What is the nature and form of reality and existence?*

Epistemology: *What is the basic belief about knowledge; how do I know things?*

Axiology: *What is the purpose of research and how is it valued?*

Methodology: *How can I go about finding out; The approach, design and methods?*

As noted, this research is underpinned by social constructionism which is a qualitative ontological paradigm where 'reality' is subjective, contested and interpreted as multiple 'truths' – or 'realities' – that are negotiated (Cohen et al, 2011). Therefore, this research appreciates that 'realities' are apprehended in multiple, intangible ways and are socially and experientially based (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Knowledge is then epistemologically understood as sociocultural and sociohistorical – as constructed and influenced by historical and cultural values and models that have specific contextual and cultural symbolic meaning in time and space – and is interactively reproduced within social processes and relations (Burr, 2015; Holland et al, 1998).

As chapter one and two explored, this research takes a constructionist and dialogical stance on leadership and identity to explore the taken-for-granted normative cultural assumptions and values which discursively influence identity construction to contribute to the understanding of leadership practice (Gee, 2011; Gergen, 2009). Therefore, from an axiological view it appreciates the need to understand life as lived from multiple perspectives to illuminate the tensions and struggles of practice. As such, it values the contribution that the exploration of lived experience can make to the understanding of leadership practice. Hence, this research methodology draws on narrative inquiry to value the construction, exploration and sharing of knowledge and understanding.

3.2 Narrative Inquiry in identity research

Narrative inquiry is a form of qualitative research that seeks to capture a person's memories and knowledge of their experiences as a way to understand their life history (Bruner, 1996). It employs a range of field and biographical data collection methods, including interviews, discussion groups, observations, written accounts from texts like stories, journals, diaries, reports and documents, as well as drawings, photographs, video and audio and performances like songs and dramatic plays and acts (Bold, 2012).

Biographical accounts of life history, collected via interviews, is the method used within this research, and the process of the interview will be explained in more detail further in this chapter (*data collection methods*).

3.2.1. Life History Research

Narrative forms of inquiry, like oral life history, are a common methodological approach used in identity studies to explore experience and practice, as Gergen and Gergen (1991) and Ricoeur (1991) argue. As Bold (2012) explains '*a life history is a particular type of story that focuses mainly on past events in a person's life but aims to provide an overall picture of an individual's life*' (2012:26). Life history research is then useful to inquire in a purposeful way, as Gubriem and Holstein (2009) argue, as it can explore the impact of past events on the lives of individuals, which can then be analysed in relation to wider social historical. Hence, as Bold (2012) explains, life history methods usually focus on the experiences of people and the events that have happened to them, how they have responded to those events, and what they think and feel about them.

However, life history stories of practice cannot be viewed simply as abstract anecdotes isolated from context and must be understood as deeply rooted in society; they are the means through which individuals author themselves as they respond to consistent and coherent sets of sociocultural assumptions (Bauman, 2004; Holland et al, 1998; Bruner, 1984). Indeed, the stories people tell about themselves in life-history interviews are drawn from their understandings and interpretations of their experiences, in particular

contexts over time and addressed to particular audiences (Bold, 2012; Squire, 2008; Holland et al, 1998). Thus, life history approaches are important as they can illuminate the contextual and discursive influences to the construction of identities and offer many insights into practice and context (Creswell, 2013; Clark, 2010; Jakobson, 2009; Smith and Sparkes, 2006; Burman, 2003).

3.2.2. *Life history narratives and figured worlds*

A narrative inquiry approach that draws on oral life history research methods compliments a figured world's perspective as it appreciates that accounts of narrativized or 'figurative' worlds are an important context for identity construction as they are the 'frames of meaning' in which human activity is interpreted and negotiated (Holland et al, 1998), as section 2.2 explored. The methodological relevance of this is in how it becomes important to pay careful attention to how participants narrate their stories during life history interviewing (Holland et al, 1998; Riessman, 2008). The listener must focus on the dynamics of authoring – the past, present and imagined futures – as well as the characters, as the heroes and villains therein, as it is through those characters (self and others), and what they are doing within those stories, that can illuminate the discursive influences to how the narrator has come to understand their worlds and their own position within (Holland et al, 1998).

Therefore, as Mercer (2007) explains, what participants say about the various characters and plot-lines they construct, and also what they do not say (implicit narratives) in relation to that construction, is then an important consideration for the narrative researcher. As Bold (2012) and Riessman (2008) further argue, the interview analysis has to go below the surface level of the stories being told, beyond what the participant wants the researcher to hear, to get to the underlying influences, assumptions and expectations that illuminate the sociocultural influences to leadership identity construction. Indeed, as Ladkin (2010) explains, it is important to explore '*the terrain below the surface level of apparent perceptions*' (2010:53) and pay attention to both the smaller stories offered, as well as intense and significant events. This can then help to make sense of how these stories are being woven into a more holistic narrative of the self through what is said and not said (Solomon, 2012; Bamburg, 2010; Mercer, 2007).

However, it must be appreciated that authoring the self in narrative life history is a personal and emotional experience for participants as they recall past events that have a particular meaning to them (McLean, 2015). As Bamburg (2010) highlights, conflicts, contradictions and tensions are also an important focus for the narrative researcher to pay attention to in stories as they can further illuminate the influences to identity construction and performance (Josselson, 2011; Mercer, 2007; Chase, 2005). This is particularly relevant from the stance in this research, as it appreciates the messiness and paradoxical conflictual nature of the authoring of a dialogical self in practice (Gunter, 2014; Mabey, 2013; Lumby, 2013; Holland et al, 1998).

Holland et al (1998) draw on Bakhtin's (1981) work on 'the literacy novel' to frame an interesting way to the tensions of authoring of multiple selves. Bakhtin (1981) argued that individuals often authored their own position within their stories through the juxtaposition and orchestration of the multiple voices and performances of the novel's characters. Holland et al (1998) explain that narrativized characters are often placed as heroes, antiheroes and villains that represent or juxtapose the expected dispositions within the narratives of cultural models. They argue how stories of 'villains' are aligned often within personal narratives to represent an oppositional counter-world to the one being figured as desirable. Holland et al (1998) further argue that, as individuals become aware of their figured worlds and the many possibilities of being, they speak of the treatment – and at times the mistreatment - of themselves in those worlds, alongside which they envision or create new possibilities for themselves. These include stories of 'counter-worlds' featuring 'counter-identities' as places and characters figured in opposition to how the world should be.

'These counter-worlds... rarely posit what a lived world should be. Instead they show us what they should not be, what threatens us, and they position the persons presumed to inhabit them as relationship inferior and perhaps beyond the pale of any imagined community we would ever want to join. The portrayal of these counter-identities, transgressors of 'principles' and 'values' often becomes a genre itself...

(Holland et al, 1998:250)

Stories include *'reactions to treatment they have received as occupants of the positions figured by the world'* (1998:143) and those reactions can speak of resistance and acceptance to various positioning as they take an authorial stance in relation to how they make sense of events. In this sense, as individuals author themselves, characters and other cultural resources, will all be drawn upon for a rhetorical narration of the individual that makes sense in the context of how, when and what they are responding to (Riessman, 2005; Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). Thus, as individuals tell stories of practice they do so *'metapragmatically'* as they also figure the worlds in ways other than how it appeared to them, as they respond to many discursive influences, authoring their responses in retrospect from their current position. In this sense their stories are a *'rehearsal'* that offers the:

'opportunity to re-create dispositions to activities-in-mind that shape to its dissatisfaction ... so that narrativized worlds are created around stories of those treatments and visions of better treatment'

(Holland et al, 1998:143)

These *'counter-worlds'* and counter-identities – as heroes and villains – are then an interesting point of exploration for life history research as these opposing worlds – as worlds that are acceptable and those that are not, can illuminate many underpinning influences about what interviewees think about practice and the culturally subjective models of *'right'* and *'wrong'* they assume and attach to it. This is interesting for leadership identity research as there are many rhetorical notions of *'good'* leaders and *'greatness'* in leadership through moralizing discourses that are argued as problematic in practice as notions of values and ethics are culturally subjective (Sinclair, 2011; Fairhurst, 2009). Therefore, exploring this angle could illuminate interesting tensions and reactions to these tensions that can add insights to practice, offer valuable insight into practice and the potential to share, challenge, transform and adapt to the pressures practitioners face (Sinclair, 2011), as chapter two explored.

Overall, with a different kind of *'otherness'* than what everyday practice may allow (Holland et al, 1998), the site of the narrative interview has the potential to offer a space to create a dialogue that encourages individuals to explore the assumptions and

expectations they have about the world, and their positions and possibilities within it more freely that they may feel they can in practice. However, it also has to be understood that interviews are not free from constraint or positionality, and there are historical and cultural influences that shape the context of the interview (Bold, 2012). The interview and the time it was undertaken, as well as those present will undoubtedly influence the stories that are chosen and the way in which individuals author them (Squire, 2008). Therefore, there is also the potential for individuals to claim specific identities through storytelling in interviews as a way to be understood as a certain kind of person to the 'others' present in the context of the research interview itself – and its perceived audience – rather than a reflection of actual practice as lived (Josselson, 2011; Riessman, 1993). This problematizes the notions of the trustworthiness of interviews and researcher position, which is discussed further throughout the next section as the considerations of narrative inquiry are explored.

3.3 *Considerations in narrative inquiry*

As Etherington (2004) highlights, narrative accounts are based on personal lived experiences of particular contexts and are therefore not representative of universal 'truth' in the objective sense. Hence, narrative inquiry, supporting the ontological, epistemology and theoretical stance of this research as discussed in section 3.1, is not concerned with objective method for the purpose of generalisability. Instead concern is focused on supporting the trustworthiness and reflexivity of the study rather than the technical reliability and validity of data, as Clandinin and Connelly (2006; 2000), Riessman (2008), Josselson (2007) and Bold (2012) argue.

As explored earlier, '*narratives sit at the intersection of history, biography, and society*' (Liamputtong and Ezzy 2005:132) and from a social constructionist perspective I aim to present interpretations of the perspectives of the participants in relation to their 'truths' about practice that may illuminate broader sociocultural influences to their identity construction. This research study, as a small-scale narrative inquiry interpreting the narrative accounts that were constructed with three research participants through life history interviewing, is therefore not seeking a generalisable outcome or the answer to

a particular hypothesis; the focus is on the subjective interpretation of a person's perceptions of life (Connelly and Clandinin, 2006; 1990). Hence, within this qualitative research study, knowledge is understood as co-constructed through social interaction (Connolly and Reilly, 2007), as it is created dialogically with the participants during research interviews. Therefore, in terms of trustworthiness and reflexivity, it is important to make clear the issues of *'voice, stance, assumptions and analytic lens so that the reader is abundantly clear on whose story is whose'* (Connolly, 2007:453). As Liamputtong and Ezzy (2005) and Connelly and Clandinin (2006) assert, when using a narrative approach, it is important to include methodological explanation and rationale to support its trustworthiness by addressing issues of transparency and credibility that also supports the reflexivity of the study by making voice (multi-vocality) and researcher stance clear, as well as attending to ethical consideration. The previous two sections of the chapter began that process, and the following sub-sections turn to these specific matters, as noted here, before the chapter moves on to discuss ethical consideration.

3.3.1: Trustworthiness, multi-vocality and Reflexivity

The way in which practitioner narratives are researched here is important to note, as well as outlining my own position as the researcher. In the words of Connelly and Clandinin (1990:12), *'we are, all of us, continually telling stories of our experience, whether or not we speak and write them'*. As Connelly and Clandinin (1990) argue, narrative inquiry is a collaborative piece and this is why it is important to articulate researcher position and beliefs as narratives have a moral dimension. Alvesson and Skjoldberg (2000) further explain reflexivity in research as the interpretative relationship between the researcher and the researched and the ability to break away from a frame of reference in order to see what it is not saying. Echoing the reflections of Connelly and Clandinin (1990), in this research I am not a scribe but rather an interpretive storyteller and story-liver.

In writing about the narratives of the three participants within this thesis there is always a fourth voice in this research – my voice – as the narratives were co-constructed interactively during research interviews. It can also be argued that there is also a fifth voice in this co-construction – that of the reader – as this thesis is read through the

subjective eyes of another who constructs the meanings of the words written from their own position as narratives constructs are multi-layered and multi-voiced (Riessman, 2001; Clandinin and Connelly, 1990), which will be discussed in more depth in section 3.5 of this chapter. My own story is embedded throughout this thesis as the literature and data were read through subjective human eyes, full of partiality and imaginings, history and expectations, passions and interests. As narrative forms of research cannot be done without interpretation (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000), reflexivity becomes a factor as stories of lived experience often convey cultural values, ethics and morals and therefore requires transparency around a researcher's stance and voice (Liamputtong and Ezzy, 2005). As Lewis (2008) argues, part of the life-history method is how it can challenge long-held assumptions as personal narratives unfold and experiences offer accounts that can challenge or subvert established knowledge, which a figured worlds analysis complements. However, this is not in isolation to the participants as it also includes myself as the researcher. Thus, Connelly argues the need for reflexive approaches stating:

It is well known that in qualitative research—with the researcher as the research instrument—design issues related to stance and standpoint need to be considered at the outset.'

(Connolly, 2007: 452).

Therefore, a researcher must remain aware of the potential of their own assumptions to stereotype or potentially, subtly denigrate others due to how his or her own attitudes have been shaped and influenced by his or her own social positioning resulting in a variety of taken-for-granted-norms (Josselson, 2007:556). As Gardner (2002) argues, a researcher must take an authorial stance and decide on how the material and data presented will be used within and beyond the research output and clearly articulate that, which I discuss further in 3.7 (the approach to data analysis) and 3.4 (ethics). Furthermore, efforts must be made to ensure the transparency of the research process to present a legitimate piece of research that is trustworthy, credible and appreciative of the importance of the contextual nature of narrative research to offer as much verisimilitude as possible (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). As Guba and Lincoln (1981) and Creswell (2007) suggest, ways to support this can include outlining researcher position in the process of co-constructive narratives, along with methods such as member-checking and peer-debriefing of data and methodological choices. Thus, as

helpful ways in which to enhance the trustworthiness and reflexivity of narrative research, I employed member-checking whereby the interview transcriptions and summary contextual statements of each participant as a 'case' were shared with the participants. This offered increased assurance of the adequacy of the transcriptions as authentic and fair shared reflection of the discussions that took place during the interviews. It also allowed for matters around confidentiality and privacy to be assured (as discussed in section 3.5: ethics). Furthermore, this back-and-forth process of transcription review aided in the co-construction of knowledge between the interviews to support the '*reciprocal process of developing understanding*' (Gill and Goodson, 2011:159). As the transcripts were shared, reflected upon and discussed, areas of questioning were deepened, developed and further explored which served to deepen the inquiry and facilitate the research discussions, which the next sub-section will discuss.

To further support trustworthiness and reflexivity, I also engaged in confidential peer-debriefing, as suggested by Creswell (2007) and Guba and Lincoln (1984) to help strengthen the credibility of the study. This was achieved through my participation in an academic theoretical discussion group around the figured worlds model, which included other research students and more experienced senior and post-doctoral academics knowledgeable of and experienced with sociocultural perspectives and narrative inquiry methodology, including figured worlds and social constructionism. Although no actual raw data was shared with peers, I was able to discuss my thematic findings along with emerging ideas in relation to the theoretical model to the members of the peer group as a way to explore and challenge my own assumptions and biases. There were also regular discussions with the supervision team at frequent intervals to help advise and guide on methodological design and analytical methods.

Overall, the privacy of the participants was upheld at all times and various efforts were been made throughout the project to elaborate my stance and position as the researcher as well as to open up, challenge and attend to personal bias and interest over the course of this doctoral journey, as examined in this chapter, including in the earlier discussion of ontology, which the next sub-section now moves on to explore.

3.3.2: Researcher Position

There is much written on the subject of 'insider' research and 'outsider' research (Josselson, 2011; Breen, 2007; Riessman, 2008). As Mercer (2007) explains, the tradition in anthropology and sociology was to study the 'strange' up until the second half of the twentieth century when the 'familiar' became more commonplace as researchers looked to their own culture, social backgrounds and grouping, such as ethnicity and gender. Thus, as Mercer (2007) explains, the distinction between 'insider' and 'outsider' emerged asserting the idea certain people have access to particular kinds of knowledge over others.

The insider is 'someone whose biography (gender, race, class, sexual orientation and so on) gives her [sic] a lived familiarity with the group being researched' while the outsider is 'a researcher who does not have any intimate knowledge... It could be argued that the researcher who shares a particular characteristic, for example gender, ethnicity or culture, with the researched is an insider, and everyone else, not sharing that particular characteristic, is an outsider.

(Mercer, 2007:3)

In highlighting the complexities of this insider-outsider division, Mercer explains that the boundaries between 'insider' and 'outsider' are complicated and unstable with the result that individuals are all multiple insiders and outsiders '*...moving back and forth across different boundaries... as situations involving different values arise, different statuses are activated and the lines of separation shift*' (Mercer, 2007:4) Thus, like various others such as Merton (1972), Bulmer (1982), Chavez (2008) and Breen (2007), Mercer (2007) argues that a researcher's position is not dualistic and the nature of inside and outside researcher position is best understood as a continuum. Mercer (2007) explains that various features of a researcher's identity, such as gender and ethnicity can be shared common features and are one dimension on this insider/outsider continuum, yet other features may not be shared. These other dimensions, as Mercer (2007) argues, are influenced by the context, situation and time period, at both macro and micro level, in which the research is set as power relationships between the persons involved and the topic under exploration will influence the nature of insider / outsider status. Floyd and Arthur (2012) explain this perceived division in status as automatically

assuming that researchers have power over participants, which in the case of institutional research especially, is not always the case:

Being an insider means being embedded in a shared setting (Smyth and Holian, 2008), emotionally connected to the research participants (Sikes 2008), with a feel for the game and the hidden rules (Bourdieu, 1998). Insider status may confer privileged access and information, but the researcher's position in an organisation may also act as a constraint, limiting who is willing to participate and what is revealed...'

(Floyd and Arthur, 2012:4)

As Floyd and Arthur contend, there can be many perceived benefits to insider status in terms of increased access to participants and prior levels of interaction resulting in a degree of trust already established that may be difficult for an outsider researcher to build in the same way. As Chavez (2008) argues, this can lead to much more openness in how participants interact, which can often lead to deeper and richer narrative accounts. However, this level of familiarity is not without its tension as relationships outside the research relationship become complications that can influence what is said, which researchers must be aware of and willing to explore (Floyd and Arthur, 2012). However, there is also the potential benefit of a shared sense of knowledge and a more profound practical understanding of the particular field of study, its history and useful areas of information and even the participants themselves that may be useful in gaining deeper insights and opening up discussion (Chavez, 2008). As Greene (2014) argues, this could lead to bias or assumptions being made that may lead to complications during analysis in terms of *'the need to keep oneself somewhat distanced, which can be hard to do'* (2014:4). As Greene further argues, researchers should not fear bias as it may well be a source of great insight and recommends that researchers should remain aware of the potential for their own bias at all stages of the research. It is suggested by Mercer (2007), Taylor (2011) and Greene (2014) that by continually examining one's own subjectivities as researchers this can help to open up reflexivity and address one's own assumptions and bias more openly. Thus, there are both benefits and tensions argued in terms of insider and outsider research, with insider research argued as offering some benefits in terms of access, interaction and knowledge (Greene, 2014). However, much insider research is discussed in the context of institutionally based practitioner research (Josselson, 2011) which does not quite reflect this research. Moreover, the wider notion

of 'insider' status regarding broader sociocultural and professional affiliations cannot be ignored and thus I argue that this research – as a Westernised researcher with a background in various education sectors exploring those of a similar background – therefore contains an element of 'insiderness' to it.

In considering this further, and reflecting on the traditional outsider-insider debate, as an academic inhabitant of the HE sector I could be classed as an insider based on the participants' latter career positions in HE. Problematic to this is the research not specifically studying HE as a sector so there are aspects of discussion that are outside of HE. Furthermore, the participants all shared a background as qualified teachers in compulsory education, which I have worked within, yet have not held a qualified teacher position within so this problematized the 'insiderness' at times as the worlds of the teaching classroom was narrated from a 'teacher' perspective, which I could only imagine and make assumptions on based on my own stance as a professional within schools and a former student inhabitant of the classroom from my own sociohistorical past. As such, there is an interesting tension as position and power relations – or positionality from a figured worlds perspective – certainly went beyond the research relationship and traditional notion of insider research. This meant that different aspects of the self – multiple identities – were brought into the research setting creating a variety of insider-outsider relations. Much in the way Holland et al (1998) posit, as Mercer (2007) also reflects, individuals have a set of identities that are relative and influenced by many factors. Thus the concept of insider-outsider was certainly interesting as some features of my own self and identity were shared with participants whereas other aspects were not (Mercer, 2007). As events, concepts, history, cultures, structures and systems featured through discussion of many value-based cultural forms, such as English and Australian cultural values and politics, religion, Higher Education (HE) and the English schooling system, as well as various demographics, notions of social class, ethnicity and geographical areas. This offered a sense of shared understanding and various assumptions between us during the interviews, thus giving a sense of 'insiderness' to the research (Josselson, 2011).

However, I also felt a sense of 'outsiderness' at play at various points as the participants spoke about aspects of their lives from historical periods, places and cultural models

that were unfamiliar to me. At times there were obvious assumptions during interviews based on cultural background and shared English cultural heritage, and in relation to the research focus, yet at other times understanding was assumed as not shared as particular historical context was elaborated by the participants for my benefit. Thus, my own position as a researcher felt rather confusing at times and I would agree that my understanding of my own position was more in line with the continuum Mercer (2007) elaborated as at some points I felt like both an insider and an outsider to some of the worlds narrated by the participants.

Relating more specifically to the concept of 'insiderness', the participants were professionally known to me which adds a further interesting dimension to Mercer's (2007) sense of continuum. Hence, there were many levels of 'insiderness' to contend with, as Floyd and Arthur (2012) argue, which went beyond broader notions, such as a shared institutional base, profession and social 'group' membership such as gender, ethnicity and social backgrounds. As Taylor (2011) explains, the term 'intimate insider' can refer to researchers who have close, distant, casual, or otherwise, friendship with participants creating a form of emotional connection that, alongside 'insiderness' in the institutional sense, can be difficult and potentially '*leaves very little room for analytic distance*' (Taylor, 2011:15). As my researcher position, and the research itself, was not institutionally based and the relationships were not of an institutionally on-going nature, the notion of 'insiderness' in the way that Taylor (2011) argues also does not quite fit the nature of my position as researcher, however, overall it is difficult to argue for distance in any part of the process. As the participants were known as professional acquaintances the emotional connection Taylor offers can be argued, albeit not in quite as intimate a way. However, the mutual acquaintance meant there was a sense of trust already established and acceptance was readily granted which can be seen as a benefit.

However, the degree to which knowing the participants was of further benefit to the study beyond this access and acceptance is difficult to establish. There is certainly potential for the participants to have openly discussed particular events more with me than to an outsider, or if we were both based in the same institutions, due to our relationships. However, the opposite could also be argued. In dealing with this, reflecting Taylor's (2011) argument around the difficulty of analytical distance, it is

more about examining one's own bias and assumptions around what is being studied through self-critique and reflexivity that is important to elaborate in terms of acknowledging the multi-vocality of research of this kind (social constructionist).

Overall, my position as the researcher was rather blurred, as somewhere in-between insider-outsider status, as Mercer (2007) notes. As Breen (2007:168) suggests, it was important to reflect on the demographic characteristics of the research participants as well as the researcher role as this can impact on data collection and analysis in terms of what is '*seen*' and '*unseen*' and what is considered '*important*' and '*unimportant*' at all stages of the research. Therefore, my prior consideration of the differences between myself and the participants in terms of cultural, social and historical background as noted in this section, as well as gathering contextual information prior to interviews was helpful. Furthermore, undertaking multiple interviews and transcript review with participants, as discussed later in this chapter, served as helpful in supporting the potential for assumed meaning and the clarification of any required points. However, assumption and bias is an ongoing tension that can never be completely negated and there was a constant navigation of 'insiderness' as my role of the researcher was rather multi-faceted. As Greene (2014) suggests, there is much value in examining the position of the researcher and the biases and assumptions that are not always explicit or consciously known. Indeed, there is still '*much to be learned in determining which biases are important enough to the research process to be revealed explicitly to one's reader's and audiences...*' (Greene, 2014:11).

3.4 Ethics

An ethical attitude toward design involves deep contemplation about what it means to encounter and represent “otherness.” This mandates that the researcher question personal assumptions about the normal, healthy, or desirable. Unexamined biases and prejudices may be injurious to participants both at the site of the data gathering, when attitudes are easily transmitted nonverbally in the form of disdain, contempt, or disgust, or at the time of the write-up, when, now physically distant from the participant, the researcher’s values saturate the presentation.

(Josselson, 2007:555)

Ethical consideration is an important part of any research conducted that involves people (Bell, 2010). Within research, there is always the risk of unintentional harm to individuals, groups and participants, as well as potential risk to the researcher and the research faculty or institution (Bold, 2012). Therefore, it is important to examine the potential for risk and harm by considering research ethics before data collection begins, as part of the research proposal (Creswell, 2007). However, ethics is a problematic concept within narrative research. This is due to how narrative studies are *‘loosely designed at the outset because narrative understanding is emergent’* (Josselson, 2007:557). Therefore, interview questions and approaches may very well change in light of emerging analysis of the data.

As Josselson further argues, *‘good narrative research is conducted inductively’* (2007:557) and therefore it is necessary to modify procedures to reflect the growing understanding and potential for shifting strategies as themes develop from the analysis. As Lieblich (1996) suggests, ethics is not simply vowing to ‘do no harm’ and following standardised institutional rules around ethical consideration. It is about having *‘an attitude of empathic listening, by not being judgmental and by suspending their disbelief’* (Clandinin & Murphy, 2007:647) as the researcher works with participants’ stories through the data collection, interpretation, analysis and writing stages. Therefore, it is about having an *‘ethical attitude’* within narrative research that focuses on the on-going care for participants through the research relationship whilst remembering that, as argued earlier, the researcher’s self *‘with its fantasies, biases, and horizons of*

understanding, is the primary tool of inquiry' (Josselson, 2007:545). This 'ethical attitude' argued by Josselson (2007) is concerned about finding a balance between upholding the privacy and dignity of participants and the need for the authenticity, accuracy and interpretation of the research. Thus, ethics is about a duty of care to participants rather than one of their 'rights' as it is difficult to inform a participant at the beginning as to what they are consenting to as much of what will take place afterwards is unforeseeable (Josselson, 2007:540). Thus, as Lieblich (1996) explains, the consent process is better approached from a relational perspective.

There is always the risk that participants are 'narcissistically hurt' by what is written about them, as it is an interpretation of them by another which may not be wholly commensurate with how the participants view themselves (Josselson, 2007). This does not necessarily mean that there is an ethical harm in this which will be detrimental to the participant as every narrative account contains multiple truths as the self is multi-voiced (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000; Mercer, 2007). Conversely, participants may take pride in what is written about them. As Josselson (2007) observes, participants will usually only share what they want to share in interviews and are thus in control of the message they give, and there was some evidence of this at particular points during the interviews as participants each made reference to events and people where they said things like: *'I won't say his name...'*, or *'the one I will tell you about...'* or *'he moved to another institution, I won't say where...'*, which highlighted their own ethical consideration for the people they were speaking of in their stories.

Overall, regardless of the possible outcomes of how participants feel about what is written about them, how the *'narrative emerges in the final report is a construction of the interpreter, and the writer needs to make this plain in the presentation of results'*. (Josselson, 2007:551). Therefore, the ethics of care should include making it clear that the research output is my interpretation of, as the researcher, drawn from a particular interview context at a specific time that the participant can choose not to agree with. Furthermore, the interpretation must also be put into the context of the research focus, its analytical processes and the questions, which 3.7 (data analysis approach) discusses in further detail.

3.4.1: Ethical Considerations

As part of the 'ethical attitude', I followed guidance from my research faculty and doctoral supervision team on ethical consideration. I also reviewed guidance on ethical consideration from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC, 2014) and the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2011) as part of the research design, planning, preparation for data collection and analysis and writing-up of the narratives. Drawing on the ethical attitude around the research relationship and ethical care, I also drew on ESRC (2015: online) six key principles for ethical research as:

- *Research should aim to maximise benefit for individuals and society and minimise risk and harm*
- *The rights and dignity of individuals and groups should be respected*
- *Wherever possible, participation should be voluntary and appropriately informed*
- *Research should be conducted with integrity and transparency*
- *Lines of responsibility and accountability should be clearly defined*
- *Independence of research should be maintained and where conflicts of interest cannot be avoided they should be made explicit.*

As part of the ethical consideration, I considered processes around matters of informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity in addition to authorial stance, as discussed below. Overall, there were no ethical issues raised regarding the study and at no point did any of the participants exercise their right to withdraw from the study.

3.4.2: Informed Consent

Overall, as noted, the informed consent process followed the ESRC (2015: online) and BERA (2011) guidance on which included, openness and disclosure, the right to withdraw and privacy, in addition to the guidance issued and the requirement of my research faculty within the University. However, informed consent is not a straightforward concept within narrative research, as noted in the previous sub-section. As Clandinin and Connelly (2000) explain, the interpretation of data that occurs during

the analysis process results in emerging themes and strategies that can shift the course of the research beyond what was initially assumed or known. Josselson (2007) notes this as an on-going dilemma in narrative research that is not easily overcome through a standardised process at the outset and thus argues that informed consent requires a focus on ongoing ethical care, especially during data analysis. Therefore, it was important at the outset to stress that the research is a narrative approach that is exploring stories and interpreting them through a particular theoretical framework; figured words. Gaining approval at the outset of the project does not mean that issues of ethical consent should fall into the background once the data is collected; rather, narrative research requires that I, as the researcher, take constant ethical care of the data I am interpreting (Floyd and Arthur, 2012; Connelly, 2007). As noted in the introduction to this ethics section, it is the on-going ethical attitude that must remain ever-present within narrative inquiry at all points throughout the study, which for this study was continued through member-checking during the data collection stages. It was also a point of focus during the analysis phase as the data was interpreted and written-up.

Process undertaken

Overall, informed consent at the outset of the research included an outline of the research focus and its overarching questions as well as the participants' rights of withdrawal, privacy, anonymity and confidentiality in addition to the expected use of research data from the study and communication of progress and access to the final research output (thesis). It also included the theme of each interview in preparation, as outlined in the data collection section of this chapter. During the first interview, it was confirmed that each participant had reviewed the information provided and agreed to take part in the study. They had each signed a consent form and acknowledged this at the start of the first interview. They each agreed in advance to have their research interviews recorded digitally with the knowledge that it would aid the transcription process and the analysis of data. They each acknowledged they understood the process and their right to withdraw at any point. All documents in relation to informed consent processes undertaken as part of gaining access and acceptance were retained in my possession. For the purpose of this thesis, the letter of informed consent issued to each participant and details of how to raise concerns or escalate issues with the research process is attached at appendix 1 (*participant information*).

3.4.3: Anonymity and member checking

Confidentiality is deeply important within the process of data collection as there is considerable ethical responsibility in telling others people's stories (Bold, 2012). I made continual effort throughout the project to maintain participants' confidentiality. This was important, as Clandinin and Connelly (2000) argue, because the research landscape is constantly shifting and changing as analysis and interpretation are underway. Therefore, concepts such as anonymity, dignity and privacy were on-going concerns in mind throughout the entire process. As elements of the participants' lives, such as age, occupation history, social background, gender, were crucial aspects due to the nature of this study being concerned with identity through lived experience, sensitivity to potential for identification remained a present concern throughout. As Josselson (2007) asserts, the importance is not just about protecting participants' privacy and confidentiality by simply using a pseudonym for each participant. It is about taking constant care with the ongoing interpretation of data, the construction of narrative accounts and the final research report to avoid the potential for their identification as well as maintaining care for their dignity, and that of other characters within their stories. Overall, although I felt confident that the participant's confidentiality was upheld throughout the research process, there was also the background worry of whether or not this was a possibility. As such the ongoing ethical 'dilemma' of narrative research Josselson (2007) highlights was that the sense of tension that was not easily diminished despite the member-checking employed and efforts to work carefully with the data that were made.

Process undertaken

As the researcher I transcribed each interview having used a Dictaphone to record the interviews and a word processing computer programme to create the transcriptions, accessible only to me and secured by password protection systems. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity was upheld, each transcript was sent to each participant soon after each interview had taken place. These transcriptions had been anonymised in terms of names, dates, places, institutions and other elements such as exact job titles or personal details that could potentially lead to identification. The pseudonyms used

were all recorded in a separate 'code-book' that I stored under a numerical code for each participant to allow for checking if necessary as the data was voluminous and often confusing at times where names or places were similar. The feedback responses from the participants in regards to the transcripts were minimal with a few minor areas highlighted, which were further anonymised to the participants' satisfaction. Once the data analysis had been completed, the outline of each participant's 'case' was sent to each participant. This included the basic contextual information about their career history based on the interviews that took place and the contextual information sheet provided by each participant, which were also approved by each participant for inclusion into the thesis.

3.4.4: Statement of researcher responsibility and authorial stance

As discussed earlier, the research presented within this thesis is my interpretation of, and authorial stance on, the stories verbally told to me by the participants on a voluntary basis. At all times I take responsibility for, and retain editorial and authorial rights to, the narratives, analysis and findings constructed by me as the sole researcher involved in this research and its data collection. This includes any other further written, published or presented work by me in any form or medium relating to the data collected and the outcomes of this research. This was clearly communicated to the participants at the outset during the informed consent stage. At various points beyond the data collection phase (interview period), the participants were offered an update on the progress of the analysis and an estimation for the completed thesis. Upon finalisation of this thesis, the participants will be offered a full copy. All digital data relating to the research was only accessible to me as the sole researcher and secured using password protection and encryption systems, including digital back-up copy files. Hard copy data was kept to a minimum but where necessary to retain, such as the information forms and signed informed consent statements from the participants, these were kept in a locked filing cabinet in a secure private area only accessible to me as the researcher. Participants were informed of data handling and storage during the consent process and communication methods mutually agreed.

3.5: Data Collection

In collecting life history stories, the sample is usually small as interviewing, or accounts of lives, can be lengthy (Bold, 2012; Squire, 2008). Hence due to the small-scale of the project as an EdD, and the awareness of narrative and life-history interview data as voluminous, as noted earlier, it was decided to work with no more than three participants. Interviews were the primary method of data collection and each participant took part in three separate individual research interviews with me spread between November 2014 and February 2015, as will be explored below (*interviews*).

3.5.1: Approaching and selecting participants

The overall aim was to explore the identity construction of education professionals through their narrative accounts of lived experience of leadership practice in educational organisations. Therefore, as the focus was on oral histories in a biographical sense, established practitioners with a career history as long-serving education professionals who had held formal leadership roles in education institutions were the primary selection criteria. The rationale for this was to capture a range of career stages from early career through mid-career to late career as a way to explore what Holland et al (1998) argue is an important aspect of identity construction, the sociohistorical context. Overall, I was looking to recruit a maximum of three participants who shared these primary criteria. The sampling rate was kept to a small-scale in appreciation of the breadth and scale of life history research (Bold, 2012), as noted earlier in the chapter. It was also felt that selecting participants who have had work experience across more than one organisation, and / or sector, may also add an interesting sociocultural dimension in terms of cross-institutional or cross-sector experience to offer a variety of accounts that may appeal to practitioners from across different education sectors. Overall, the participants shared the primary criteria as well as the additional cross-institutional and cross-sector experience and also had some interesting differences, which will be discussed in chapter Four (*data analysis*) when introducing the participants.

As discussed earlier, I knew the participants professionally, resulting in a somewhat double-edged position on the continuum between insider and outsider researcher position (Josselson, 2011;2007; Mercer, 2007; Bulmer, 1982). As such, due to prior professional relationships having been somewhat established, albeit on different levels, there were degrees of acceptance and trust already established historically, however this was not without its benefits and tensions, as discussed (See 3.3.2 and 3.4).

I approached the participants for an informal discussion about the research focus and purpose and what would be involved in terms of data collection, time-frames and commitment. After initial interest was secured by the three approached, I followed up with participants by asking them to provide some basic contextual information about their career history by completing a short information form in preparation for the interviews. This was to confirm the context of the education institutions they had worked in and clarify the different roles they had undertaken during their career to confirm suitability for the study beyond what I knew about them historically, which resulted in their suitability being confirmed based on the above criteria and I sent them an information letter about the project to gain their informed consent, as discussed in section 3.4. Out of the first three participants identified and approached, all extended their acceptance and volunteered to participate and interview dates were then schedule directly with each participant at their convenience between November 2014 and February 2015.

3.5.2: Interviews

As Mercer (2007) suggests, small-scale qualitative research is more likely to use unstructured or in-depth interviewing as a means to construct participative knowledge. In this type of interviewing which is often used within narrative and life approaches as Josselson (2011) argues, discussion is understood as developmental during the interview through *'questions that evoke stories from participants'* (Jones et al, 2014:85). Indeed, Czarniawska (2004) argues that narrative interviews are manipulated conversations potentially able to generate knowledge about social practice. Bell (2014) also emphasises the importance of probing to encourage further storytelling and narration on particular stories offered. Furthermore, as Mercer (2007:11) argues, in social

constructionist narrative inquiry, interviews are influenced by not only the perspectives of participants involved but also by the research approach, paradigm, focus, and questions. Therefore, as the data was gathered in a reflexive way, through a process of developing discussion between me and the participants through a life history interview and two generic thematic in-depth interviews, following an unstructured approach with the interviews helpful in allowing discussion to develop in the way Mercer (2007) argues.

Overall, the approach taken reflected that suggested by Riessman (2002:671) in terms of giving up structure and control of the conversation throughout the entire interview and to follow the participants down their '*associative trails*'. This was important as the co-production of narratives occurs through the dialogic exchange between interviewer and participant, as Mercer (2007) argues, which was situated within the interview context and through the review of interview transcriptions afterwards. The interviewee predominantly held the role of storyteller, as the interviews were a rather complex space of meaning making (Bruner, 1986; Riessman, 2008). As a participatory set of discussions, we shared an understanding of various discourses, artefacts and cultural scripts that inhabited the worlds of the English education system, HE and other life worlds, such as family, social clubs and religion (Holland et al, 1998). Therefore, although the interviews followed the participants' stories from the outset, they were interactive; the questions I asked were in response to what participants had said as well to ask what had happened to them next or to how a certain event had influenced them, or returned to an interesting narrated event to ask more about their understanding of it or for further stories about it. As noted earlier, the interviews were thus complicated as narratives were co-constructed and there were often assumptions of meaning made in relation to my position as researcher, as section 3.4 of this chapter discussed. Therefore, in a dialogic sense as Holland et al (1998) offer, as discussions developed, particularly where points were raised that sparked my interests around the research questions, the interviews were highly developmental as the participant narratives of lived experience were co-constructed through our mutual dialogue.

Interview process undertaken

The first interview was an unstructured life-history interview, with the second and third interviews based on a particular theme of discussion as well as building on initial areas

of interest from interview one and two. The interview themes were shared with the participants prior to commencing the schedule, as below:

Interview One (life history): Exploration of how the participant became a 'leader'

Interview Two (theme): Stories of being a newcomer to workplaces/roles

Interview Three (theme): Stories of challenging situations in practice

The three interviews were conducted with each participant separately over a two to three-month period at quiet private locations and times preferred by the participants. The interviews were recorded via digital Dictaphone with the permission of the participants (see section 3.5: Ethics). Each interview was estimated to last around approximately 90 minutes; the actual range was from 85 minutes to 105 minutes across participants and interviews. As discussed earlier in this chapter (section 3.3) to aid reflexivity and trustworthiness and support ethical consideration, after the first life-history interview, the transcripts were shared with each participant individually before the next interview (Connelly and Clandinin, 1991). The second interview, although unstructured and opening with one question in the context of the interview theme, as above, aspects from the first interview were further explored in relation to the theme. The transcript was again shared afterwards in preparation for the final interview. The third interview occurred in a similar way to the second interview in terms of drawing in on interesting points for further exploration, both from the first life history interview and from the second interview, around the overarching theme of the third interview, as noted above. The transcript of the third interview was also shared afterwards and it was agreed that if either I, or the participant, had any points of uncertainty after the transcription process, email communication would be acceptable. This process allowed for the participants' narratives to grow and develop during the interview process through reflection, discussion and questioning (Mercer, 2007; Etherington, 2004; Connelly and Clandinin, 1991). Beyond the acceptance and approval of the third transcript the research participants did not have any further data to add to the process. Overall, participants commented that reviewing the transcripts and reflecting on their career history had been influential to their thinking about practice and was overall a positive experience for them.

3.6 Data analysis approach

...From the moment of arranging to meet, through the interview or observation, through the transcription, through the analysis, the researcher's interpretation is omnipresent...

Josselson (2007:549)

As Josselson observes, and Alvesson and Skjöldberg (2000:5) assert, '*there's no such thing as unmediated data or facts, these are always the result of interpretations*'. Thus, the process of making choices within the research analysis undertaken should be made clear in relation to the research question and to aid in supporting the transparency of the research (Gubrium and Holstein 2009). Overall, the construction of the participants' narratives took place during the data collection phase. This was a co-constructed process as noted earlier in this chapter through the thematic unstructured interviews and the process of reviewing of transcripts between interviews with participants to aid reflexivity. Thus, as Josselson (2007) reflects, the analysis process began during data collection as interpretation started when contact first began and the specific research relationships commenced.

However, once the data collection phase had completed after the final interview and transcript review had been undertaken, the interpretation of the interview data during the remaining analysis and writing-up periods sat with me as the researcher. As noted earlier in section 3.5 (*ethics*), the report outputs of narrative research are my interpretation of the participants' stories as the researcher situated in the context of a thematic analysis based around a particular research interest and line of questioning (Josselson, 2011; Mercer, 2007).

Therefore, the participants were not involved in the interpretation analysis or writing phase of the project beyond the data collection as the focus was on constructing and reporting how the data had thematically appeared to me from across the participant narratives. Hence, the final result of analysis within the thematic chapters and discussion of findings within this thesis is my interpretation constructed on the basis of the narrative accounts co-constructed with participants around their own interpretations of

their life as lived at a specific point in time, within a particular research focus. It is thus a multi-layered approach, particularly as *'there are always interwoven layers of meaning in any interview text'* (Josselson, 2011:37). As such, I followed what Josselson (2007) asserts, in that:

While the task of the researcher in the data-gathering phase is to clarify and explore the personal meanings of the participant's experience, the task in the report phase is to analyze the conceptual implications of these meanings to the academy. Thus, at the level of the report, the researcher and the participant are at cross-purposes... The researchers are interested in the research questions (and their careers). The participants are interested in themselves. Thus, there is a division between the personal narrative told by the participant and the "typal" narrative, a narrative that exemplifies something of theoretical interest, created by the researcher.

(Josselson, 2007:549)

Therefore, the interpretation and written thesis *'rests in the researcher's authority'* (Josselson, 2007:549) in that the analysis and the written report is about my own meaning making process in relation to the data as researcher, and not about participant interpretation of the collected data. As such, what I write is my interpretation of the interview text and this thesis, and I take full interpretive authority for it (Chase, 1996; Smythe and Murray, 2000). Therefore, my written interpretation in the form of this thesis is not an account of any one person as they told their stories. Rather, this thesis reflects the findings from the analysis based upon my interpretation of the data analysed through the figured worlds framework in relation to the research interest in identity construction in leadership practice as told from stories of practice and lived experience. As such, the focus of the analysis was to *'to tell the story in such a way that interprets and conveys the content and the meaning of the stories in a more holistic way'* (Jones et al, 2014:85) which reflects the research focus.

As noted earlier in section 3.4, there are considerations around reflexivity and voice that are required within narrative research. As Lewis (2008) explains, the rationale for the selection of data must include transparency, whereby reflection and critical judgement are a part of the analysis process. Overall the data analysis involved, what Clandinin and Connelly (2000:132) emphasise as, *'the repeated asking of questions concerning*

meaning and significance’ as the research focus and questions guided the process particularly as the analysis developed in order to retain focus. I employed a thematic analysis method to the analysis of the interview data collected. A thematic analysis involves:

identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organises and describes your data set in (rich) detail. However, frequently it goes further than this, and interprets various aspects of the research topic.’

(Braun and Clarke, 2006:79)

As Riessman (2005:3) argues, a thematic approach is useful for theorising across a number of cases *‘finding common thematic elements across research participants and the events they report’*. This is argued as appropriate due to the focus of the research exploring influences in lived experience to leadership identity construction. However, going beyond a standard thematic analysis by using Holland et al’s (1998) identity framework as an analytical tool allowed the analysis to explore *‘wider institutional and cultural discourses – not usually studied’* as Riessman (2005:3) argues. A thematic analysis was also helpful in attending to the performative natures of identity construction of those discourses as well as the cultural contextual situatedness of the stories, and the interviews, and positioning of the storyteller and other characters in the narrative, as discussed earlier (section 3.2).

3.6.1: Analysing the data – a thematic approach

The thematic data analysis was a hugely iterative process that involved considerable movement back and forth between the raw data (transcripts), the findings of the analysis, literature review and the theoretical framework of figured worlds. Drawing on Holland et al’s (1998) identity in practice (figured worlds) as the analytical tool, the data was analysed in relation to the four contexts of identity that Holland et al (1998) outline: figured worlds; positionality; authoring the self; and world making (as discussed in chapter two).

Before turning to the actual processes undertaken to analyse the data, it is first important to discuss the representation of the interview data within this final thesis and the multiple voices, layers and constructions present within the representation of the data, as noted earlier in this chapter (section 3.3 and 3.5). As Connelly and Clandinin (1990) explain, narrative research is a multi-layered and multi-voiced construct (Josselson, 2007; Mercer, 2007) resulting in multiple voices presents within any written text, as well as multiple layers of meaning. As the self is always ‘multi-vocal’ in a Bakhtinian dialogical sense, there is always a multiplicity of voices – a heteroglossia – as selves are authored during interviews. ‘Multilayeredness’ is described by Josselson (2011a:37) through a metaphor of how ‘*the storyteller is a weaver*’ whereby many meanings are interwoven into the interview conversation beyond conscious intention as taken-for-granted notions and normative assumptions.

As Josselson (2011a) asserts, there are always many interwoven layers of meaning in an interview transcript and beyond this, the analysis adds a further layer of representation – another voice in the story as my interpretation as the researcher, adds another layer of meaning. Therefore, as the researcher-storyteller, I brought together threads from participants’ stories as I considered the data in light of the research questions, the purpose of the research and the theoretical framework as I constructed meaning. In that sense, the written text featuring the analysis of data within this thesis is an intertextual reference back to the transcripts that are understood not just as texts outside of this thesis, but as texts that are used within this thesis and the analysis was thus an ongoing dialogue between the two. Furthermore, as noted earlier in this chapter (section 3.3), the reader of any text is also adding a further layer of meaning as they interpret the words of the text through their own subjectivity, for in a Bakhtinian sense ‘*meaning comes into existence only when two or more voices come into contact*’ (Wertsch, 1993:52).

Therefore, ‘*every aspect of narrative work is interpretive, as everything implies meanings*’ (Josselson, 2011a:38). Thus, the interview transcripts, the analysis process, the writing-up process and the reading of this thesis offer many layers of meaning to the original words uttered during the interviews. As Josselson (2014) explains, although the opening questions to the interviews were vague, the participants were aware of the

focus of the research which had therefore given them a frame through which to discuss their lives, and thus the interview transcripts are a text that presents one possible version of their life which was then subject to my interpretations and reconstruction of parts of that text in relation to the research aims and my own subjectivities as a person.

As Josselson (2014) argues, the interpretations of interview transcripts within the analysis were readings of a text – specifically an interview transcript – and are therefore not analyses of an individual. As Josselson goes on to say, the relationship between the individual and the text is problematic as there will always be *'gaps between the meanings of experience (the participant's understanding of his or her life) and the authority of expertise (the researcher's interpretive analysis of that life).'*' (2014:151). Hence, as Josselson concludes, the meanings researchers derive from a text represent interpretations that are hoped will illuminate the research question being studied, which was the case in this research through the thematic approach taken in the analysis.

3.6.2: Analysing the data – the process

Analysis began during the data collection stage, as reflected above, through how each interview was transcribed and reflected upon before the next, by both the participant and myself as the researcher, as a part of the process of constructing their narratives.

I transcribed the interviews myself as a way to maximise the time spent with the data, beginning after the first interview and continuing through to the end of the third interview between November 2014 and March 2015. Josselson (2011b:228) asserts that narrative analysis *'involves gaining an overall sense of the meaning and then examining the parts in relation to it'* and argues that by doing so *'we arrive at a holistic understanding that best encompasses the meaning of the parts'* (2011b:228).

To explain this, Josselson (2004) offered a four-step process which I utilised as adapted by Jones et al (2014:84):

1. *Undertake an overall reading of each interview to begin to ascertain general themes and return to specific parts of transcripts to develop meaning whilst considering how the meaning of each part contributes to the understanding of the whole*
2. *Multiple readings of each transcript to track different narratives present within each and how they relate to each other*
3. *With multiple readings, a story that captures both the whole and the patterns begins to emerge*
4. *Explore the themes with the theoretical tool/literature to deepen understanding of meanings*

Therefore, as Jones et al (2014) argue, this process involved the undertaking of an iterative reading paying attention to the structure, content, larger contexts and how these elements overlap. Elements of the analytical approach used by Chase (2005) were also drawn upon when listening to the audio recordings and reading through the transcripts. In particular, Chase's emphasis on the way in which participants described their understandings, feelings and behaviours in relation to leadership, organisations and their own life history was helpful for a figured worlds analysis. Additionally, Chase's focus on the way in which personal narratives appeared constrained and influenced by particular discourses, individuals or social expectations in specific time periods was also useful to draw into the analysis process. I listened and read the transcriptions recurrently over extended periods after that to get to know the stories in both audio format and written format, both in isolation and in their entirety and in relation to specific themes. As each interview took place, I listened back to the interviews to ascertain particular points of interest, tension, contradictions and any areas of clarification or further exploration. I created notes of points to explore in relation to the theme of the next interview, which were shared with the participants via email along with the interview transcript in preparation.

Memos were also used as a way to record my thoughts, hunches and insights into the data as it emerged and the interviews, and then the analysis, developed (Jones et al, 2014; Charmaz, 2006). Memos, as well as transcripts, are a way to create an initial and on-going analysis of data as it is collected which can help develop summaries of leadership practice and self-understanding that can develop as analysis continues (Uhl-Bien and Ospina, 2012). Memo writing is part of the analytical process and, as Jones et al (2014) argue, it began early when working with data especially to capture anything that came to mind in relation to what was happening within the data as it was seen. As Lempert (2007:245) argues, memos may bring in quotations from interview data as '*an immediate illustration of the analytical topic*' and further memos can be helpful as the analytical process deepens to include links between the data, literature and theoretical framework.

As part of the analysis, the memos and the notes from the interviews along with each transcript were first interrogated individually and deconstructed and sorted into particular incidents or stories the participants told that were recurrent, interesting, unusual or confusing in line with the use of Chase's (2005) approach, noted above. These stories, and several sub-stories, were coded by significant words or phrases, sentences or paragraphs from the transcripts and were categorised into themes through the use of researcher memos for each participant individually. A table was created for each participant which presented the themes emerging in each of their stories and how they may link to the aspects of the figured worlds framework. There was a space for the memos and excerpts from the data as quotable examples that could have potential use within the analytical section of the thesis to support interpretation as Jones et al (2014:85). The tables had the following headings as below:

- *Theme (and any sub-themes as applicable)*
- *Researcher discussion (memos)*
- *Quotable quotes (excerpts from the transcripts)*
- *Theoretical Link (to figured worlds)*

Continuing to draw on Chase's (2005) and Josselson's (2011b) approaches to analysis, as noted above, the table for each participant was then examined holistically as the transcripts were re-read to re-construct a narrative of each participant. As the data was rather extensive this was used alongside the individual tables that had been constructed for each participant to consider holistic themes and tensions emerging across their stories. This resulted in a holistic theoretical interrogation through the theoretical lens with lengthy written notes and further memos as the data was re-sorted by theme and stories brought together. This is when the comparison across the case narratives began to deepen in terms of looking for commonalities across to identify any recurring themes amongst them and these themes appeared in relation to similarities and differences between the participants. In this sense, the representation of that data was a multi-layered and a multi-voiced construct as it took shape into overarching themes, as discussed earlier.

The five overarching themes that emerged from the analysis were explored holistically and written-up into separate analytical chapters drawing on excerpts from the transcripts to present, discuss and analyse the themes from participants' narratives in relation to the literature review findings and figured worlds analysis. At this point, I then re-constructed the participants' narratives as short 'case' summaries offering a brief contextual overview of their professional life history in a linear fashion based on my interpretation of their stories as told in the interviews. These were approved by all participants and are found at the start of chapter four (data analysis).

As the thematic chapters were finalised, excerpts of transcript data were interwoven with discussion to '*warrant the interpretive claims made by the researchers*' (Jones et al, 2014:85). The transcript data used is clearly demarcated to present this data clearly, as well as indications of which utterances belong to the participant and which to me, to allow the reader to distinguish who was speaking. This involved labelling and formatting of the entire text of each chapter.

During the analysis and writing process, and as the final thesis was constructed, I kept the frameworks of Etherington (2004), Richardson (2000) and Sikes and Gale (2006,

cited in Bold, 2012) closely in mind to evaluate the written work in relation to the following criteria listed below:

Substantive contribution: *How does the narrative contribute to knowledge and understanding?*

Aesthetic merit: *How does the narrative invite interpretive responses? Does the writer use analysis to open up the text? Is it interesting?*

Reflexive and participatory ethics: *Does the narrative represent participants fairly and acknowledge the contextual conditions in which the data were gathered? Is the author sufficiently visible to make judgements about point of view clear? Have ethical considerations been understood and addressed? Does the author show themselves to be accountable for telling the stories of others?*

Impact: *What is the impact on the audience? How does it affect me, intellectually or any other way?*

Experience near: *Does the narrative appear real, and present a fair and reasonable account of the contexts it claims to represent? Does the work provide a sense of lived experience?*

Overall, interpreting, analysing, writing-up the data and constructing the thesis took almost sixteen months and was an iterative and on-going process of deepening, focusing, evaluating, filtering, re-focusing and re-evaluating, always with the research questions and focus in mind.

3.6.3: Reflections on the data analysis process

Overall, the processes and approaches that were very helpful during the analysis stage included several aspects. The first and foremost helpful part of the process was spending considerable time immersed in the data. This included listening attentively and repetitively to audio recordings and making notes to then compare, as well as reading and re-reading transcripts and making notes to compare with the audio notes. This allowed for themes to become clearer and for the data to lead the analysis process. The

next helpful aspect was in re-constructing the participant's narrative as a detailed story of their life from the transcripts, and then re-constructing this later as a summary. This helped to gain an overall sense of familiarity with the overall story of each participant and the points they continued to return to. Also helpful as part of the process was being immersed within the data through attentive listening and transcription before going straight into the theoretical analysis of figured worlds. This allowed the themes to emerge from the data before being then analysed through the theoretical lens, rather than looking for specific concepts from the lens as a starting point. Creating tables for each participant as a way to bring their themes together and create a space for discussion was a further useful part of the analysis process as a way to sort the data early on within the process. This included continuously returning to the raw interview data to challenge, question and check interpretations, particularly later in the analysis process when writing-up the final chapters. Furthermore, it was important to understand and appreciate the iterative and interwoven process of analysis and the constant return to data, literature and the research questions, as well as the need to draft and re-draft numerous times, remembering document version control and to securely back-up data. Finally, during the writing-up process, using the framework (section 3.6.2) adapted from Etherington (2004), Richardson (2000) and Sikes and Gale (2006, in Bold, 2012) aided in the critical review of the thesis text.

Data analysis was a complex and rather '*messy process*' (Denzin and Lincoln 1998: 30). As Creswell (2007), Bold (2012) and Clandinin and Connelly (2000) all highlight, narrative inquiry can produce overwhelming amounts of data. In this research there was a large amount of data to analyse and I had allowed for a significant portion of time for analysis and the first written draft of the data analysis chapters. The structure of the analysis chapters was discussed through peer review to add to the trustworthiness and credibility of the interpretations and analysis (Connelly and Clandinin, 1991). This included tutorial discussions with the EdD supervision team and peer review from members of the theoretical discussion group I participated in during 2015-2016 (as noted earlier). Listening to the stories of other researchers as to how they have analysed and written-up narrative data previously, as well as discussing published examples of others' work, were invaluable in exploring possibilities for this process of analysis and the arrangement of the data analysis section.

Overall, the process of data collection and analysis in narrative research reflected what other researchers have outlined their experiences to be (e.g. Hunter, 2010; Connolly, 2007; Bold, 2012) yet was a rich and insightful process that was hugely developmental for me as the researcher, as the final chapter (five) of this thesis discusses.

Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the methodological approach used within this study to gather data on practitioner experiences of leadership practice and identity. The philosophical stance around social constructionism was discussed and narrative inquiry was argued as an appropriate approach to the study of identity, with biographical life-history methods highlighted as a particularly useful way to gather insights into how individuals understand the world and themselves within it. Therefore, as this was explained as involving the co-construction and then re-telling of the stories of others, the importance of trustworthiness, reflexivity, multi-vocality and ethical consideration were discussed along with the approaches taken and processes for data collection and analysis process.

The next chapter (*Chapter Four: Data Analysis*) now follows, beginning with an overview of how the data is arranged and introduces the participants, then moves to present the analysis through a series of thematic sub-chapters.

Chapter Four

Data Analysis

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CHAPTER FOUR

Data Analysis

Chapter Introduction

This chapter of the thesis analyses and discusses the data collected from life history interviews with three research participants, Vivienne, James and Patrick, through Holland et al's (1998) identity in practice framework (figured worlds), in relation to the findings from the review of leadership literature. To organise the chapter, it is structured into several subchapters following a thematic analysis, developed from the stories of practice offered. This will be explained next to outline how the data is arranged and aide the reading of this data chapter, before it moves to introduce the research participants.

Stories as themes

In employing narrative inquiry and life history approaches, as discussed in chapter three (methodology) my focus was on how stories of practice can bring identity construction and development to the forefront and can illuminate broader sociocultural and historical factors that have influenced practice and identity work (Sinclair, 2007;2011; Bamburg, 2010; Bauman, 2004; Lumby and English, 2009). At the start of the first interview, each participant was asked how they had come to be where they were, at that point within their career as an educational leader, and whether this was something they had always wanted to be. The stories that ensued were extremely varied and full of events that spanned many life-worlds and not just the organisations they had worked within or the leadership and management development (LMD) programmes and training they had each undertaken. Holistically the narratives all presented similar themes through the particular stories told, that have been influential and important to their understanding of leadership. These themes offered interesting similarities and differences that had influenced the construction and development of their identities. They also illuminated many broader aspects of leadership practice in education across various sectors. Therefore, to organise this data analysis thematically, I have structured the data into subchapters representing the holistic themes emerging from across the

narratives as ‘stories’ as influential contexts through which they had come to understanding leadership practice, and themselves in relation to their experiences. Overall, the themes appeared as:

- *Stories of early life*
- *Stories of organisational life*
- *Stories of study and training*
- *Stories of influential others*
- *Stories of managing the ‘leader’ image*

As noted in chapter three (*methodology*), the data presented is done so fully anonymised using pseudonyms. Square brackets – [] – are used where I have used a pseudonym or obscured aspects and detail to aid anonymity.

The research statement

This research is interested in the exploration of leadership identity as a relationship between self and society. Appreciating leadership as a discursively influenced social construction, situated in the social worlds of organisations, this study is a narrative inquiry, drawing on a sociocultural lens – Holland et al’s (1998) identity in practice – to appreciate the importance of social constructivism, dialogism and relations of power in identity construction and leadership practice. Through the analysis of practitioner stories, its aim is to offer an exploration of leadership identity that contributes to the growing body of knowledge within leadership and management development (LMD) research, wider leadership debates, and the educational leadership field.

The research Questions

3. *What do stories of leadership practice offer as influential to the construction and development of leadership identity?*
4. *What insights does the study of identity, from a sociocultural perspective, offer to wider leadership and management development debates, that informs the educational leadership field?*

Introducing the research participants

This section presents an overview of the background and career history of Vivienne, Patrick and James, the three research participants.

There was a generational gap of about a decade between them all ranging from the late-fifties to late-sixties, with Patrick being the youngest and James the eldest. James and Patrick came from similar working class backgrounds from different areas of the country, both having grown up in large metropolitan cities in Northern parts of England. The participants have each held a variety of positions across a range of organisations over their career, including formal organisational leadership and management roles at various levels in education with around 35 to 45 years of working life experience, including: Higher Education (HE); compulsory education (primary and secondary education); and for both James and Vivienne, Further Education (FE) and vocational education and training (VET), with James also having experiences in the private sector in commercial industry.

Vivienne

Vivienne's career experience has been predominantly situated within the English compulsory schooling sector in primary education and the Higher Education (HE) sector, spanning several schools and one HEI in England. Vivienne was born in England in the early 1950s and thought about becoming an early years practitioner – nursery nurse – after her primary school assessment outcome sent to her to different status of school she had been expected to attend. However, she went to teacher training college and became a primary school teacher, starting as a class teacher in a small primary school in the same county where she had spent her childhood years, which she described as '*a very middle class*' area.

After several years, Vivienne moved on to a similar slightly larger school in the same county where she took on her informal responsibility for leading a whole-school

programme. After about a decade working within her home county area, Vivienne relocated to a similar county in another part of England where she began her first formal leadership role as a key-stage leader in a large primary school. Vivienne spent several years in that school and began to apply for deputy headteacher positions envisioning a career pathway to becoming a headteacher. She began to undertake several training courses in children's behaviour, school management and leadership in her journey towards headship. After about five years, for family reasons, Vivienne then relocated once again to a very different area in England within a heavily populated metropolitan city. There, she took up a deputy headteacher position for several years in a large primary school in a very socioeconomically deprived area, also beginning her Master's degree in educational leadership.

With two and a half decades in the state-education system, over a decade as a school leader, Vivienne relocated back to her home county where she finished her Masters studies and took up a position as a lecturer in a large university faculty, lecturing on education programmes. At first, Vivienne was focused solely on lecturing but quickly gained formal leadership responsibilities within her programme area. After a few years, an opportunity arose for her to undertake an organisational leadership role within a vocational education institution, which she then spent a few years undertaking before moving back into HE as a senior lecturer with formal programme leader role, where she has remained for almost a decade. After several years at her current HEI, structural changes within the faculty saw Vivienne's programme leader role come to an end and her sole focus was on teaching. Getting close to her planned retirement age at the time of the interviews in 2015, Vivienne was beginning to consider her focus after retirement.

Patrick

Patrick's experience has been predominantly situated within the Higher Education (HE) sector spanning several universities across two countries – England and Australia. Patrick was born in England in the late 1950s in a large industrialized metropolitan city to what he described as a 'working class' family. Unsure of what he wanted to do, he turned down a job working with his father and followed his childhood friend to college, who he had known from the Boy Scout group he belonged to.

After graduating from teacher training college, he began his career as a teacher in state education and undertook a Masters degree in his teaching subject area. Shortly after achieving this, Patrick relocated to Australia following an opportunity to study for his PhD in education, which included nominal work as an associate lecturer at his PhD university.

After obtaining his PhD, Patrick began as an associate lecturer in education in the English HE system before then moving into the Australian HE system for a fuller academic role as a lecturer within the education field. From the start of his career in Australian HE, Patrick was deeply focused on research and spent the first several years of his academic life in a “*research vibrant*” faculty in a well-regarded Australian HEI. He worked to develop his research profile progressing to the role of senior lecturer during his time at that HEI. As Patrick further developed his career position to associate professor over several years, he progressed through a further two Australian HEIs. As he moved into the role of associate professor, he incrementally gained formal leadership responsibilities for programme areas, staff, resources and research centres. After around fifteen years in the Australian HE system Patrick relocated back to England to begin a professorship as an associate dean overseeing research in a large HEI faculty, which was situated in a large city which struggled with social deprivation.

After over a decade in that role, which included undertaking leadership training with the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education, Patrick was offered an opportunity to continue his professorship at an Australian HEI as an assistant dean and head of school working closely with the dean of the faculty. Patrick relocated back to Australia to take up the position for a few years before leaving HE altogether and returning to England. At the time the interviews concluded, Patrick was semi-retired focusing solely on leading an international research collaboration outside of HE and was no longer in a formal academic leadership role.

James

James' career experience has been predominantly situated within the Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE) sectors spanning several organisations in England and included some time spent as a private-business owner in various non-education related sectors. James was born in England in the late 1940s in a very large metropolitan city to what he described as a '*lower working class*' family. He gained a good outcome in his primary school testing (eleven-plus) resulting in his going to a more prestigious school out of his local community, leading to him attending college. After graduating from teacher training college, he began his career as a teacher in state education where he spent the first several years of his career. James worked in several challenging schools where he gained incremental leadership responsibilities over time moving from department head to acting headteacher.

After his spell as an acting headteacher, James moved out of education completely and into the private sector where he spent several years incrementally moving into a senior management position within a medium-sized commercial company. During this time James undertook several training programmes and a formal professional qualification in human resources to support his leadership practice. James moved into the public sector spending several years leading FE programmes as a department leader in local government. After this, he moved into the vocational education sector leading a public sector organisation focusing on FE provision where he spent several years as a senior organisational leader. James then took a break from education completely for a few years and focused on running his own commercial small-business within non-education related industries. When James decided to leave the small-business sector, he took up a position as a vice-principal for a FE College around the time of incorporation in the 1990s when FE sector funding changed significant as colleges became independent organisations from the local authorities that had previously controlled and funded them.

James spent several years working as part of the college's senior leadership team focused on development and enterprise. James then left the FE sector and briefly embarked on another small commercial business for a couple of years before then moving into the HE sector where he remained for approximately fifteen years until he

reached retirement age. During his time in HE, James began as a lecturer and completed his Masters degree in educational leadership incrementally gaining leadership responsibilities over time, becoming a senior faculty manager and an associate dean. On reaching retirement, James decided to take semi-retirement and spent a few years back in the FE sector in a programme development role for a small vocational organisation. As the interviews came to a close in 2015, James had retired completely from employment and was concentrating his time on benevolent leadership roles in his local community.

Summary

Overall, participant stories offered a wealth of experiences, contexts and cultures to explore featuring interesting similarities and differences. They each offered unique locally contextualised stories based on their own experiences yet also shared many similar understandings of various notions and expectations attached to leadership. They also shared many cultural understandings based sharing particular social and historical periods of time in England, describing experiences of family, schooling, social class and education as a professional. The following subchapters now move to explore their narratives thematically, as highlighted earlier in this chapter, moving to chapter five for an overview of the findings from this analysis in relation to the research questions.

- Subchapter 4.1.*** *Theme One:* *Stories of early life*
- Subchapter 4.2.*** *Theme Two:* *Stories of organisational life*
- Subchapter 4.3.*** *Theme Three:* *Stories of study and training*
- Subchapter 4.4.*** *Theme Four:* *Stories of influential others*
- Subchapter 4.5.*** *Theme Five:* *Stories of managing the 'leader' image*

Subchapter 4.1. *Stories of early life*

Subchapter Introduction

This subchapter discusses the first of five themes emerging from the analysis of the interview data undertaken through the theoretical lens of Holland et al's (1998) identity in practice framework. In this particular shared theme, the commonalities were how, in telling a story about themselves as educational leaders, Vivienne, James and Patrick each drew on their social backgrounds, cultural models and values from their early life and upbringing in England as children, adolescents and students at teacher training college.

Before moving to discuss the data, it is felt helpful to outline, and deepen, a few theoretical points of significance from Holland et al's (1998) identity in practice framework that have helped to analyse the data in this subchapter, and subsequent thematic subchapters. Following this, stories of early life are explored following:

<i>4.1.1. Social background: struggling, surviving and thriving</i>	<i>109</i>
<i>4.1.2. Cultural models: values and expectations</i>	<i>118</i>
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Co-development and figured worlds

As the subthemes in this chapter will explore, James spoke of growing up in 'a *slum area*' of a large metropolitan city as a 'working class lad' who had done well at school and gone to 'a very middle class college'. Patrick spoke of his childhood in a large industrialised city following his friend from 'the middle class estate' into the Boy Scouts and then to college turning away from the labouring trade occupation of his father. Vivienne described coming from a 'very nice area' in an affluent county town and spoke of expectations around 'a sort of British stiff upper' lip as she described her 'upbringing' as a rather sensitive child who was 'hurt very easily about things' in the world, like famines and wars. Therefore, in this theme, the focus is on the authoring of wider

(macro) social positioning and cultural models that came into their narratives through these early life stories and the influence this had on their understanding of themselves and how they figured the leadership world.

As discussed in chapter two, identities are not only narrativized through discursive cultural models but they are also positional as they are shaped by powerful institutionalized social structures organised through notions of status, power and privilege in particular worlds. It was interesting how for each of the participants, their social position had become a part of their sociohistorical selves – their history-in-person – in the way Holland et al (1998) posit as they each drew on their sociohistorical context as formative aspects of their professional identities as they constructed their leadership narratives and figured the worlds of leadership. As they argue,

‘From a Bakhtinian-sociohistoric perspective, persons develop through and around the cultural forms by which they are identified, and identify themselves, in the context of their affiliation or disaffiliation with those associated with those forms and practices.’

(Holland et al, 1998:33)

The relevance of this ‘co-development’ is the link between individuals, cultural forms and social position in particular worlds, which results in the heuristic development of identity over time. They define heuristic development as *‘the contingent formation of subjectivity over time’* (Holland et al, 1998: viii), which can be understood as how an individual constantly engages with discursive and powerful institutionalised ways of thinking and develops new ways of being over time. As they further argue, cultural models and their socially and culturally constructed discourses are *‘living tools of the self—as artifacts or media that figure the self constitutively, in open-ended ways’* (1998:28).

As Holland et al (1998) argue through their notion of co-development, cultural resources were subjectively taken up in James, Vivienne’s and Patrick’s stories, not only reproducing powerful social practices but were also be improvised to imagine and create new ways of being through *serious play* (from a Vygotskian view), which is what Holland et al (1998) term as *making worlds*. In relation to each of their narratives of leadership, this can be understood as the myriad of discourse that they each engaged with through time as they interacted with different historical context, cultures and discourses which

they improvised to become a certain kind of leader. The importance of this here is how various forms of cultural inheritance through sociohistorical understandings of family, values, community and social class featured within their lived accounts. Indeed, they were deeply influential to them all as they shared stories of their careers. Thus, in early life stories as this subchapter will explore, there were many notions that reflected a sense of habitus featuring as *'an enduring and significant aspect of history-in-person, history that is brought to current situations'* (Holland et al, 1998:65). Indeed, Holland et al draw on Bourdieusian notions of habitus, which as Bourdieu argues:

is essentially the way in which the culture of a particular social group is embodied (internalised) in the individual, during the socialisation process beginning in early childhood'

(Bourdieu, 1990:63).

Therefore, as Holland et al (1998) explain, an individual's history-in-person is the sediment from their past experiences of habitus that are then improvised which can become the basis for their reformed subjectivity – their heuristic development.

Across all of the participant narratives there were similar cultural resources that reflected Holland et al's (1998) notion of cultural *'artefacts'*, drawn upon regarding wider social models and events, politics, values and education systems. As the subthemes will explore, various cultural models appeared, such as how James drew on the *'humanity'* of his religious community and his *'hard working'* family, or how Patrick returned to the cultural model of the Boys Scouts with its *'supportive environment'* and Vivienne spoke of British society, her *'upbringing'* and family's values. Hence, they often shared a sense of institutionalised values, such as *'respect'*, *'honesty'*, *'integrity'*, *'hard work'* and *'supporting others'* drawn from cultural models as well various notions around structure, such as class positioning as noted earlier and the English schooling system with its national assessments and phases of primary schooling, secondary schooling and college, as the subthemes will explore.

Therefore, as Holland et al argue, *'only by moving between the institutional and the intimate, between history in its usual sense and history-in-person, can we do justice to social life'* (1998:111). This is important as it helps to explore lived accounts of experiences in ways that can help to illuminate the wider discursive cultural models of

expectation and social position – the ‘standard plots’ or doxa in Bourdieusian terms – that have shaped the historical contexts the participants inhabited, as well as highlight how individuals socially construct identities through plots and doxa. Moreover, *‘heuristic development results in persons whose ‘history-in-person’ is likely to have an agenda and momentum of its own’* (Holland et al, 1998:46) as they each brought their history into various situations.

This form of sociohistorical cultural inheritance then results in what Holland et al argue as an *‘untidy compilation of perspectives’* (1998:46). Indeed, for each participant, an untidy complication - a myriad of discourse – had resulted in a sense of tension as their history-in-person travelled with them *‘colliding’* with other circumstances they found themselves within over time (Holland et al, 1998:46). For example, James spoke of the tensions of *‘betraying his class roots’* at a *‘very middle class college’* as a *‘scally who shouldn’t have been there’*. Vivienne articulated tensions as she spoke of how she had *‘failed’* at primary school and *‘didn’t want to be in that mould of, you know ‘well you’ve only gone to a secondary school’*. For Patrick, he explained *‘I didn’t realise there was anything wrong with my accent and dialect at all until I did this sociolinguistic course’* much in the way James reflected tensions around his working class status and spoke of working to working on losing his accent at college. Hence, cultural models and social positions are important aspects of identity work (Holland et al, 1998) and the stories of the participants’ early lives were useful in illuminating what had shaped their cognition of the world and how they had experienced and negotiated the values, tensions and conflicts of their understanding within their practice.

This subchapter now explores these ideas through two subthemes before concluding with a short subchapter summary:

4.1.1. *Social background: struggling, surviving and thriving*

4.1.2. *Cultural models: values and expectations*

4.1.1: Social background: struggling, surviving and thriving

Historical past became an important aspect of how the participants constructed particular worlds and their identities in relation to the plots and doxa within. A wider field of power featured across their stories (Bourdieu, 1998) in which they located their own social positions through various cultural notions of social position.

For instance, James drew on stories of his childhood and early life most frequently and spoke often of his childhood adolescence through the 1950s through to starting his early career in the 1960s after teacher training. His many worlds came to the fore through how he spoke of different political agendas, his local communities and social deprivation and the '*class warfare*' he described as part of the historical context of 1960s and 1970s. At one point he said '*you've got to remember my background*' when explaining how he understood leadership and what it had been like for him in his early life, often reinforcing the importance of sociohistorical context within his stories and how it was '*a very different time in society*' as he narrated rather permissive, and at times rather '*brutal*' aggressive, contexts. He spoke about being a '*working class lad*' who did well at primary school and so accessed a higher status of secondary school than his community peers, and then went to a '*very middle class*' teacher training college.

FC: ... you mentioned your interest in drama [at teacher training college] ...

JAMES: I was at college training to be a teacher and yeah there was – I was approached – and I think that started the dilemma really, because bearing in mind I was playing rugby so a total [inner city] scally who shouldn't have been there really. Most of the people there [at teacher training college] were people I had never met before in my life, the type of people I had never seen before in my life! ...someone approached me and said 'we are doing [a play] [...] will you play the part of the [inner city] scally?' Now that had coincided with my first teaching practice which had been done remarkably well in [a local deprived area] – a hugely rough area – of [the city]. But at the end of it there was a bit criticism that I was doing ever so well in [the local deprived area] but how would I go down in a less familiar area, or an area who didn't have that accent. And the tutor said to me 'it's great [James] don't lose your regional accent but remember you have to be understood and a thick [City] accent is hard. And I'd been trying, and I'd been taking some rip from mates there because interestingly there were about six of us that came from a

working class background. The rest of them were very middle class, very very middle class at college good lord! It was very very middle class. Very few came from working class areas other than these six, and of course these six were betraying that – of course talk about me betraying the class roots – and it really was class warfare. I mean it's no coincidence that the sixties were full of those sorts of plays with you know 'No Room at The Top' and all the rest of it. And it's true, that culture existed...

James' articulation reflected how he felt he had embodied a particular social class referring to the position of '*working class*' and his '*accent*' as artefacts of his positioning in social worlds. His mention of the drama group he joined at college was an interesting cultural resource for how he had explained his way of negotiating his position in the '*middle class world*' of college. The drama group reflected how he had improvised various discourses to reform his own subjectivity and heuristically develop a new identity at college, much in the way Holland et al (1998) posit as co-development, as discussed earlier. James appeared at times to be in this untidy compilation of perspectives that Holland et al assert as his historical '*working class lad*' identity collided with the middle class circumstances around him at college. His working class positioning was quite an important part of his self-understanding appearing as a consistent part of his leadership narrative.

However, he also spoke often of the many efforts he made to change his behaviours and disposition, including his accent, to move away from his past-self as '*a working class lad*' to fit into new cultural models in the social worlds he entered. This resulted in tensions with his working class peers as he was accused of '*betraying his class roots*'. As later themes will explore, James remained close to his local area and working class communities and never completely rejected that identity, remaining passionately attached to this part of his history-in-person, and helping those in similar communities.

Patrick also reflected on social class as he spoke of how his awareness of social position developed during '*Thatcher's time*' in the 1980s during the then conservative government in power from 1979 to 1990, and interestingly, like James, Patrick also used a story about his '*accent*' as resource to explain his understanding and how he became aware of his own social positioning.

PATRICK: ...I did a social linguistics course in my undergraduate. I didn't realise there was anything wrong with my accent and dialect at all until I did this sociolinguistic course, and because [the then UK Prime minister] banned [my] dialect from schools, so I was very interested in the notion of positioning and disadvantage...

Patrick rejected the positioning he had become aware of and instead challenged why his accent had been considered 'wrong' through stories of his academic research in social justice and equality. Whereas James had worked to lose his local accent as a way to access and position himself in the middle class college world and the world of teaching. Patrick spoke about his research and beliefs around disadvantage often. In one sense this was a rejection of his own positioning in a 'disadvantaged' community, yet also an acceptance of that positional identity as he, like James, remained passionate about working within similar communities to his own and tackling issues of social injustice on a more macro and meso level nationally and in local communities.

FC: ...Was being within a leadership role within education, and within research, was that something you thought you would always do?

PATRICK: No, not at all. Not at all. I was really fortunate I guess. My dad worked [locally] as a [skilled tradesman] and he asked me if I would like a job [locally]. And I said no as I saw how filthy he was and his whole body was a wreck with bad arthritis and all the rest, and I said no thanks dad. But because, [Paul], my mate in the scouts, lived across the road in the middle class estate. Well, it wasn't called an estate – the council houses were called an estate – they were just called the nice houses. But because [Paul] lived there, he was in the scouts, so I went in the scouts, he went to Sixth Form College so I went along to Sixth Form college because he did. I had no idea what I wanted to do. So I did some more O-levels. I ended up spending three years at sixth form so I've got fourteen O-levels, can't even remember what they are all in and four A-levels. Not good grades, but I had a lot of very good drinking friends at that age. The PE teacher said 'Patrick, why don't you go to PE college and do more PE' and I thought 'well, oh yeah, I like sport, so why not'. I had no idea that I was actually training to be a PE teacher until I actually got there...

For Patrick, his comment of 'I was really fortunate' was interesting as it denoted a sense of how Patrick had felt privileged to be able to move away from the social position he was born into, yet reflected his claim as a member of this world. His admiration for his friend in the 'middle class estate' offered a sense of how Patrick had imagined a different

world for himself and how his friendship with 'Paul' appeared as resource of for Patrick to imagine and access other worlds, like the Boy Scouts and College. It could also have been the status of this friendship that had enabled him to access these worlds, as a sort of social capital in Bourdieusian terms. Regardless of how exactly he entered those worlds, Patrick had improvised the cultural models he had seen from Paul's world and his father's world to determine new possibilities for himself and move away from his own social background. Although he explained becoming more aware of his accent and position in college, it appeared at earlier points in his story as he described his perceptions of difference between him and his friend, and the local areas where he grew up. For, James and Patrick they had both come to move away from their working class backgrounds by developing new identities as students, teachers and professionals to access other worlds, thus improvising various resources through co-development (Holland et al, 1998). However, they also retained this positional identity as a part of their cultural inheritance and sociohistorical selves – their history in person – as an important aspect of how they authored themselves as educational leaders. This underpins the notion of the self as fluid with multiple identities that interplay.

Vivienne's narrative was somewhat different in terms of her social positioning. Vivienne referred very little to her family background and? schooling during in the 1950s and 1960s yet she alluded to particular notions of social structure in her stories, especially around her expectations of social behaviour and professionalism. She mentioned working in her local home county area where she had grown up, then working in county area elsewhere that she said was very much like her home area, described as '*a very nice area*' that was somewhat '*middle class*'. Like James and Patrick, she also spoke of her 'accent' to describe a tension around her social position when she had moved to a more northern parts of England. Vivienne explained this area as a deprived area with very different cultural behaviours. This again reflected Holland et al's (1998) notion of an untidy collision of cultural models, which had resulted in tension for Vivienne.

VIVIENNE: ...I had always taught in schools that were probably seen to be quite nice schools or slightly mixed schools, whereas the school I taught at in the [North] was erm – the area the school was in was an area where any families who couldn't be coped with in [the city] were dumped into that area so there were huge social problems, erm, huge behavioural problems... [...]

FC: *...what was it like in terms of your acceptance there, of not being from the [North]?*

VIVIENNE: *... there was a lot of, sort of, light micky taking erm because I have a southern accent but of course when I was down south I had a northern accent so I just, you know... erm... but it wasn't malicious, at all, it was always very light-hearted, 'oh you are going down south to [home], or where ever, are you' you know, so I don't think in school it particularly... I think the hardest thing maybe was for me to actually understand what people were saying to me (laughs) because even though they speak English in the [North] it's like, it's almost as if they're speaking a foreign language to begin with, you don't understand them... I was very aware that I didn't always one hundred percent what was being said to me.*

For Vivienne, she narrated this tension of being positioned by others uncomfortably as she articulated the sensitivities she felt of her own social positioning in relation to the others around her, using the cultural resource of her 'accent'. Vivienne was positioning herself in the story as clearly not part of the low socioeconomic '*deprived*' social class she was situated in within that school community. Unlike James and Patrick, she never overtly claimed a social class position but notions of how she understood herself in relation to wider social positioning were interwoven throughout her stories. As Holland et al offer, as the participants clearly outline, an individual will have an apprehension of their social position within lived worlds whereby '*discourses and the other forms of cultural artifacts used in everyday practices construct subjects and subject's positions.*' (1998:133).

James and Vivienne were around five years apart in age and their stories contained the same cultural resource – the eleven-plus schooling assessment – but with very different consequence for how they understood themselves through this assessment and how it had then positioned them in their social worlds, and academically as children.

VIVIENNE: *...I conformed all my primary school years and then I failed the eleven plus and went to secondary school and I – I felt very much that I had to... I struggled, or had to struggle, to be something slightly different. I didn't want to be in that mould of, you know 'well you've only gone to a secondary school', I wasn't going to be 'I've only been to a secondary school' person.*

She referred to herself as a *'failure'* in the schooling system as she articulated the *'eleven-plus'* as a resource that afforded her a status and identity; an academic under-achiever positioned within a lower status that she had expected. In this sense, as Holland et al (1998) would argue through authoring the selves, Vivienne was rejecting the positioning that this status of school had afforded her – this positional identity as only a *'secondary school'* person – as it had not formed part of the cultural world she had expected to inhabit and thus was resisted in her narrative, yet it was a strong part of her history-in-person. Interestingly, there was a story of *'survival'* for Vivienne and of resistance to similar forms of positioning where she could not be her *'own person'* and had to conform, as further themes will explore. However, as she found herself within a culture she felt she did not belong to, this story led her into the only brief discussion about herself as a child.

VIVIENNE: *...from an early age, in that as a child, I – I was hurt very easily about things. I used to get very worried about the planet and wars and things like that and I don't know when but I do remember almost sitting myself down and giving a really good talking to myself that I couldn't allow myself to be hurt in this way. So I think from probably secondary school age I learnt to have a sort of a slightly different persona in everyday life so that I wouldn't get hurt, so... because things like famines and things like, you know when you have pictures on the television, they used to really upset me – they still upset me but they don't upset me as much.*

FC: *Through your experiences, what influenced your thinking around that 'you leave your baggage at the door' stuff? Where did that come from...?*

VIVIENNE: *Hmmm, don't know. Did we talk about that at college? I don't think so. I – I actually wonder whether that's almost a sort of cultural thing and maybe my age, you know sort of British stiff upper lip type of thing in that how whatever's happening you still do the job so I think maybe, yeah maybe it's part of my upbringing that you don't tell everybody all the awful things that are going on in your life you just get on with it. So I think it's probably more from there than from anything I learnt in later life. I think it is possibly a cultural thing.*

As she offered a brief role in her story for her childhood-self as quite a sensitive character, this sensitive-self was an identity that featured in her later life stories about leadership as she moved through events in her career, as further themes will explore later through the remaining subchapters. In terms of the relevance here, this sensitive character appeared as a part of her history-in-person from her early life experiences as

she struggled with feeling '*hurt*' from her positioning at school as well as in how she saw events or other ways of life that were outside of what she had understood as a child. As she spoke of engaging with cultural media as a child, such as pictures of wars and famines on the television and how she had comprehended and imagined the world around her, she authored this rather sensitive-self as a deep part of her emotional being.

However, Vivienne's discourse around the '*British stiff upper lip*' was interesting as it appeared as a cultural script, as one of suppressing hurt and emotion. It appeared as an expected part of her cultural upbringing in that was an authoritative voice from her socio-historical experiences that had come to form part of her inner speech as she went onto regulate her own behaviours in a way to answer this expectation. This sense of emotional control – this '*stiff upper lip*' – had become part of her history-in-person as a strong internally persuasive discourse for Vivienne, as theme five (subchapter 4.5: *Stories of managing a 'leader' image*) goes on to discuss further. For Vivienne, leaving her '*baggage at the door*' was a way of understanding this cultural script in the workplace. Again, this offered a collision of perspectives as Vivienne struggled against her feelings and identity as a sensitive person, and the expectations of the cultural scripts that had become embedded within her understanding of being a person in the world, which sat in the way Holland et al (1998) would state as untidily and uncomfortably, in tension with dominant notions of leaders as strong and tough individuals (Ford, 2015; Sinclair, 2011). This is a point which theme five (subchapter 4.5) will explore further. Interestingly, for James the eleven-plus had also placed him outside of his own culture and class positioning into a middle class world and he too spoke of working hard to fit into the different cultures he had found himself in at secondary school and college.

FC: ...have you always done... reflective practice? How far back can you see yourself doing that?

JAMES: Oh god, yeah, I - yeah, you're scarred by it aren't you. Erm, you've got to remember my background erm - middle of [the city] slum area - the only one, apart from strangely the guy next door who became editor of the [a local newspaper], the only two of us to pass the eleven plus which was important at the time, so you are scarred by your school experiences. And the powers that be, was to not send us to the same school but send us to diametrically opposite schools, him [several] miles in one direction and me [several] miles in another, so

you get on three buses and you get battered on the way there (laughs) [...] I guess it was then, you know eleven, twelve, you think 'how do I avoid this?' And you can't because you get the bus and pass three secondary modern schools, lads are going to batter you, even people you used to go to primary school with, so you think 'well, ok how do I deal with this' so you start working out strategies that you become a comic or you become a – a bit of a rebel and you decide when you see them, so you present a difference face to each of them. You're scarred by your life, by your childhood, everybody is scarred by their childhood.

FC: *...those strategies, how do you think you developed them?*

JAMES: *...read an awful lot. I'm an avid reader, erm, [religion] for me, was a huge, huge refuge. Erm, it kind of gives you the humanity. I'm not sure how I'd have got on without the [religion] in all those brutal years really when you look at them, but it kept the sense of 'this is right thing to do, this is the right thing to do' erm, and yeah I guess that's where it came from really. How did you come up with the strategies? You kind of watch and you talk to, you know, good youth leaders. The [religious leader] we had was a magnificent. It was working class [inner city] and so it was very much you were [religion X] or [religion Y], and if you were [religion Y] it was [religious leader Y] and I was [religion X] so it was [religious leader X], and they would tend to be [a branch of religion X] and are hard workers so you watched and listened, so you just had to keep learning.*

For James, like Vivienne, there was a story of struggle and survival in his narrative, however, James authored his childhood-self through the eleven-plus resource as an unexpected high-achiever in relation to the otherness of his childhood community peers. Unlike Vivienne, James accepted his position in the new school world, yet he too also tried to maintain his claim to his old 'working class lad' identity as he spoke of 'strategies' of reflective practice he had used try to remain as part of his working class community as his former peers began to ostracise him due to him going to a very different class of school. His introduction of the cultural model of his religion was interesting as he offered this as containing many cultural scripts around values and dispositions as another way he was constructing himself, such as notions of 'working class', 'hard working' and 'good' as well as it being a world where he was able to find a place of safety, refuge and belonging in a time of hardship.

Furthermore, his story reflected his on-going learning as he engaged with others in this world, which sat apart from a rather fixed perspective of 'everyone is scarred' by their

childhood. James often drew on a more psychological discourse around selfhood, which the next theme explores, however his stories presented his self as conflicting and multiple, and as heuristically developed as Holland et al (1998) argue. Like Vivienne, James also offered a strong story of survival and overcoming adversity, and of a 'scarred' and 'brutal' childhood, but for him, he authored himself as resisting this, as fighting back against this hardship as a hard-worker and a fighter, remaining very attached to his 'working class lad' identity. However, it also appeared, through many other stories that a deeper story for James was how a key part of claiming an identity as a leader was around being a survivor and overcoming adversity – being tough, strong and aggressive – living through difficulties and prevailing over circumstances that constrained them. This reflected much of the mainstream leadership discourse around fixed heroic notions of leader identity, such as Ford (2015), Western (2013), Sinclair (2011) and Collinson (2011) argue, as chapter two explored. This was similar for Vivienne as she struggled with her sensitive-self, as further theme will continue to explore as the data analysis continues, particularly subchapter 4.4 and 4.5. Interestingly for Patrick, the way he constructed his early life contained less by the way of stories of struggle, constraint or being positioned in social structures in uncomfortable ways like James and Vivienne did. Instead of narrating a story of survival and overcoming adversity as they both did, for Patrick, there was a strong sense of how he authored his childhood world as an exciting and interesting world, with a sense of adventure and opportunity attached.

PATRICK: *I actually really loved the scouts, we'd go away camping and climbing and abseiling, canoeing and we'd have knot tying competitions and all that sort of stuff. [...] I loved it [being a patrol leader in the scouts], loved it to pieces, and [my patrol] had six people in it, and there were the [other patrols]. I can't remember the names of the others. There were about eight different groups all based on birds of prey. And that was really fantastic for me. I really loved working with people and helping them [...] the Australia thing... my tutor on the Master's got a job in Australia at [my PhD University], and this is before email so we kept corresponding by snail mail. So one day he said 'Look Patrick, they are interested in funding some research in schools, are you keen?' So, [my wife] was a permanent teacher and I had a permanent position, so we said 'well shall we go, we've got no kids so let's go and do some travelling and see a bit of the world and see what happens'. So that... I can't believe we did it, no internet or anything you know to find out what was in Australia. Are the Kangaroos jumping down the street and all that sort of stuff, it was incredible really, it's what you do.*

Patrick's stories had presented his childhood-self as an adventure and a risk-taker, without the notions of 'hurt' and struggle that James and Vivienne built into to their early live selves as characters in their story. He did not offer any stories about his compulsory schooling, speaking only briefly about himself as an average achiever at college who wasn't particularly good at anything, more of '*a generalist*' and '*fortunate*' to have gained the opportunity of college and move away from a potential life of manual labour present in his family history. His stories presented that he knew the positional identity he did not wish to take up, of a working class labourer, and had thus rejected it as he had followed his friend [Paul] who lived in '*the middle class estate*' to the Boy Scouts and then to college before his then later move to Australia.

Overall, Patrick spoke of his pride in doing well in his life to achieve the things that he had, but often came back to notions of hard work and pursuing opportunity through collaboration with others through the way he had described the cultural model of the Boy Scouts. As a positional world with various '*ranks*' position and status, like '*patrol leader*' and values of honesty, respect, hard work and supporting others, the cultural model of the Boy Scouts had become quite internally persuasive discourses for Patrick. He continued to build into his stories the various notions '*working up the ranks*', learning skills and learning from others and the importance of being part of a collaborative community in the workplace, which reflected the Boy Scouts cultural model he described.

4.1.2: Cultural models: values and expectations

Cultural worlds featured strongly across the narratives. Models of values-based expectations around behaviour was a strong feature and each participant articulated where they felt that came from when asked about particular leadership behaviours they had described in their stories. Wandering into stories of early life culture was common as they each drew on the values and normative taken-for-granted cultural models of social being, thus, their history-in-person was adding a range of voices mediating their behaviours to create their sense of leader-self.

For Patrick, as the last section highlighted, the Boy Scouts appeared as a strong cultural model that had particular narratives and scripts around the expected identities of its members, as such this was quite a deeply embedded discourse for Patrick. As Holland et al (1998) posit through Bakhtinian notions of ‘otherness’, Patrick too carried this internally persuasive discourses as part of his sociohistorical experience, embedded within his history-in-person. As he continued to draw on the many notions of support and collaboration in his leadership stories as he did with the Boy Scouts, he was constructing an identity based on his history-in-person as a Boy Scout.

FC: *How did you come to be an educational leader, and to talk about this, it might be helpful to pick out some key moments or events that brought you to where you are today?*

PATRICK: *I’ve been thinking about - when did I actually become an educational leader? Is it the formal position that you are called, like [Associate Dean], or is it like Professor? Or - what is it? And for me, and don’t laugh about this as I am deadly serious about this, I actually think it goes back to the Boy Scouts. I was introduced to the Boy Scouts by a friend who lived across the road in the nice houses. We ended up going to the Scouts [...]. I ended up becoming a Patrol Leader for [one of the patrols in the group]. And I was an AP - Assistant Patrol Leader – and then Patrol Leader. I really loved working with people and helping them get through their badges and all of that. So I think that was in the subconscious all the while that I really enjoyed doing that. I ended up going off to Sixth Form College, a PE College, and there is kind of an expectation that you are a bit of a leader anyway when you go to PE College. You are not only expected to be good at sports, which I am not really that good at anything, I’m a generalist really. As a PE teacher, you are expected to show a degree of leadership. So nearly all PE teachers in schools have some sort of leadership role in one way or another, whether it’s Head of Year, Head of Pastoral Care or whatever. So there is that kind of expectation of that. I taught at a school in [another area], then went off to do a Masters... Then I ended up going off to Australia to do a PhD in [education] which was fantastic.*

For Patrick, the cultural model of the Boy Scouts had been an important part of his own heuristic development, as well as how he had experienced strong expectations around leadership at college and being a Physical Education (PE) teacher. Thus, for Patrick the notion of leadership as an authoritative voice deeply attached to the institutionalised ways of thinking in the cultural world of PE education was something he had appeared

to accept as a taken-for-granted norm of that world. As Holland et al (1998) argue, in drawing on Bakhtinian notions of authoritative discourses, cultural models determine what is acceptable, and what is not, within particular worlds. As often uncontested taken-for-granted authoritative voices, Holland et al argue how these various authoritative discourses can become automated and embedded within practice as almost unconscious taken-for-granted cultural scripts of assumption and expectation, as chapter two explored as it explored the theoretical framework. Furthermore, they argue that an internally persuasive discourse, in a Bakhtinian sense, is assimilated into understanding as an individual takes a discourse and makes it part of one's own cultural script, in the way that Bakhtin (1981;1986) argues that words are half one's own and half someone else's. Thus, cultural values and expectations are models that become part of the 'inner speech' that Bakhtinian dialogism posits, which serves to mediate a person's behaviours and dispositions in relation to the 'otherness' of the world, as Holland et al (1998) assert via the space of authoring.

As chapter two (2.2). explored, this 'otherness' influences the way individuals are all answering and addressing their various worlds, as Bakhtinian dialogism offers, which will take on differing levels of authority within conscious action as multiple discourses are organised and improvised to '*craft a response*' (Holland et al, 1998:272) to various worlds, as chapter two also explored. In terms of each participant's early life, their childhoods were spread apart by around a decade, with James born in the late 1940s, Vivienne in the early 1950s, and Patrick's in the late 1950s. They all articulated strong cultural models which reflected a shared sense of institutionalised values as notions such as '*respect*', '*honesty*', '*integrity*' '*being good to others*' appeared in similar as they described their passions and values in social life. As we spoke of organisational life in leadership practice, particular ideas, beliefs and values came to the fore which they each traced back to their early lives as they reflected on where this had come from.

FC: ... *what were your day to day experiences of leadership like...*

JAMES: ... *I was well aware on a day to day basis that, for example, I had to be in first. I had to be. Didn't matter whether anybody saw me or not, I felt I just had to be. I had to stick to the original principles that what... that were driving me. I had to be one of the last one out.*

FC: ... *Where did that come from?*

JAMES: ...*Values early on... erm, values early on from school, religious community, wherever else you know, not letting people down, not wanting to let people down at all. [...] in the field I latterly was in, in [my programme area], it was important to show those [students in my programme area], because they were mostly industrialists or commercial people who knew, the importance of dress and behaviour. So, it was an insult to them in many ways if you didn't match their expected standards of behaviour and dress. That's a daily example I am thinking of, and turning up on time for a lecture and doing the basics... responding to an email... doing the basics. [...] not setting examples, and not responding to people I think that was the biggest insult [...] That's absolutely inexcusable sort of behaviours I think. It is where I see it... rudeness, without courtesy and rudeness...*

FC: ...*what sort of behaviours have you tried to put into your daily practices as a leader?*

JAMES: *Try to be courteous to everybody, I always said address them as you would wish to be addressed, well it's a basic [religious community] thing isn't it... you know love thy neighbours thyself, treat them with respect...*

For James, his working class culture and religious community often featured in these reflection, appearing as important cultural models that underpinned his thinking around 'not letting people down'. Particular values were described as part of what Holland et al (1998) would argue as internally persuasive discourses as dominant voices of expectation appeared automated as part of James cultural script around values that he asserted of part of his social being.

Similarly, to James, Vivienne's cultural scripts included similar notions of being respectful, honest and dressing in particular ways, as she described these dispositions as resources she had held on to throughout her life, particularly as she had thought about professional behaviours in the workplace as a teacher and a leader. However, as noted in the last sub-section, there was often tension in their stories as they came up against different cultural models of expectation around values and behaviour. For instance, as Vivienne reflected on her sociohistorical past, she spoke of changing values and her more recent struggle with this that was still rather unresolved for her.

FC: ...you mentioned just before about behaviours that you find are acceptable and unacceptable [in organisations by professionals and leaders] where do you think that came from [...]?

VIVIENNE: ... I think probably the behaviours thing is... probably my upbringing, you know how my parents brought me up, what was acceptable and what was not acceptable. And then the first school I went to, taught at, it was quite a forward thinking school but behaviours, both the teachers and pupils, was at the heart of how the school ran so I think my whole philosophy sort of came from all of that...

FC: So, going back to those behaviours [...] can you tell me about what they are...?

VIVIENNE: Yeah, I think they are very much about honesty, people being honest, people being upfront as well... so not lying I think is a big one, erm... being respectful... dressing in a... in a way that's appropriate. I know you can't tell people how to dress but there's appropriateness and actually recently I have had my thoughts about behaviours really challenged [by an undergraduate student group on teaching placements] ... there's a mismatch there between what I think is a good behaviour and what they think is a good behaviour, so that's actually made me really start to look at the whole issue of behaviours, and is what I'm saying correct or is... has the acceptance of behaviours changed? Is there a generational change and is that right or is that not right, you know, because I do think, as a society, we need to looking at all these behaviours from different parts of society and different organisations. One of the things that we as a British society were always seen as being good at was our honesty and our integrity and I'm not convinced that's something we are good at anymore. So those are the sort of behaviours that I would expect and that is why I think going to the [North] was so challenging [...] my behaviour set doesn't include beating people up or swearing at people, you know. So that was quite a challenge... so that was... my expectations as a leader would be that the staff would work with integrity, honesty, truthfulness, and... present themselves as a professional.

The untidy collision of different cultural models Holland et al argue, as an individual's history is brought into new circumstances, again underpinned the tension Vivienne narrated. In a way, her stories of experiencing shock and challenge at times spoke of how her taken-for-granted cultural models had been ruptured, as Holland et al (1998) would assert, as she came to experience different ways of being. Many stories were offered by each participant that outlined similar notions of tension in the midst of the heteroglossia of multiple, conflicting discourses.

Vivienne framed her struggle with this untidy compilation, this collision of cultural models as *'perhaps a generational thing'* as her own cultural model from early life appeared as what Holland et al (1998) argue as an internally persuasive discourse. In this sense, it reflected the tensions between her sociohistorical understandings of behaviours in social worlds, particular around professional behaviour in the workplace, as she reflected on her own history-in-person and tried to come to terms with the tension and conflict between the two as she rejected particular discourses.

However, it also offered a story about wider society and values in England and reflected a sense of Vivienne's understanding of the evolution of sociohistorical context. This was indeed an interesting aspect to many of the stories offered by all participants as they drew on wider sociohistorical contexts and their own history-in-person through past-selves and events to talk about who they were and who they are now as they positioned themselves within the standard plots and doxa they constructed as they narrated their lives. For instance, this was also reflected in how Patrick spoke of the Boy Scouts as he reflected on himself as a leader as he recalled the culture of the Boy Scouts as *'such a powerful place for me to learn in and develop in'* in a similar way as he described his first Australian HEI as an early career academic. Patrick's stories of his passion for equality and diversity and how education had become of great importance as he had come to understand the inequalities of the world around him as he experienced different cultures to his own in a similar way to James' religious and family values and Vivienne's family values and societal values.

Subchapter Summary

Overall, as Holland et al (1998) explain, for all participants the cultural resources, models and narratives as well as their social positioning that interplayed within their stories were important ways they had come to construct an understanding of leadership and of themselves as a professional and a leadership practitioner. Through Bakhtinian notions of how individuals author themselves in everyday speech, authoring is offered as *'the meaning we make of ourselves'* (Holland et al, 1998:173). It is thus, in the making of meaning, that individuals author the world and draw on various cultural resources to

present themselves in these worlds, drawing on words, language, disposition and *artefacts* to do so, as the introduction section of this subchapter articulated.

In the space of this authoring that Holland et al (1998) posit as another context of identity work, James, Vivienne and Patrick's improvisation of multiple discourses presents the self as a multiple construct, as Holland et al argue. As Holland et al (1998:170) draw on Levi-Strauss's (1966) notions of '*Bricoleur*' as the self – the 'I' – as constructed with pre-existing, and often improvised, materials from their cultural worlds. As such, the social positioning and the cultural models already explored in this subchapter offered a way in which they each formed various plot-lines, resources or *artefacts* and their relevant social positions to then author particular selves. They each drew on their various past-selves, as historical characters, as well as family members, friends, social groups and schooling peers to place themselves within their stories. This was important in the leadership story as particular identities were offered as important aspects of their leadership journey in relation to their identity development. These findings are interesting in relation to what Day et al (2014) and Day and Sin (2011) have argued through their research on leader and leadership development, as they argue that identity is an important aspect of leadership development. They too reflected on leadership as 'learned' though many contexts, as an on-going process beginning early in life. Indeed, understanding of human social learning and development has been presented here in a way that supports Day et al's (2014) and Day and Sins (2011) findings and is therefore an important aspect of leadership development.

As this subchapter explored, wider cultural influences and societal notions were very important influences to how participants narrated their understanding of leadership through the values they carried, assumptions they attached and the expectations they observed, particularly around role of 'leader' (Crevani et al, 2007; Grint, 2005a), as the further thematic subchapters will further explore. As Holland et al (1998) argue, their identities were referenced to several contexts of activity: figured worlds, positionality, authoring selves and making worlds as '*historical phenomena*' and the frames of meaning that contain '*processes or traditions of apprehension which gather us up and give us form as our lives intersect with them*' (1998:41) as '*linked to power, status, and rank*' (1998:271).

Therefore, beginning here with stories of early lives and social background, further themes move on to explore how many differing life-worlds intersected within their stories. Their stories gave a sense how they each drew on a variety of cultural resources and social positions as they were each asked to tell a story about how they became educational leaders, and whether it was something they had always wanted to do. Therefore, these early life stories served to underpin their professional identities as sociohistorically constructed, as a form of co-development between individuals, cultural models, and social position, as Holland et al (1998) suggest. Thus, leadership practice and the continual construction of identities can be argued as a process of heuristic development, as Holland et al (1998) maintain, as individuals engage with and reproduce cultural models, occupy and resist particular social positions, and improvise the various discourses accessible, to create new possibilities for practice.

The next theme (Subchapter 4.2) now moves to explore how this co-development and heuristic development continued throughout their career through *stories of organisational life*.

Subchapter 4.2. *Stories of organisational life*

Subchapter Introduction

This chapter explores the second theme emerging from the analysis of the interview data, which focuses on stories of the organisational workplaces that James, Vivienne and Patrick had worked within throughout their careers. Appearing as another important context through which they each made sense of leadership practice, they each spoke of institutional cultural expectations, social positioning, discourses and organisational structures of power.

The participants had each occupied similar contextual sectors, particularly Westernised education systems, during similar historical periods over the last 30-40 years, beginning as school teachers. Stories of particular workplaces and sectors featured, such as schools and university faculties, as well as broader discussions around notions of privilege, status and power in those worlds through stories of social class and gender. Sociohistorical context was again illuminated as important as various organisations were authored through their structures, ranks and positions. Described through micro interactions with particular individuals and groups and to the meso organisational structures that reflected the positionality of those worlds were often articulated.

For each participant, specific organisational cultures, especially from early career periods, had been quite powerful in the creation of 'standard-plots' of leadership. As they each described how they each understood and experienced organisational life, these standard-plots appeared through particular discourses of assumption and expectation in their narrative and as they moved through stories of subsequent organisations, various 'ruptures' occurred as their taken-for-granted norms 'collided' within a heteroglossia of contradictory perspectives (Holland et al, 1998).

Hence, as Holland et al (1998) argue, their stories were full of orchestration as they drew on many of the authoritative voices of their past and present, as well as their narrativized imaginaries, to craft their response to the worlds around them in a dialogical sense. As Holland et al argue:

Improvisations are the sort of impromptu actions that occur when our past, brought to the present as habitus, meets with a particular combination of circumstances and conditions for which we have no set response. Such improvisations are the openings by which change comes about...'

(Holland et al, 1998:18).

Therefore, participant's stories presented various responses depicting their degrees of acceptance, resistance and rejection of particular discourses and positions as they enacted orchestrated performances of expectation. Yet the stories also reflected how they had pursued their own sense of agency in practice illuminating identity as not only a product of social worlds, but also as a way to produce new possibilities, or rather what Holland et al argue as 'world making'. To explore this, this subchapter is organised as follows:

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4.2.1. Early career cultures: 'expectations', 'ideals' and 'norms'

The participants often returned to various periods of their early career, citing them as particularly formative periods for their understanding of leadership practice. For instance, Vivienne returned often to her first teaching school [Acorn Primary School (PS)] as her 'ideal' school culture and spoke of this as a powerful influence to her teaching practice and expectations of leadership. As she reflected on cultural scripts from that world, drawing on notions of collaboration, democracy and support as she described her own habitus, this also often illuminated '*an institutionalised way of thinking – a taken-for-granted (or normative) way of being*' (Western, 2013:512) derived from history-in-person.

FC: ...what motivated you to want to be a deputy head?

VIVIENNE: ... I think it was just my interest in... in sort of developing people and actually having some input into how the organisation ran and making things better for children [...] ...once I had trained as a teacher, my first school [Acorn PS] was the inspiration that has driven my career because the... all the teachers there apart from one who – I don't know what happened to that person – they all went on to be deputies or Headteachers. It was the sort of school that encouraged you to do things, encouraged you to discuss things and look at things in more depth and consider the way you are teaching and challenge each other about things. So that is probably where it developed, so from that I just wanted to go on and be a deputy head...

FC: So in terms of that culture [Acorn PS] and that shaping you, what did you find were the most important things to pay attention to, or the most pivotal moments for you?

VIVIENNE: I don't know... I think because with that first school it was the whole experience really, it was the fact that everybody embraced everybody's ideas from the point of the view that we discussed everything erm, everything was open, you could go to the headteacher if you had any issues...

Vivienne's stories of Acorn PS often reflected a sense of positionality as she described the assumptions she had come to internalise around role of headteacher and the move towards it. As Vivienne recalled this culture as '*a driving force*' for her career, it reflected how Holland et al (1998) argues that expectations and norms can become part of a person's inner speech in a dialogic sense. Indeed, as a strong discourse that shaped and regulated Vivienne's actions in that world, she described it as an embodiment of sorts – a habitus – and described pursuing headship during her early career. Vivienne's stories presented how she had gone on to undertake local training courses to access that position, which presented as cultural *artefacts* that could help her to gain access the school leadership world, and were understood by her as resources that would help her move towards a claim to a headship position, as subchapter 4.3 (*stories of study and training*) explores further. Thus, a figured worlds analysis presents Vivienne as spending much of the first half of her career as accepting headship as a 'norm' – a standard-plot of the teaching world. As Holland et al (1998) would argue, Vivienne had constructed her identity claims and imagining in response to the powerful expectations around her. There were similar stories of expectation, positionality and discourse within Patrick's

stories as he also drew often on stories of his early career at his first Australian HEI, Beta University, as a lecturer and early-career academic.

PATRICK: *[Beta University, AUS] was such – it was like the boy scouts – it was such a powerful place for me to learn in and develop in, you know, it did have the top people in the world coming through ... That Faculty of Education, I am so pleased I was in that Faculty of Education because it was the most research vibrant Faculty anywhere [...] The pressure of that was quite significant but it was quite fantastic... In that faculty there was a huge expectation from everybody that you became the best, you were at the top of your game. To say you were from Beta University at that time was just magnificent. So, there was always a striving to go to that next level, so... I think I applied for senior lecturer three times at Beta University and got knocked back three times but eventually got it the fourth time through I think. But that was good in a way because it was the expectations that were there... you had to be at the top of the game [...] you know, I was probably so driven, so driven for career, erm... I wanted to make sure that I got to where I wanted to get by a certain age. I'd been told at Beta University that if I wasn't a Professor by the time I was forty, forget about it. As it happened I was a Professor by forty so I was happy with that. So you have that kind of expectation, you have that kind of drive. It's almost... you expect everybody to be driven just like you.*

Patrick spent almost a decade at Beta University, which he referred to often like Vivienne did with Acorn PS, citing it often as a hugely formative culture that had influenced and shaped his understanding of leadership and the positional nature of academia and HEIs. Returning to his early life, Patrick drew on the culture of the Boy Scouts to describe the similarities between his understanding of those two cultures, with positionality interwoven throughout stories of the worlds he narrated. In Bakhtinian terms, as Holland et al (1998) articulate through the space of authoring, the cultural script of the Boy Scouts had become quite a discursive influence for Patrick in a similar way the teaching world had been for Vivienne. As these discourses were accepted, internalised and embodied – as his habitus – Patrick had pursued his move claiming professorship. These two cultural models were quite important to the construction of Patrick's self-understanding and the heuristic development of his identities through his interactions with them over time. Indeed, just as Vivienne's experiences at Acorn PS had formed a particular dominant aspect of her history-in-person that presented through the interviews, Patrick's similar return to stories of Beta University and the Boy Scouts reflected his 'co-development' in these contexts. This illuminated the link between

history, cultural experiences and social positioning as particular identities were authored and claimed across the narratives. For instance, this was often presented in how Patrick spoke of the disposition and status of the professor role, thus highlighting various cultural narratives of expectations he had come to understand which had then influenced his pursuit of that position. In this sense, the various positions Patrick spoke of were not only narrativized identities, they were also positional identities, as Holland et al (1998) argue. Thus, those identities were relational, linked through the narratives of cultural expectation and the positionality of academia illuminating the powerful institutional ways of thinking present in the worlds Patrick figured from his historical past, which appeared in a similar way to how Vivienne had narrated the habitus and positionality of the teaching world from her early career experiences.

PATRICK: ... something that comes through really strongly in my career [is] that I have always felt I have serviced people... I serve people. You kind of make yourself become second, and that is a strong thread coming through in my career.

FC: ...what sorts of things of things have you found really helpful in doing that when working with people?

PATRICK: Sharing my experiences really. [...] I helped people with their PhDs. I helped people with developing a research profile. [...] Because, you know, if you are publishing in a high top class journal that's good evidence that you are a good researcher. So that is good objective evidence out there...

Within the cultural models they both offered from their early career experiences, Patrick and Vivienne offered a shared discourse of leadership as a participative as they returned back to various cultural artefacts and scripts, such as democracy, supporting others and collaboration. For Vivienne, as noted above, she had talked about leadership being about 'developing others', and 'making things better for children'. Additionally, Patrick and Vivienne both reflected on the notion of leadership as serving others, which was also a similar feature for James. For instance, Patrick offered:

PATRICK: ...A part of being a leader and being a professor is about bringing on other people, it's about working with other people and supporting other people. You know ... all I do is service other people.

Patrick offered quite a strong return to notions of serving others, which offered a strong narrative around the role of 'leaders' and what the 'ought' to do. At times this often reflected notions of servant leadership, noted in chapter two, which theorises

leadership as putting the needs of follower first as a values-driven discourse around self-sacrifice (Greenleaf, 2002). However, as Tourish (2013) argues, these moral and ethical discourses have often positioned leaders as ‘stewards’ of sorts to govern the potential impact that organisations could have on wider society. Interestingly, Patrick and Vivienne often returned to the purpose of education in wider society, taking in this discourse of wider moral responsibilities quite deeply within their narratives. Similarly, James often offered a very strong discourse around leadership practice as ‘*serving*’ the organisation for the purpose of its success. He often returned to ‘*the interaction between industry and education*’ as vital in enabling local communities to thrive as he reflected a ‘moral purpose’ in relation to educational leadership explaining he had come to understand this during his early career. James also referred to his early experiences as ‘*the most powerful*’, James also spoke of how his first organisational workplace, which was also a school, had influenced his thinking for some time.

FC: ...when you have joined a new institution or a team or you’ve maybe taken a step up to a leadership position. ... exploring the day to day, [tell me] about all the mundane sorts of things that go on...

JAMES: Yeah, it’s interesting because it’s – and when you’ve just said that – it’s jumped into my head before, since our first conversation, and erm, your first impressions are always the most powerful aren’t they. And thinking about it, looking back, at [St Jasmine’s] middle school which was my first post [...] one of the first things that very quickly dawned on me was the headteacher, who was a wonderful old chap... was very much what I now recognise as positional power. He was the supreme leader and it was by the virtue of the position, his role as he had been there for many many years... he certainly had positional power; what he said went. So that was kind of my first experience really which, I guess shaped a lot of my thoughts for a while afterwards. [The priest had] purely positional power and that’s a huge influence when you first start out in your career as you basically think wow! [...] so I applied for another school, a secondary school [...] and that’s when I became third [in the structure] and it was run as an independent chieftdom, erm, a headteacher, a deputy head and then myself and then I was part of a true team.

James explained his early career cultures, particularly when he started teaching in the 1960s, through a discourse of autocratic leadership as he articulated cultural scripts of bureaucracy and positional power. In the 1950s, as Western (2013) explains, the dominant view on organisational management posited workers as expected to ‘*follow rules and procedures, to respect position power as people must know their place in the*

hierarchy' (2013:183). As Weberian perspectives (e.g. Weber, 1978) would argue from a historical perspective, the link between power and authority can be closely related, and this appeared as the case for James when he began his career as he saw position power as the 'command' and 'right' to direct others (Ladkin, 2015). For James, power as authority – position power – was quite a tension in his narrative as he described understanding more humanistic discourse, which entered leadership debates in the 1960s, as the chapter two explored. Indeed, for each participant, leadership and organisational worlds were depicted as hierarchical regardless of the historical context of each of their early careers. Participants stories reflected institutions as *'organised about positions of status and influence and the cultural narratives that posit particular sorts of characters and their dealings with one another'* (Holland et al, 1998:59). As various discourses around leadership appeared across the narratives, notions of bureaucracy and hierarchy appeared alongside leadership, which was then more often narrated as form of control in the organisations participants' narrated. Hence, through powerful cultures and the positionality that featured as part of their worlds, as Holland et al (1998) argue, the participants each appeared to carry powerful scripts of expectation around position and status as authoritative voices from their early careers embedded within them as part of their history-in-person as they had continued their careers, which were then challenged.

4.2.2: *'Ruptures' of the taken-for-granted*

As the participants moved through their careers and engaged with new social worlds, cultures and discourses, this often resulted in what Holland et al explain as *'ruptures of the taken-for-granted'* (1998:141). This can be understood as how the many different institutionalised ways of thinking (taken-for-granted norms), constructed from experiences in the many worlds they had inhabited from early life including their early career organisations, had faced contradiction as competing discourses were presented to them through their social engagement in particular worlds. As the first subtheme explored, James had initially internalised a cultural script around *'positional power'* where various identities, such as 'headteacher' were equated to leadership in the sense that once occupying the role, he assumed leadership would 'happen' and others would

follow his lead because *'he's in charge'*. However, in taking up a leadership position as an acting headteacher early in his career, James had found this discourse ruptured as he experienced the realities of practice were not quite like the romanticised assumptions he held about position. Developed during his time at his first school (St Jasmine's Faith School), as noted in the last subtheme, James had initially understood leadership as positional power. Thus, coming into a hierarchical world where positional power was a strong part of the culture, in observing others *'at the top'* (Malby, 2007:3) of this hierarchy *'command'* others who had followed without question.

For James, following *'authority'* was *'what you did'*, heavily reflecting Weberian perspectives on authority and power as obedience to lines of authority was the expected *'norm'* within that culture. Moving to Barton Secondary School (SS) to the *'chieftdom'* where he was *'third in rank'* was interesting as his assumptions around position and authority continued yet had been challenged. Indeed, he spoke of realising how he had come to realise that position alone was not been enough for him to be successful in commanding authority from those around him as an acting headteacher. As he inherited the *'top'* role in the school, he had assumed that leadership would naturally happen, however, he found it did not work the way he had figured.

JAMES: ...I was teaching as a class teacher [at Barton Secondary School (SS)]. The deputy head became ill and I stepped up temporarily and then the headteacher became ill, both of whom were only supposed to be off for – or absent – for two months and it turned out to be at least nine, you know, ten. So I became a leader by accident erm, and was awful, was absolutely awful, er, and realised there was a lot to learn and a lot to do. When they came back, I couldn't go back. It was one of those things, I just couldn't go back to being a class teacher. I tried, but I'd enjoyed leadership too much even though I had made an absolute [mess] of it, and realised also that my experience was very limited and I needed to learn.

As James struggled with his return to his former position as a teacher, he spoke of *'catalysts'* in terms of how much he realised he needed to learn about leadership to be *'successful'*, but also realised how he had *'enjoyed the freedom of leadership'*. These were important assertions in his narrative as many of James' other stories presented how he had pursued this sense of *'freedom'* and the tensions and struggles that had followed later. Furthermore, this story also reflected his sense of ongoing learning as he often returned to himself as a young-career novice, learning how to become a leader,

which had involved his ongoing co-development as he constantly found he was *'trying to somehow... apply what you consistently learn through the experience and the training'* as he moved further through his career. From a figured worlds perspective, this greatly reflected an important context for his heuristic development as his experiences these early career organisations had continually reformed his subjectivity, in the way Holland et al (1998) argue. For example, James offered:

JAMES: ...I looked out of the window one day as all the pupils were working, I was standing in temporarily as a class – well I'd gone back to being a class teacher – and I saw a chap pull up on the road in a car... and I can see him now... and he got out and he took his time and he had a cigarette and I thought 'I can never do that'. I didn't smoke anyway, but I thought 'I can never do that, I am restricted to a classroom' [...] it was the time when we had just raised the school leaving age for lads. When I told them they had to stay on for another year, and I said 'you know it will do you good when you go to work' and they said 'how do you know you've never been' (laughs).

As James' stories of moving out of school teaching reflected how he was narrating that world as very constraining, as he felt *'restricted to a classroom'*. After the hierarchy was re-established and James was re-positioned as a class teacher, he rejected this re-positioning, and the world of teaching, through his move out of schools to the commercial industry sector. The historical context around the movement of children into the workplace at that point in his life, had also offered him a context through which to imagine another world – the world of *'work'* and industry. Thus, in the way Holland et al (1998) explain *world making*, James was orchestrating the multiple discourses of he had experienced, and other notions from his early life and the world outside of the school, as he imagined new possibilities and new worlds and began to improvise his response. The 'chap' smoking outside the car was then a figurative character representing freedom and choice for James. This event was then a rupture for James that presented teaching as a constraint he could no longer live with as he came to realise his sense of restriction which then led him to imagine new possibilities.

Ruptures were also present within Patrick's narrative as he often offered a powerful habitus around undertaking research in the academic world. He figured the wider academic world, and HEIs as institutional worlds, in his stories, describing them as *'the system'*.

PATRICK: *You start, you enter the university or the teaching profession thinking you can change the world. You very soon realise once you've had that batted out of you, that you can't change the world at all and that it's really... you try to have a little influence of the little bit of your world...*

FC: *...Who bats it out of you?*

PATRICK: *The system bats it out of you*

FC: *...Who is or are the system?*

PATRICK: *The system is either other academics, government priorities, policies agendas, policy changes... [...]erm the university at [Epsilon University, UK] for example, just not interested in changing the lot of local people [...] but the system is not interested. You don't get valued, well you didn't really until recently, well you still don't actually... the notion of impact in the REF is really important, but global impact is far more important than local impact. It's all bonkers.*

FC: *In terms of that system, if you think about yourself when you first entered the system and now you are here at the other end of your career, how do you think that 'the system' has influenced you?*

PATRICK: *Erm the university... at the start, I didn't realise the system existed. For me, it was very much my own little world of developing my own teaching resources and developing my own class. And then once you begin to understand the university and what it entails and its relationship with other universities and so on and where the university sits within the broader structures, then you get a sense of what the system is and what it means to you. [...] But before that realisation it was really very much my own little world and I would get on and do what I wanted to do.*

Patrick's depicted 'the system' of academia as a wider structural hierarchy continually woven through the cultural model of academia, as reflected in the idea of positionality. As Holland et al (1998) explain as they draw on the Bourdieusian notion of field, social worlds are embedded and limited in social space by a field of power. Bourdieu offers the concept of 'field' as '*a structured social space, a field of forces...*' (1993:162) describing how '*relationships of inequality*' occur in social spaces as individuals use various forms of power at their disposal, whereby '*it is this power that defines their position in the field and, as a result, their strategies*' (1993:162-163). This illuminated contradiction within social life as individuals navigate the tensions between narratives of expected discourse, imagined worlds and their positional realities, which often reflected how Patrick depicted 'the system' and his struggle within it, in similar ways to James and Vivienne in their 'systems'. Through Bourdieusian notions of power and position, Holland et al (1998) argue that identities are socially and culturally produced

and continually reformed from the 'scenery' of figured worlds, the characters cast therein, how they are positioned in the hierarchical structures of power and privilege and how this relates to the activities and wider social landscapes of positioning across and throughout many interconnected worlds. For Patrick, at times he narrated '*the system*' as a structure of oppression at times, that limited freedom and agency in practice, yet also spoke of it as place of competition, opportunity and possibility. In the latter sense, offering a more liberatory way of thinking about power, there was room for mediation and '*routes of escape*' rather than only of '*imposed discipline*'. (Holland et al, 1998), which is an idea the next subtheme will explore further. Overall, as Patrick's assumptions travelled within his history-in-person, he had held onto those discourses around research in academia into mid-career maintaining a strong identity as a leader of academic research.

FC: *What do you think have been your biggest challenges as a leader?*

PATRICK: *...There's a phrase that the Deputy Vice-Chancellor at [Epsilon University, UK] used [...] 'everybody can make a contribution to the University'. And that was a really important phrase for me because I felt that if you weren't doing research you were kind of a lesser being than others who were doing research [...] To say they were lesser beings is a bit over the top, but they weren't pulling their weight, they weren't doing the right thing within the University context. [...] So for him [deputy vice-chancellor] to say that was a big moment for me, and I've been really very tolerant of people who have said 'no, research isn't for me I'm ok I'll teach another two classes that is fine'. And I am ok with that now, but twenty years ago that would have been really difficult for me.*

For instance, here, the authoritative voice of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC), who Patrick recalled respecting for his academic achievement, had presented a rupture to powerful discourses from the research worlds for Patrick. As Holland et al's (1998) space of authoring offers, this voice of the Deputy Vice-chancellor, understood by Patrick as a legitimate voice to counter others, had entered his inner speech and offered Patrick a new discourse from which he could develop and orchestrate his authorial stance on the academic world. Additionally, this improvisation of the unexpected thus offered a new script that represented the positional identity of the Deputy Vice-chancellor to Patrick, which had been his early career ambition to achieve. In this sense, drawing on his early-career academic-self and his present-self in juxtaposition of each other, as well as

imaginings of a possible future-self, Patrick was narrating his own ongoing co-development as he had come to accept the new discourse. Vivienne also offered a similar rupture of how she assumed leadership would be, speaking of how she had come to realise organisational culture varied greatly between contexts and had influenced her thinking around leadership.

VIVIENNE: *...In the first school [Acorn Primary School] it was great [...]. The shock came in other schools where the culture was not open and not talking about problems and bringing issues to the forefront...*

Stories of Acorn PS, her ideal world of school leadership, often illuminated a particular dominant influence of her history-in-person. However, as she had moved through her career, following her path to headship, she had begun to question the role and how it sat with her beliefs about leading schools. As Vivienne reflected back on this, she began to discuss how her rejection of that cultural script came about, reflecting, like Patrick, her co-development as she engagement with new cultural models.

FC: *... Why did you aspire to become a deputy head?*

VIVIENNE: *...I wanted to make a difference in schools and I think probably when I first started to want to be a deputy head I wanted to be a headteacher, and so I wanted to, er, I wanted to run a school in the way I thought a school should be run. [...] I look at headteachers now and the role is not what – the role is not what I aspired to when I was a naïve teacher. When I was a naïve teacher it was all about being a headteacher, it was all about the children and moving the children on and having this nice collaborative environment and I think that was – that was naïve teacher utopia and I don't think now, I look at it, I don't think that's what it was or what it would have been.*

Over time, she had developed to a point where she struggled to see the possibility of the discourses she had held onto. As Holland et al argue, '*voices that are very alive in inner speech may, at some point, fade in their insistence on being answered*' (1998:190) and as such, Vivienne had let go of the discursive model and expectations that teaching equates to headship that had influenced her pursuit of the position.

4.2.3: Colliding perspectives and the tensions that emerge

Figured worlds can be understood as one of the contexts for identity in practice as they *'move through us as spoken discourse and embodied practice'* (Holland et al, 1998:251), however, this is not without tension. As the space of authoring is offered by Holland et al as a space of struggle as perspectives collide and contradict each other, as the last two subthemes raised, early career organisational cultures were a powerful influence to the understanding of leadership practice, and the ruptures that later occurred through the introduction of new organisational cultures had been often narrated as *'a shock'* or surprise as they encountered new discourses and ways of thinking. The many stories of *'ideal'* cultures, were often told as an interplay between later institutional cultures offering what Holland et al (1998) argue as *'counter-worlds'* to the accepted standard-plots and norms of the figured worlds each participant had come to understand and expect (Holland et al, 1998). Counter-worlds *'rarely posit what a lived world should be. Instead they show us what they should not be...'* (Holland 1998:250). Through these counter-worlds, and their counter-cultures, the participants each offered stories of tensions that had formed as their particular understandings of the worlds had been challenged over time. Indeed, as they found that social life in organisations was contradictory and involved many discourses of being, particularly as a *'leader'*. For instance, as Vivienne described moving away from her *'naïve teacher utopia'* through her career, a myriad of discourse developed within her space of authoring as she moved through different contexts.

FC: ...how do you think all those [organisational cultures] combined have influenced you?

VIVIENNE: I think they have influenced me from the point of view that I have, sort of, worked in a very democratic environment, I then worked in an environment where I was pushing forward new ideas taking people along to then an environment that was probably quite bureaucratic which moved towards more collaborative, erm... so I think probably looking back at the transcripts in the future, I will think *'gosh my career has been in some rotten situations'* but actually I think I learnt so much because they were quite – quite difficult situations some of them. I started off in the ideal school [at Acorn PS] and then went downhill from there. But I think because I started off in the ideal I had this ideal vision which I then went on to, sort of, translate bits within the other situations which were far from ideal. [...] I took bits from that, that I then tried to sort of move into the other

organisations, I never tried to emulate the first situation because I knew I could never emulate that because of the people who were actually in that organisation. I – I knew I would never find that again. [...]

FC: *...you said..., 'I think that you can never understand what the situation and the organisation you are in will do to your leadership and management style because there are so many factors coming into leadership and management'. ...Can you tell me more about that...*

VIVIENNE: *I think – I think it probably stems back from my first school [Acorn PS] was very collegiate, had quite a flat structure, everybody was involved in most of the decision making. So you then make an assumption as a young teacher that that's how things are going to happen. And then you go into another organisation whereby you are 'told' what to do and your opinions are not valued, erm, so I think that it's – it's a learning curve that you think all organisations are all going to be the same but they're not. [...] My preferred leadership style is collegial but I do have an understanding [...] when you are talking about large organisations, the collegial element is slightly different. For me the collegial [in the HEI] is in [the programme area] – it's not even in the faculty of education. So the faculty of education is slightly more bureaucratic and then I would say that [HEI] as an organisation is very bureaucratic. So maybe I've... maybe I find my collegial bit in every organisation I work in – maybe I create or find a bit that is more collegial that I can work within.*

As Vivienne spoke of more 'telling' bureaucratic cultures, she often depicted them as counter-worlds that she had resisted as she had tried to 'create or find' a 'collegial' culture that suited her imaginings of how leadership 'ought' to be. Her reflection of how she perhaps 'created' her own space for collaboration was interesting and it greatly reflected Holland et al's concept of world making. Vivienne was talking about the heteroglossia of leadership cultures in the organisational worlds she had travelled through and how she had improvised discourses of being from her sociohistorical past as she continued to figure leadership in the way she imagined Acorn PS had been from her memories. Indeed, she was described how she had orchestrated competing discourses and cultural models to give herself a modicum of agency within her own practice. As she reflected back on her stories she spoke of how she had enacted a variety of different identity performances as she responded to the dominant discourses of expectation of those organisations and negotiated contradictory expectations. She had spoken of resisting, accepting and of rejecting various discourses through her many stories of challenging practices, influencing change, leading new initiatives, saying 'no'

and even leaving particular contexts. Her negotiation through various cultures then offered her a multitude of discourse from which to orchestrate and construct her responses – her identity in practice – as her stories reflected the sense of bricolage that Holland et al (1998) argue. Indeed, Vivienne’s reflections illuminated the importance of context in co-development as she negotiated the complex, ambiguous and contradictory terrain of leadership through multiple organisational cultures. Thus, her reflection on ‘learning’ through ‘rotten’ situations, reflected all of the ways in which she had crafted her response to the tensions and influences around her. This reflected how her identities heuristically developed through her experiences and how she had found a modicum of agency in her practice through her identity work, to ‘create or find’ worlds she could be comfortable in. In this sense, as Holland et al (1998) argue, her many improvisations often reflected her impromptu performances in response to the unexpected as she sought to navigate various conflicts.

However, for Vivienne, tensions within the wider system of English compulsory education were far more imposing within her narrative as she spoke about her discomfort with being in what she described as a wider bureaucratic culture through an increasingly directive policy climate within compulsory education. Often reflected as a strong tension for Vivienne, this collision of perspectives was a difficulty for her as she spoke of struggling to reconcile bureaucracy with her understanding of school leadership, the role of headteachers and the place of vision and values in schools.

VIVIENNE: ... one of the things that has held me back [...] is I do understand that people have different perceptions. One of my own issues in my own leadership style is that I don’t like being authoritarian and telling people ‘you will do that’ because I understand the need for people to have their own opinion [...]

FC: Why do you think that has held you back at times?

VIVIENNE: ...I think that the way education has developed, erm... particularly over the twenty years, it’s actually... I think you have had to ‘tell’ people more in education over the last twenty years because there are some things, policies that have come from Government, that you might not actually necessarily totally agree with but you have to actually comply with and I have found that a very uncomfortable place to be.

FC: ...In terms of it being an uncomfortable place, in what way was it uncomfortable for you?

VIVIENNE: *Uncomfortable in that, increasingly I have felt that you cannot disagree with what is coming down from Government. Increasingly we've worked in a compliant – more compliant environment.*

FC: *And how do you think that fits with your idea of educational leadership?*

VIVIENNE: *Very badly in many sorts of ways, in that leadership... leadership is all about you and your values and your vision and your thoughts about how children are educated and if you disagree badly with things that are being brought in, then that's quite an uncomfortable place to be in that you can actually see the problems with all those initiatives and what those initiatives could potentially do to the education of children ...it is very difficult to be the visionary person I was at the beginning of my career.*

As explained in sub-theme 4.2.1 (early career cultures), Vivienne's leadership expectations were greatly based around participative forms of leadership that valued the opinions of others and thus she was often resisting the notion of autocracy and bureaucracy. As chapter two explored when discussing leadership literature, many scholars (e.g. Ball, 2012; Lumby, 2009; Gunter, 2014) highlight that the pressures felt in local school settings are increasing as political agenda continues to place expectations on school leaders to continually improve institutions through performance measures and popular discourses of practice.

Therefore, As Morrison (2013) highlights, and many aspects of Vivienne's narrative reflects, this creates a struggle for practitioners expected to sustain performance standards in local settings during a continuous flow of new ideas (Apple, 2011). For Vivienne this had become a collision of perspectives and a form of bureaucratic control as her stories reflected just how untidily she felt national government policy sat with local schools and their priorities, and with her own ideas around school leadership. Furthermore, her stories reflected how she often felt unable, and even fearful, to challenge compliance as this increasing climate had then complicated and problematized the scripts around vision and values in headship that Vivienne had held from her early career. For Patrick, his powerful discourse around democracy and equality in leadership had too been challenged as he struggled with autocratic cultures in the wider HEI. Patrick found tensions emerging as he came across individuals that he felt 'cheated' the university system, gaining position unfairly without the relevant artefacts and historical movement through 'the ranks' he attached to academic

leadership positions like the professor role. As Patrick had a strong habitus of how the academic world appear and those within it would be, his tensions thus grew as he found particular HEIs cultures and others in those worlds deeply contradicted his habitus.

FC: *You said earlier that you prefer a more democratic and collaborative style [of leadership], so how did those [undemocratic decision-making] experiences influence you...?*

PATRICK: *Well, they rubbed me up the wrong way that's for sure, when there is no democracy. [...] it really grates on me when there is no democracy within the University system and I have no respect at all for people who don't show democracy in action, if you like, through everything they do. That's why I am more paranoid about making sure that everything I do is with colleagues rather than on them.*

Patrick's responses to his tensions often came back to how he was positioned, and how he sought to position himself, in the academic world as a legitimate professor and academic leader. He said *'the university system is all about status, hierarchies and power. It's not about knowledge at all'*. He laughed and shook his head as he said that, articulating his early belief in research and collaboration, speaking then of how he had come to understand the importance of particular symbols of status such as a PhD, research grant record and publications.

As Holland et al argue through positionality and Bourdieu's notion of capital, in Patrick's narration of the academic world, these symbols of status were cultural resources, as *artefacts* of importance, that allowed inhabitants to gain access to particular positions of status and prestige, such as professorship and faculty leadership. Patrick articulated his belief in these *artefacts* at many points, yet found this to be a tension. He appeared to struggle to reconcile his understanding of these important *artefacts* with his experiences of those who did not possess them yet still held positional authority; for Patrick, this presented the academic worlds as an unfair place where people 'cheated' to gain position rather than earning it as he spoke his distaste for self-interested autocrats to succeed at the expense of knowledge. As explored earlier, Patrick's history-in-person included particular dominant voices around social equality through his PhD and early career experiences, as well as a strong habitus around collaboration, subjectively formed through the culture of the Boy Scouts and Beta University, as

discussed earlier. Thus, as he spoke of democracy and fairness, he was resisting discourses of autocracy and inequality, and held on to an identity claim as a supportive academic leader, who possessed the appropriate cultural artefacts for a faculty leadership position in the way he felt was fair. As he asserted his authorial stance, this was a dialogic response to the myriad of voices around him. For Patrick, as he entered and engaged with others within particular HEIs worlds, his struggle was in reconciling the contradictory voices he was experienced as competing discourses entered his space of authoring and he continued to resist and reject various discourses and dispositions. This tension had resulted in a strong ongoing claim to a democratic-leader identity within his narrative as he continued to claim his right to a position in a way he understood as appropriate to the context of that world as he rejected those who appeared to 'cheat' and gain position unfairly.

James also narrated a wider tension around the differences between education sectors, as well as the commercial world of industry, as he had spent time outside of education for several years before going to work within vocational education and then FE.

JAMES: ...I kept going back to education because I'm interesting in educational leadership which is a recurring theme but I have to say... the interaction of industry with education is, I think, absolutely essential. If you are going to understand what children are going to do in their life then you've got to understand that life. You can't isolate yourself by being a teacher or a student teacher... that can't be your life if you are going to help others, I'm passionate about that. So for me educational leadership is about that wider experience. [...] Higher Education leadership, Higher Education needs to consider the unthinkable, you know can a degree be done in two years? Can a Masters be done at a less cost? Does it need nine thousand pounds of income? Can we look at those big – can we spread the assets a little bit more, so that we can save for example? Can we use the building – the Greeks do it for example in their education system which is still pretty good despite the Euro [...] There are tonnes and tonnes of thing which can be done. I tried to make that difference, I tried but in the end I didn't make a difference. None of those things are going to happen – not by my actions anyway. So consequences for me? I kind of erm, defeat for the first time, that I couldn't actually have made a difference.

James' tensions were reflected in how he spoke of struggling between cultural models and expectations as he remained attached to notions of commercial business success, educational leadership and his role as a leader as being one that should be embroiled in constantly new initiatives to develop education and connect with industry. For James, this reflected his strong self-understanding as a change-agent and transformational leader, which was a powerful habitus. James appeared to struggle deeply with the ideas and visions within HE and struggled to embed his ideas and expectations into that culture. This was quite difficult for James as he found it hard to claim an identity as a transformational leader as his time in HE wore on. As he spoke of his views becoming more 'opposite' to the HEI culture, he spoke of resisting it yet coming to realise the culture would never be how he imagined it could be. He recalled feeling happier in more commercially driven environments.

Indeed, as James had moved through his career, these ruptures of taken-for-granted assumption about leadership and organisational worlds had formed an important aspect of his identity development. As for Vivienne and Patrick, tensions formed over time for James as he had held onto the discourses from various cultures and career periods, reflecting them as the formative and influential to identity development.

In that sense, as Holland et al (1998) argue, sociohistorical experiences had great influence in the construction and improvisation of various selves as new discourses became available to each of them as they developed through time and experience, in a heuristic sense.

FC: *when you went back into Education, what do you think – about context?*

JAMES: *...in industry it's much more free-wheeling. Yes! Yeah, actually that's a really good point because education is such a one shot – every child only gets one shot you can't afford to take too many gambles. Do you know, I'd never thought of that but yeah, possibly that's the reason. Government money too so it wasn't your own money that you were generating. Yes, very possibly it stifled a little bit of innovation perhaps or the sort of free-wheeling stuff I would have done... yeah, good thinking.*

FC: *...how did it feel going into a new sector?*

JAMES: ...I think you get a shock for about two or three months and in those two, three months you realise that where you've been is of absolutely no benefit other than for what it's taught you. [...] and the only thing that is of any transference is that you're dealing with people. That's the only common bit, each time. And then when you got back to education there's a sense of impatience with the slow pace, with the – which you understand because it's children and you can't afford to go bananas [...] The terrifying bit is going back into industry and saying 'have I still got it, have I still got that leadership capability' especially when you are on your own and it's your own money – 'have I got that leadership capability to make this work' that's when it's terrifying.

FC: ... at [Theta University] ...you mentioned last time that there were some difficulties...

JAMES: I just did my own thing and that again was the same mistake as I'd made previously in the FE College and in the others schools etcetera because then you encourage an 'us and them'. And it worked in industry, no doubt it worked in industry... But it doesn't help when you're in a large organisation that realistically has a bigger number of staff that you can ever hope to influence. So you can only ever hope to influence those who think the same. You'll never influence those who don't think that way, why should you, why should they?

For James, his history-in-person and his attempts to influence the HEI culture through enacting various behaviours, actions and expectations were his way of resisting the discourses of the HEI world and trying to influence new ways of being through his improvisations. As Holland et al (1998) suggest, through Vygotskian notions of play and Bakhtinian dialogism, James orchestrated various discourses to organise his response, thus engaging in '*making worlds through "serious play"*' (1998:272). As a rehearsal of new possibilities for practice, these rehearsals – this identity work were performed as he sought an opening for change. However, the tension for James was in trying to resist a large and powerful institutional culture which did not share his assumptions and norms. James had therefore been positioned by others in ways he had continued to resist, feeling '*stifled*' and unable to claim his leader identity in the way he had become accustomed through his earlier experiences in other organisations. This reflected '*colliding perspectives*' and the various attempts participant's made to navigate the tensions this brought through forms of resistance, rejection or acceptance.

4.2.4: Changing contexts, power and gender positioning

As organisational life and leadership were narrated, wider social positioning through broader macro notions of position, such as social class, race, ethnicity and gender, emerged. In particular, beyond stories of social class which were explored in the first theme, subchapter 4.1 (*stories from early life*), gender positioning was an interesting context for the construction of identity. In leadership practice, as Ford (2015a) argues, leadership discourses often contain *'strong elements of masculinity that act to strengthen male identities and thereby produce asymmetrical gender relations in organisational life'* (2015a:243).

James spoke of working in boy's schools during his early career in the 1960s-1970s narrating them as male-dominated contexts which were *'hugely tough'* environments. As James had served as CEO for a vocational training organisation (VTO) in the 1980s, and before that as a head of department in the public sector in the 1970s, he also spoke with great passion of the benefits of various education initiatives, particularly for working class communities.

JAMES: ...You were talking of a city that remember had [a period] of [social issues] and [serious impact on people] and erm, we were trying to rebuild and bringing in accomplished managers from the big companies, because we were sponsored by a large company in [the city] and they wanted to offload a lot of their senior managers who weren't up to it and I said no and brought in [tradesman] that we trained up as managers, plumbers, you know those sorts of people. [...] it was a strange time, for example in the [public sector] we were trying an experiment to work in the community which is now common place but in those days it's a brand new idea as normally you didn't do that and the idea was to give everybody... erm... one pound twenty a week if they worked so we did. We had construction work – and sewing for the ladies – because that was very much gender discrimination. But that sort of realisation was a big thing for people, you know for lads to learn how to plaster, for girls to learn how to sew rather than prostitution. It was huge, hugely influential for me...

These local communities James talked about working within, often greatly reflected the community of his childhood, narrated as a 'rough', 'slum area, middle of the city'. Much of James' history-in-person came into play in stories of his struggles in HE as he reflected on the work he did in his early to mid-career which was about education helping working class communities, which was a strong part of his sense of self. As the first theme (subchapter 4.1) reflected, James' childhood-self, as *working class lad*, was an identity he maintained a claim to throughout his narrative as he reflected on his time working in various organisations. Therefore, the historical context, particularly in terms of the internalisation of societal expectations, often appeared as a form of cultural inheritance for James.

The contexts he had worked within were deeply influential and had an important role in shaping his own subjectivity, as his social worlds, cultural models and history combined. More widely, James' stories of organisational life illuminated many wider historical discourses around gender, misogyny, class status and political (un)correctness reflecting wider social positioning that had influenced him and the tensions they presented. For instance, James recalled his time in FE during a time of change and how it had been his remit to develop the organisation, often describing and claiming an identity as a 'change-agent' or 'transformation-leader' within that world.

JAMES: *[FE] Colleges were becoming something I believed they should become; incorporated and steam engines of industry, erm, which generates wealth. So, when the position came there I thought 'ah well perfect for me really' and that's what they wanted me for, they wanted me to generate money to show that the college could be closer to industry [...]. It was so politically correct from the FE point of view, which at the time wasn't the case in industry. So there was a constant battle when you were trying sell the FE College services into industry, erm, and you – and because I'd been a teacher I was ok with that, I could live with political correctness because you had to in the school – but I could understand where they [FE] were coming from. But if you were doing supervisor training, if you are doing that in a [factory setting], then you know (laughs) you know it was... it was misogynistic, it was sexist, it was racist, erm... you're not excusing it by saying you had to live with it, but you did you know! Trying to get [the factory workers] then into College to do supervisor training and - wow! And then the old FE lecturers used to say 'damn nonsense' and all the rest of it [to the idea], so yeah there were a lot of tensions there...*

In many stories, James often returned to a discourse of 'leader as a change-agent', and his time in FE storied two very oppositional cultures in which a tense and difficult struggle surfaced at times. However, orchestrating the 'PC' and 'un-PC' discourses to move between those worlds and seek to influence them, James had attempted to navigate these tensions by drawing on his own history-in-person and improvising his performances to realise change. Thus, he was claiming various identities as a leader as he went in and out of these different cultures, highlighting the importance of identity work for James when dealing with colliding perspectives. As James explained that he had come to realise the need to pay attention to many aspects within the context and to begin interactions from a '*higher, harder*', '*business-first*' disposition with employees often reflecting the dominant view on leaders as '*masculine competitive, aggressive, controlling and self-reliant*' (Ford, 2015a:243) illuminating the issues of gender.

JAMES: ...you will look at gender because men and women do expect different things, you can argue that all day long, but they do. Erm, you can look at context, so for example in a large [organisation] it's very different like when I ran [Business A] and ran [Business B]... very very different contexts. With [Business B] ...women were spectacularly successful at this, men weren't, bearing in mind it was a new concept. A [foreign] lady ran it for me, she was brilliant, terrified the life out of me I could never do it, but – so my role then as a snapshot was to then come in as the kind of, you know, almost benign sort of boss, whereas [Amanda] was the hard as nails, you know and be honest it suited me down to the ground as it was like having a day off. With the [Business A] I had to do that, it was the foreman or the manager got the work out of them as well. So you kind of tend to look at the context, you look at gender, you look at lots of things

As James commented '*you can argue that all day*' as he referred to gender difference, he was answering both the masculine discourse around leadership and the 'PC' discourse as he had described in his stories of FE and 1990s cultures. Indeed, he took an authorial stance to an imagined audience, in a dialogical sense, as he positioned himself between discourses. For James, the '*hard as nails*' metaphor for the female manager articulated many notions around leader-toughness as he accepted the masculinity discourse as a normative assumption of the aggressive cultures and hierarchies he had inhabited, thus appearing as a strong discourse within James' habitus.

However, he was aware of the tensions of social equality and thus, as he was answering many discourses – PC, un-PC and maleness in leadership, James – as *‘a Levi-Straussian bricoleur’* (Holland et al, 1998:276) – used these discourses to construct his response by orchestrating those competing voices to claim a position in response to matters around ‘PC’ and gender. For James, there was never a sense that women could not be leaders, rather, there was more of a sense that leaders had to be tough and hard, which could involve women, but that in the past he was articulating that there were less opportunities for women to gain position. Indeed, when he spoke of his mother, he recalled his respect for her strong and tough nature and how she taught him the value of hard-work, which was a disposition that continued to appear in leadership stories.

Overall for James, gender was a tension as he often claimed multiple positions in relation to gender in leadership, yet he clearly articulated a difference in how he felt he had to respond to men and women as a leader during interactions in the workplace. Therefore, the world had indeed not been equal where gender was concerned, reflecting the broader issues of positionality as inequalities ever present in social worlds and reflected changes in how gender positioning in the workforce and leadership practice has evolved over time.

In a similar way, gender was narrated as an inequality and tension for Patrick as he spoke of his own positioning in academia, however, he narrated this tension as a deep struggle with the *‘aggressive, male’* world of academia as he continually authored his resistance to gender inequalities in the workplace.

FC: *...becoming legitimate from the leadership point of view, [what do] you think is very relevant...?*

PATRICK: *I think gender is important. I know a lot of women professors have problems with legitimacy [...] I think that the gender thing has been really important in terms of my career. It's a very male world the university system, and I've really struggled with that. At [Beta University] we had to actually have – at the university level - that all university committees would be at least a third women, that's the basis. Erm, you know I – yeah, I really don't like that male world at all.*

FC: *Did [gender inequality], change at all between Australia and the UK...?*

PATRICK: *I think that Australia was much more gender aware than the UK, at [Epsilon University, UK] they just weren't interested at all, it was just the man's world [...] Quite often women don't have the same opportunities as men career-wise, for health and all sorts of stuff. But you still judged them with that in mind [...] That notion of 'subject to opportunity' just does not exist here [UK]. So men have more opportunities for advancement, men tend to support men, I don't know why but they do... and it is a male world, so you know, if you want to network for example in the pub after hours, it's the men who will be networking in the pub...*

FC: *How do you think that [gender] influenced you as you have gone through that system?*

PATRICK: *I think I have rubbed men probably the wrong way... I'm happy to support anybody who is passionate about their work... but I am not interested in supporting people who are just out for themselves ...the university system, it's such an aggressive, male, dog-eat-dog, 'all about me' world...*

Patrick had spent much of his career in academia, describing HEIs as male-dominated with aggressive cultures. Prior to his academic career, Patrick had a brief history as a PE teacher in secondary education in the 1980s after his time at sports college, and before that spent many years in the Boy Scouts, which he narrated as traditionally male-dominated worlds. Patrick had left for Australia in the 1980s to undertake his PhD scholarship, talking greatly of his research with local communities. Referring often to work in academic research with indigenous groups, refugees and migrants at times of social and industrial growth, as well as during a context of increasing politics around multiculturalism after increasing mass migration into Australia in the 1970s (Jamrozik et al, 1995), Patrick presented a great passion for social equality. He also spoke of wider sociocultural differences between metropolitan areas and rural communities and brought his frustration with gender inequalities in the wider HE system into his narrative, reflecting on how wider forms of social positioning had influenced his self-understanding as a leader.

For Patrick, his position as a male academic in what he saw as a machismo world, with very masculine discourses around leadership, was narrated with deep contention for him as he spoke of inequalities in 'the system' and the privileges afforded to him due to

his gender, over that of women. In this sense, he was explaining how his gender had allowed him a greater status and access to the academic world than if he had been female. For Patrick, his habitus around social justice and equality resulted in a harsh collision of perspectives as he navigated professional life in HEIs, articulating that his gender was helpful to his positioning, yet not without tension.

PATRICK: ... *[the women at Gamma University] were quite exclusionary, they would hold things and I would find out later on that they were happening. I had never encountered anything like that before so that was a real eye-opener [...] the thing that was interesting for me was that there was this kind of internal grouping within the university which I had never experienced before which was having an impact on the work I was trying to do and there wasn't much I could do about it, I couldn't go to the male vice-chancellor and complain.*

FC: *And where do you actually think that came from?*

PATRICK: *I don't know, the only way I could think of at the time... It must have been a kind of defence, self-preservation type group, to promote the lot of women because male – universities are male centred places without a doubt and it must be difficult being a woman in the university [...]*

FC: *So knowing and understanding that, how did that then influence your interactions and behaviours?*

PATRICK: *Well, I was ok for them to have their meetings and so on, that didn't worry me at all. I was just a bit upset when I knew they could have been having engagement and involvement with some of the things I was doing. But you know in terms of timeline I was there three years and it was probably two years in before I got the full realisation of what was going on. So by that time I was probably looking elsewhere for jobs. I think I had been... I had encountered the indifference at [Gamma University, AUS] for two years and I was just 'oh well, that's their problem, it's not mine really', it was that kind of an attitude really I think. It's a disappointment. [...] I left the university. Well, there was no point in trying to battle.*

However, for Patrick, as some of his stories like the one above presented, being a man in a man's world had not always meant he had been in a more privileged position in particular micro-cultures. His experiences at Gamma University, his second HEI and first research leadership position, he narrated as a struggle as he found himself unable to access research opportunities and work more collaboratively with others, as had been his experiences for the decade before. In this sense, he was describing how he was

positioned by this the powerful group of women known by the male academics of that HEI as *'the lesbian mafia'* as some of them happened to be gay, which brought another thread of tension around the tension of sexual orientation in *'the system'*. For Patrick, explaining how he had tried to resist his positioning by the group and reject the traditional 'male-academic' identity being offered to him, he had spoken of his focus on sharing information and building relationships. However, as this has been an increasing struggle for him, he rejected the positioning ultimately by leaving the HEI. However, his move to his next HEI also presented tensions, which Patrick reflected could have been related to gender positioning.

FC: *Can you tell me a little bit about [the issue at Delta University with your colleague] ...*

PATRICK: *Well you first think 'oh my god, what have I come in to?' You kind of think your career is going downhill rapidly... she [my colleague] was antagonistic ... she had such a significant position in the faculty... she tended to get the support of everybody else... [...] the dean and this other woman had tied up all the local networks so strongly that there was no space for me at all to do anything. [...]*

FC: *Why do you think she was like that with you specifically?*

PATRICK: *I think it was as I was a man, and I think it was because I wasn't [from her discipline] and I think it was because I was more senior than she was [...] I left... (laughs). ...when I realised there was no money in there for my position to carry on over three years so, right, I am getting out of here as soon as possible.*

FC: *... moving on from that how do you think that shaped you moving forward?*

PATRICK: *It was one of the things... you know there have been lots of 'shapings' along the way but that was an experience that taught me I needed to do a bit more homework to understand the context [...] the position title sounded great and the description sounded great but actually in practice it was a disaster*

As Holland et al (1998) offer, in the Bourdieusian sense, Patrick had found how social power had outweighed position power on many occasions as he reflected on the academic worlds of HE as being all about *'hierarchies, status and power'* as noted earlier. Patrick reflected on his colleague's historical status and social connections in the faculty and how this had given her particular privileges over Patrick as a newcomer, as her social and cultural capital was seen to outweigh his. Patrick again had resisted, and ultimately rejected, his positioning as he left that HEI. Beyond the tension of his positionality in the

micro level of this HEI faculty, for Patrick there was a wider tension that reflected the broader field of power that Holland et al (1998) draw on from Bourdieu. Being a man in *'the man's world'* where women had taken power was a tension that he had been uncertain how to navigate and had felt unprepared for. As he spoke of his continued experiences of inequality in juxtaposition to his understanding of how the academic world should be, he struggled within the gap between them as his tension in claiming a position as a successful male academic meant he was actually part of the world he rejected as *'an aggressive male dog eat dog world'*. Thus, he continually authored his sense of rejection of the machismo worlds and masculine notions of leader-identity, as these his beliefs and his realities continued to collide within his narrative creating an uncomfortable space of struggle for Patrick.

Indeed, as David (2015:10) argues *'Patriarchy or hegemonic masculinity in HE is still strongly felt and experienced'*, particularly reflecting how UNESCO (2012) research presents that there is still a strong gender gap on PhD enrolment and in research careers in HE with women continuing to face discrimination in employment, often requiring an increased amount of education or experience to gain similar roles as men. David (2015) reported on research within the UK highlighting that, although women make up approximately half of the workforce in HE in the UK, less than 20% of professors were female, going on to highlight pay inequalities and how *'the white male remains legitimately in power in HE'* (2015:15) adding an interesting dimension of ethnicity through the argument that there is a lack of ethnic professors and HE leaders, reflective of the 'male-whiteness' culture of HE. Global research commissioned by the Leadership Foundation (Morley, 2013) also reflected the prevalence of male academics as senior HE leaders and highlighted that the *'global gender gap remains in senior HE leadership'* (2013:6). Furthermore, at many points Vivienne spoke of her positioning through wider notions of education policy and the bureaucracy of her HEI. This often appeared as often more constraining to how Patrick, and especially James, had offered their stories as there was less talk of agency in comparison, especially after her mid-career. Vivienne's early career to mid-career was spent within primary teaching, and then her time in HE as lecturer in an education faculty, however she did not explicitly raise any particular authorial stance on gender in the workplace, remaining rather silent on this issues for the most part apart from one story during her time as a deputy-headteacher.

VIVIENNE: *...a teacher got hold of a child by their arm and I had to step in [...] and his reaction was 'yes but I know the parents, I know all the parents in the school and they like me' and I said 'I don't care about that, you can't do that because that could come back on us as a school'*

FC: *And what was the outcome of that with him, how did that work out?*

VIVIENNE: *The outcome is that I reported it to the headteacher and the headteacher said he had had words with that member of staff. I wasn't convinced because this member of staff he had been in this school since he had come out of college so he was well known to all the parents and the grandparents, he was one of those people who could do no wrong. He was one of four male members of staff and he was quite close to the headteacher so I don't know quite what went on.*

FC: *And how did that make you feel?*

VIVIENNE: *I think I was fine with it in that I knew there was nothing else I could do, erm, but I was – I – I was very then, wary. But I always made sure that I covered my back so that nothing came back to me so that any incidents that happened in the future I would make sure that I would talk to the headteacher because it made me... it made wonder how supportive the headteacher was of me.*

As Mills et al (2004) and Skelton (2012) reflect, the teaching profession has been greatly highlighted as a 'feminized' world, particular in the primary sector which has generated a lot of debate around gender in education over the last twenty years. For instance, Brinia (2012:179) focuses on the under-representation of female teachers in leadership positions in Europe, raising the Greek education system's culture of '*women teach – men manage*' for example. Skelton's (2002) statistics presented the 5:1 ratio in primary teaching of women to men, yet presented a disproportionate rate of male primary headteachers to female headteachers, in relation to the female dominance of the profession, which was again presented in Skelton's (2012) later review of the field. Furthermore, Chard (2013) reflected that '*the dominance of a masculine stereotype continues to be associated with educational leadership roles*' (2013:171), as he reflected on various statistics representing a similar disproportionate rate of male headteachers to female headteachers in primary to Skelton's findings, and especially disproportionate in secondary education. Vivienne's teaching career had been predominantly spent in what could be conceived of as a female-dominated

environment based on the arguments the literature presents as above, which was quite different to Patrick and James. Indeed, many of the ‘influential’ leader characters they offered in their stories were male, usually appearing as inspirational mentors from early career, which theme four later discusses (subchapter 4.4: *stories of influential others*). Vivienne did not offer any similar mentors and the only characters she mentioned who had been involved in leadership roles during her time in primary teaching from early to mid-career were male-leaders only briefly mentioned, as theme four (subchapter 4.4) will explore. However, the matter of gender is indeed situated in a wider field of social power, in Bourdieusian terms, as Holland et al argue the positionality of various notions, like gender, in social worlds traverses many life-worlds before the figured world of education, or schools or even one school.

As Sinclair and Evans argue research has increased since the 1990s exploring how leadership cultures have been often ‘*dominated by masculine norms, such as valuing heroism and stoicism, rejecting weakness and vulnerability*’ (2015:139). Vivienne frequently struggled between these norms and her own sense of vulnerability as she struggled to claim a position in relation to the often ‘tough’ and ‘resilient’ disposition she narrated in relation a ‘leader’ role, as the remaining thematic subchapters will explore. Thus, she was often rejecting the masculinity discourse, and its associated identity at various points as she often returned to her teacher-self and what has been argued as more ‘feminised’ notions of leadership through collaborative, relational, humanistic and authentic forms of leadership. (e.g. by Sinclair and Evans, 2015; Ford, 2015a; Chard, 2013).

More generally, discussions of gender and a stance on her position were not consistently present in her narrative, however she did mention geographical movements in relation to her husband’s career which she implied had delayed her own career progression, as well as speaking briefly about the breakdown of her marriage. Indeed, more masculinised notions of leadership as ‘tough’ and ‘directive’ often came back to discussion of power in Vivienne’s narrative. Vivienne’s description of power reflected how she often described bureaucratic leadership cultures in organisations, as way of coercing others to take action.

FC: *In terms of power – in terms of your understanding of power within an organisation – how do you understand that to work and what does it mean?*

VIVIENNE: *I suppose it, for me, it means that somebody has to the ability to make other people do what they want them to do. So they don't take into account that somebody else has their own thoughts and feelings and free will, so somebody tries to put their will and thoughts on to somebody else.*

As Karlberg (2005) argues, drawing on the work of Miller (e.g. 1982, in Karlberg, 2005), he elaborates how power can be understood and embodied in different ways between men and women in Western societies. In particular, as he discusses Miller's work, and also the work of Arendt (e.g. 1969), he explains women as historically powerful in ways that enhance, nature and empower others, which reflected Vivienne's preference for influence. Furthermore, reflecting the masculine norms raised by Sinclair and Evans (2015), Fitzgerald (2014) argues that women more likely to engage in collaborative, relational and participatory forms of leadership, rather than the '*adversarial nature of male norms such as controlling, competing, organising, establishing rules and regulations and deferring to a higher authority...*' (2014:103). Hence, rather than diminishing the power of others, Karlberg (2005) explains that much feminist research on power has turned towards exploring this difference, which could indeed reflect how Vivienne often spoke of leadership power as a form of control and domination. Often reflecting Weberian views on structures of power, the 'bureaucratic' cultures Vivienne narrated her distaste for appeared through notions of authority or domination over others in a hierarchical sense.

This appeared difficult for Vivienne having spent much of her early career in a collegial 'flat' structure where position power appeared in the role of headteacher but in a more nurturing and empowering way as she reflected she 'could go to the headteacher' if she had a problem who would help, otherwise, she was left to her own practices with the support of colleagues. As she spoke of power as authority, control and domination, Vivienne narrated herself as quite vulnerable at various times, as will be explored in the fifth and final theme (subchapter 4.5: *stories of managing a 'leader' image*). Overall, she was negotiating the notion of 'toughness' in leadership practice. She spoke often of more masculine notions, appearing to accept the notion of being 'hard' as a leader as a

dominant script into her utterances yet also challenged this at times. Thus the tension was in how Vivienne understood power could be used as a form of domination and how much leadership discourse had appeared to her in that way, which gender could further problematize in terms of her preference for more nurturing, empowering 'scaffolding' discourses of leadership. Therefore, power and leadership appeared as a deep interwoven tension for Vivienne that she struggled with as she inhabited organisational worlds.

As Chard (2013) notes, and as Holland et al (1998) assert, notions and perceptions of masculinity can shift over the course of individual lives and historical periods, as well as develop in various ways in relation to differing sociocultural contexts. As explored in chapter three (*methodology*), as Ladkin (2010) argues, it is important to explore '*the terrain below the surface level of apparent perceptions*' (2010:53) and pay attention to both the smaller stories offered by the participants, and the individual characters cast in their stories, and how these stories are being woven into a more holistic narrative of the self through what is said and not said (Solomon, 2012; Bamburg, 2010; Mercer, 2007). Therefore, what is not said by Vivienne regarding gender could be reflective of Vivienne having been positioned by the wider gender inequality, as a woman, in primary education, without alternate discourses as voices through which to author herself and was thus silenced and unable to reject or resist the 'norm' of masculinity in leadership practice (Holland et al, 1998). Hence, her narrative could indeed reflect this powerful macro institutionalized script around gender roles in primary education and leadership as a norm was perhaps automated or fossilized within her space of authoring, as Holland et al (1998) would argue. However, this is difficult to explore further based on the limitations of this study and the data collected, as the focus was not on gender as part of the research interest. Yet, it was an interesting tension that emerged and is certainly worthy of note and further exploration beyond the confines of this research.

Overall, this subtheme offered an interesting gender tension in the leadership debate, from the global gender gap in HE leadership to the imbalance of headteacher gender in compulsory education in the UK, gender has presented an interesting context for identity formation and development in leadership which certainly would benefit from further exploration outside of the limitation of this study. Furthermore, the statistics

highlighted earlier around ‘male whiteness’ in HE leadership globally (Morley, 2013; Blackmore, 2007) was also significant in terms of tensions around race and ethnicity in academia which would also benefit further exploration. Indeed, Holland et al’s (1998) identity in practice, drawing on figured worlds and dialogical perspectives, employing a narrative methodology could indeed help to explore gender positioning, and indeed wider social positioning and issues of class, race and ethnicity within educational leadership and management from in the inside as way to understand the history and discourses at play. It is certainly an area of note for LMD research and development and research, as Chard (2013) notes, in terms of the influence of wider sociocultural positioning in educational leadership as identities are constructed heuristically over time. Indeed, the narratives offered by participants reflected the tensions of macro societal positioning and how this evolves over time.

4.2.5. Improvisations... and less desirable aspects...

As participants negotiated the tensions and struggles articulated throughout this subchapter, and how they related to them, their space of authoring was often reflected as ‘*a contested space, a space of struggle*’ (Holland et al, 1998:282). James, Vivienne and Patrick all narrated their identity work in ways that offered them as often resisting constraints and pursuing what Holland et al (1998:40) would argue as a ‘*modicum of agency*’ over their own behaviour and practice within the structural and positional worlds they found themselves within as they traversed a range of organisational cultures. They often each spoke of the improvisation involved in their performances as they attempted to navigate their worlds and the myriad of discourse and societal expectations attached to leadership as they faced the ambiguities of practice in complex organisational worlds (e.g. Ford et al, 2015a; Close and Raynor, 2010; Glatter, 2009).

However, beyond stories of agency which offered a liberatory feel through themes of overcoming struggles and adversity, there were also improvisations that had deeply challenged each of them as power became a central tension in leadership practice. This subtheme explores this through two short sections: *Rebelling: ‘It was me against the system’* and *‘The Dark Side of Leadership’*.

Rebelling: 'It was me against the system'

A shared theme was in how each participant drew on the narrativized identity of 'rebel' as a resource through which to narrate their resistance to particular structures and attempts to have agency in practice. For Patrick the sense of tension he had presented through stories of 'the system' and his resistance to it.

FC: *in the Higher Education Sector, how do you think those different organisations influenced how you how you actually understand the concept of leadership?*

PATRICK: *I think for me, it was, I had a kind of a – I felt I had a responsibility to fight for the underdog in many ways. Because as a Professor you've got a really privileged position, not only was I a Professor or Head of [division], [...] that gives you privilege, it gives you position, it gives you power and it gives you a bit of sway. So, I would go to the University Research Committee and fight for Nursing, fight for Education, fight for the women on the committee, [...] fighting for your PhD students [...] you kind of bat for them. So I had this view of – of erm, it was me against the system in many ways [...] the systems are totally not fair no matter what people tell you, it's not fair. People getting promotion when they shouldn't. I spent a lot of my time battling against the system, against the structures, not for the underdog as that sounds a bit too grand, but I guess trying to change the system to make it a fairer system*

As Patrick spoke of orchestrating and improvising his performance, through the juxtaposition of various organisational experiences and subsequent 'counter-worlds' offered, Patrick began to offer a sense of how he had navigated various discourses to position himself so that he could be a change-agent.

He drew on his motivations around equality and strong discourses of democracy to continually author himself and his identity in opposition to the very 'system' he spoke of becoming, as he became more senior and took up positions that placed him in an influential role.

PATRICK: ... I guess you become part of the system [...] and you are sending out loads of messages and you have to be really really careful about how you do that sort of stuff, not just in terms of process but in terms of making the decision but also relaying that decision on. And then senior positions like [Associate Dean for Research] and Head of [Division/Department], you are essentially a messenger for the system – you are the system – so you set the expectations up and you try to change the system and work around the system, I used pride myself in the fact that I could work around the system very well. [...]

FC: ...Where do you think that came from rather than following rules or just towing the line?

PATRICK: Yeah, towing the line... I guess it's that kind of northern rebellious streak in me, I'm not sure (laughs), I don't know really. I've seen people go against the system completely and get hammered, and people don't respect them. [...] So I have seen that sort of thing and that's not good, but yeah so going or rubbing up against the system is not a good idea. Playing, er... doing exactly what the system requires is also, it's not that exciting but it's also – it's kind of inhibiting because you have to – the rules are not there really for enhancing individual careers, the rules are there for maintaining the structure, the system, so I always find its best to try to get around that if you can in one way or another

As Patrick reflected his movement through the ranks of the '*the system*' had meant that he, as an academic leader, was becoming the very enforcer of the structures he spoke of resisting, he drew on a cultural disposition of '*rebel*' to narrate this opposition and 'fighting', as he positioned himself as breaking away from various structures of constraint. As Patrick spoke of gestures that would challenge expectations, he improved various aspects of his performances and drew on particular discourses around him to author himself and create new possibilities, Holland et al's notion of 'world-making', thus often claiming an identity as a change-agent. In terms of his positioning in organisational worlds, James' stories also often presented various forms of capital, as resources he used to craft his identity performances. Through what Bourdieu (1986) theorises as economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital, James spoke of social background, disposition, accomplishments and qualifications, social networks and status in a referent sense as he drew on the use of charisma within his disposition.

As James brought his history-in-person into that HEI culture, he built up various cultural resources to claim a more position within that world as a leader as he had done elsewhere previous. He also often drew on the ‘rebel’ identity, and of being ‘a fighter’ and with the assumption he would then embody the role of catalyst or change-agent as he had done before.

FC: ...what sort of behaviours have you tried to, sort of, put into your daily practices as a leader?

JAMES: ...stand up for your staff, for gods stake, stand up – fight for them, whatever it costs, even if it costs you your job. [...] You create a – deliberately create – a kind of fortress mentality where it’s you [the department] against them, the rest of them [the wider system] and a developing pride of working in that particular section and everything else: ‘we’re difference, we do things differently because this why we do it’ we’re not doing it just – it’s not capricious. We’re doing it because it’s the right thing to do, you know, and we will not do things differently, not because we want to but because it’s the right thing to do. And that kind of builds a fortress which actually reinforces that sense of team work that everybody will do it and you do it deliberately, it’s us against them. [...]

James also often drew on notions of ‘fighting’ as another resource of his identity work to describe his resistance to various structures and discourses and in pursuit of agency. The ‘fortress mentality’ he described was quite problematic for him as he found it had the tension of isolation from the rest of wider organisation. The ‘rebel’ identity was then quite an interesting way he constructed his past, drawing on wider social issues and his own individual experiences sociohistorically, as a way to claim his positions and author his stance in relation to particular discourses and role expectations. As resources that appeared greatly in stories of his early life (theme one, subchapter 4.1), James’ ‘rebel’ was constructed through many notions such as a ‘permissive society’, his ‘working class lad’ background, military metaphors, and was a complex orchestration of many discourses from James’ socio-historical past, just as it was for Patrick and Vivienne.

VIVIENNE: [At Gameton Primary School] ...I had to be really careful because that I could be seen as quite a disruptive influence because they weren’t a group of people who challenged things so I think I was seen by them as a bit of a renegade. ...I had come in thinking I had the freedom to do what I wanted to do, to then be told ‘no that’s not the way that we do it’ and so that... that’s how it became very

difficult... [...] I can be in a... put myself in a box for a certain amount of time and then there's something in me that just wants to kick the box to pieces [...] I could toe the party line and I could be that 'person' that they wanted me to be. I think what's happened now is that I've just got bored with that and I'm – I'm kicking the box erm, and it's – it is quite invigorating ... I still can do something slightly different' [...] I don't have to be just 'a grunt'.

Vivienne often drew on stories of how she 'rebelled' against various structures, powerful others and her positioning in her organisations worlds, mainly confined to stories of her early to mid-career. Imagining herself in the Headteacher role, as *'too vocal'* and as someone who would *'kick against the system'*, she further rejected that identity from her orchestrating of the discourses around her and her imaginings of the future of the education world. Vivienne often cast the rebel-identity, in the similar way to James and Patrick as a form of resistance to her positioning, and for the pursuit of agency. She cast the *'renegade'* only occasionally as she described how others saw her in relation to her identity work, as in someone who refused to fit in or do as those in the culture did, rather than actively opposing them as she described at times with the *'rebel'*. As noted earlier, her resistance was at times problematic for Vivienne. Being a *'rebel'* was not without consequence as Vivienne spoke of the many tensions that emerged as she resisted her positioning in various structures as she spoke of risking her position and difficulties interactions with others who had then made *'life very difficult'*, as they continued to try to position Vivienne in ways she rejected, which the next theme discusses (subchapter 4.4: *stories of LMD influencing others*) discusses further.

The use of the *'rebel'* identity often appeared as a resource through which each participant could describe their agency within systems of constraint, as they orchestrated various discourses to author performances that positioned them in certain ways within their own stories. Often used as a way to narrate themselves as *'change-agents'* seeking an opening for change in their situations, they were improvising their performances as they imagined new possibilities for themselves. Hence, this often reflected Holland et al's *'serious' play* as a form of world making as they attempted to influence the worlds around them.

'The dark side of leadership'

As the participant's stories narrated the pursuit of agency, their identity work also took on different connotations, particularly for James and Patrick, as they began to narrate power as a strategy for positioning within their practice. As explored throughout this subchapter so far, the way in which Holland et al explain positionality, the structures of power were by narrated James and Patrick as broad and rather transcendental, in that power was presented in Bourdieusian terms, as a broader field of forces. This was reflected across the various figured worlds narrated, and their interconnecting wider landscapes, as they were constructed in participants' stories, as noted earlier in subtheme 4.2.1. Hierarchical structures presented often where notions of positional power, or 'legitimate' power, were present through the narration of positional identities as ranks like headteacher, professor, CEO etc. Rank was important within organisations to be seen as a legitimate leader to others, as Patrick and James' narratives heavily presented, as they each spoke about particular resources opening up to them as they become more senior in rank.

However, as Holland et al (1998) argue through Bourdieusian notions of power and privilege, cultural and symbolic resources or 'artefacts' that represented social power and status beyond legitimate 'position' power. In Weberian terms, power is understood as *'a political means of building social order'* yet *'it is the belief in the legitimacy of power'* by others than vests authority in the person holding position (Ladkin, 2015:16). This appeared in ways that reflected Bourdieusian notions of social and cultural capital in terms of various symbolic resources as artefacts of meaning and social value that could influence the belief of others. In terms of the legitimacy of a leader's power, as well as the legitimacy of the structures of authority, this can include aspects such as expertise, knowledge and connections, as well as accomplishments and qualifications, as earlier themes have discussed.

Power also appeared in more referent forms as a softer form of power related to respect and high esteem, yet as a rather relational and dynamic between leaders and followers (Ladkin, 2015), as a form of Bourdieusian social capital. Furthermore, James spoke of using charisma to influence others, as Weber (e.g. 1978) argued, the charismatic leader had to achieve success and fight to win to maintain the admiration of followers, which many of James stories reflect. As power was discussed in these broader terms and

reflected in stories of local practice, power was then produced in and through the participants as they inhabited larger systems of power. As Holland et al argue, power is then an embodiment of habitual, symbolic power through relational positional identities as individuals are positioned, and position others, within social structures in various ways. As Karlberg (2005) argues, the dominant way power tends to be understood in the Western world is as a competition in its 'best' form, or domination and coercion in its worst. James spoke of '*the dark side of leadership*' as a metaphor to explain what he described as a form of negative power – coercion – that he drew on to control and dominate the actions of others to position himself and others in various ways. This '*dark side of leadership*' was depicted in a similar way to Conger (1990), as well as to Tourish (2013) – who uses the term in reference to transformational leader – and to Bolden's (2007) *shadow side of leadership*. They all discuss the tensions with charismatic, visionary and transformational forms of leadership and dependency on the leader role for organisational effectiveness, cited by Tourish (2013:4) as '*leaderism*'. They also problematize the potential for narcissism, charismatic manipulation, domination, repression and alienating myths used to create subservient followers and the potential for disastrous outcomes for individuals and organisations.

FC: ...[tell me about] experiences you have had with challenging individuals or groups, or difficult situations when you have been a leader in the workplace [...] day to day events, the mundane, the... what happened [...] how it influenced you...

JAMES: ...you always make me think on these things (laughs) and it's - it's, I... like history tends to sort of, one thing leads to another so you are absolutely right in taking the approach you have. I mean [St Jasmine's Middle School] being [a non-Catholic] in a Roman Catholic school. Erm, but it was interesting because I thought about this and I thought 'what did I learn from that?' [...] I learnt the value, bluntly, of the dark side of leadership of - of blackmail. If I ever I wanted anything I used just say 'well I'm not sure I can keep these lads under control'. Now bearing in mind you are talking of lads, and they were boys aged nine to fourteen, some of them were very big too. Big tall lads limited intelligence poor background, so it was actually a dark side of leadership that I could maintain my own independence by threatening the priest that there may be trouble in his school, which was a good school, with the headteacher so, it's a dark side of leadership really when you think about it and that was the first value I learned about dealing with, in inverted commas, 'difficult people'

James spoke of 'dark side' practices with great tension explaining them as an often necessary, albeit unpleasant, aspect of leadership practice that '*had to be done*'. He often articulated in his own ethical struggle in doing these practices, as the fourth theme (subchapter 4.4: *stories of influential others*) will explore further. In regards to the focus here, on Holland et al's (1998) notion of improvisation, the way James explained his use of '*the dark side of leadership*', was a practice he embodied when he felt it necessary to control and position others. As he spoke of particular situations where he pursued a sense of agency in the way he felt necessary, his use of this resource – this practice – was often as a form of resistance to how he was being positioning by others as he sought agency, as well as way to position others. For James, the *dark side* involved charisma and blackmail – whereby charisma was a complex performance of motivational manipulation, as Tourish (2013) argues, through narcissistic behaviours to encourage the compliance of others and diminish resistance as a more referent, as a form of symbolical social Bourdieusian capital, to gain status and worship in leadership worlds. Blackmail was described by James as a more coercive form of power over others by the use of threats, a form of domination – of power at its worst (Karlberg, 2005).

However, Patrick drew on Foucauldian notions of power to describe his frustrations within academia as he reflected struggling with limited positional access to resources in some roles. As explored earlier in subtheme 4.2.4, Patrick often narrated power more as a form of competition, which as Karlberg (2005) notes, can be understood as power in a 'best' in Westernised worlds. However, he also spoke of power as a way to control or dominate other in more negative connotations, for example coercion and threats

PATRICK: *When I first went to [Epsilon University, UK] ...money had been allocated by the Research Committee in the Faculty to members of the Research Committee. So then I wrote to them, each one, formally ...I didn't get a single reply. But, because I wasn't a Dean, or their Head of [division], I had no formal line-management of any of them so I had no power to do anything about it. But, by asking them I made the point.*

FC: *...How do you understand power through your experiences within organisations?*

PATRICK: *Well, I agree with Foucault that power is circular so in any position everybody has power but it is just a matter of how and who can exert it. So, if I am dealing with a PhD student for example, then he or she has a degree of power within our interaction. That's perfectly fine, I am ok with that. But in terms of formal structures, the University doesn't believe in Foucault, they deal in someone has power and someone hasn't. So if you are a line-manager you have power over somebody else and that's it. It is as simple as that really.*

FC: *So when you have wanted to achieve something [as a leader] how have you gone about achieving that?*

PATRICK: *I have had to use threats, motivations, incentives, big sticks. I have to use every strategy and tool imaginable... One of the things I have prided myself on with PhD students was knowing what motivating each one of them... Same with staff. Staff, there is a little less flexibility really...*

FC: *... you mentioned how the strategies of leadership ... sort of shifted over time...*

PATRICK: *...With research, you are pushing it up hill trying to get people to do research when they don't want to do it. You really don't have any power. You don't have any sanctions or any incentives... When you are just say an Associate Professor, you are really limited in what you can do ... but once you go up the ladder ... different strategies and tools open up to you. [...] you have more resources in the broader sense behind you. ...so, the positions differ and by that your resources and your strategies and tools can certainly differ.*

Holland et al criticise Foucault's earlier works (e.g. 1965) due to his focus on 'unreflexive objectivity', the imposition of discourse as control and order on individuals in social worlds, which they assert departs too much from the sociohistorical school and its sense of optimism on identity. They argue that what they 'seek to recover' from Foucault is a less regimented world where power is more contradictory and diverse and allows for dialogic space for positional identities that can be habitual or not, within awareness or not. Rather than individuals solely habituating the discourse, Holland et al argue for orchestration, for improvisation and automation of discourse as ongoing co-development. In Foucault's later work (e.g. 1980), he moves more towards an argument that power is simultaneous as it both produces and represses the social order arguing that power constructs structure and hierarchy by producing discourses and 'truths' that are imposed on the social order, yet are shaped by its subjectivity.

What Holland et al draw in from Foucault's later work is the paradox of that simultaneity, as they bring this together with notions of Bourdieusian capital, habitus, and field,

Bakhtinian dialogism and Vygotskian notions of play. This, they argue, asserts that discourse is only that which shapes us, but can also be our tool for liberation from the structures that position us. They argue for this paradox through the space of authoring in how the improvisation of self can bring about forms of agency which can influence social change. In this sense, in how Patrick understood Foucault's later work as circular, he often struggled in the academic system due to its 'power as domination' (Karlberg, 2005) script which present economic forms of capital, such as research funds and money, as resource that Patrick struggled to access, leaving him only positional power to draw on, which he found did not provide the power he needed in some roles. Thus, the resources accessible to him by the virtue of positional power in terms of his specific rank, and any economic capital he held, created a sense of positional identity which had limitations to his own power to influences other. For Patrick, notions of rewards and incentives to motivate others and of threats and '*big sticks*' to coerce, as well as other forms of persuasion and debate, reflected the multiplicity of power in his narrative and how it could be a constraining factor, yet also had allowed him more agency as a leader.

Vivienne's description of power, as noted in subtheme 4.2.4, often reflected how she described bureaucratic leadership cultures in organisations, presented how she saw power ultimately as a form of coercion, and of dominance, which as Karlberg (2005) reflects, can be understood as the very worst aspect of power. Vivienne indeed was very wary of dominating forms power, offering her resistance to those coercive interactions she struggled with.

FC: ...you mentioned that you'd come to understand later that people sometimes have agendas that are not rational...

VIVIENNE: ...some people will have agendas because it's all about – for some people – it's all about power which - which I still don't understand fully because I am not a person who particularly wants power. I suppose it's nice to have influence but I don't feel the need to have power but I do understand that some people need to feel in positions of power for whatever reasons and what they will do in the workplace is they will find ways of showing that they have power over you. So it could be undermining you, it could be talking back to you, it could be making life generally difficult, but for those people they are making themselves feel powerful

Vivienne offered a consistent resistance to controlling cultures and the coercion or domination of others to take action. For Vivienne the concept of 'influence' was narrated as a softer and more acceptable notion in her narrative, more as a capacity to nurture or empower as explored earlier. Thus the tension was in how Vivienne understood power as a form of domination and how much leadership discourse had appeared to her in that way, therefore, she was often rejecting those discourses around leadership presenting a very complicated tension, highly likely around how she understood power within leadership, much influenced by her experiences of various aspects of institutional life, and her own sociohistorical past as someone who 'struggled' to be her 'own person' as a child as she was positioned within a system she resisted, as the first theme (subchapter 4.1: *stories of early life*), explored.

Subchapter Summary

Stories of career institutions were a strong context for the development of identity. The stories offered how their experiences created powerful assumptions and standard-plots within their stories, offered as ways in which they could talk about how organisational leadership 'ought' to be (Holland et al, 1998). An identity in practice analysis, through figured worlds and the other contexts of identity activity, offered that, as each participant moved through particular cultural models in organisational life discourses of professional worlds and leadership within became embodied, or internalised as habitus (Bourdieu, 1990), as they each brought their history-in-person into new organisational worlds and developed their social scripts. Stories that reflected positionality within, and beyond, leadership worlds offered a deeper story of micro, meso and macro tensions across the narratives. Power was a complex and broad aspect interwoven with cultural expectations, and wider social positioning, such as social class and gender. Weberian notions of formal legitimate position authority within hierarchies of organisational structure were strongly present, however power was often a more discreet and covert synergy through social and cultural forms of capital, used to gain status, privileges power and position beyond position power.

Early-career experiences were often placed in juxtaposition to other later institutional cultures which, were at times, offered as counter-worlds to how leadership ought to be. As Holland et al explain, counter-worlds '*rarely posit what a lived world should be*' offering instead '*what it should not be*' (Holland et al, 1998:250). For instance, in how Vivienne spoke of her leadership in her '*ideal school*' as collaborative juxtaposed to bureaucratic cultures she experienced; how Patrick spoke about supportive, democratic leadership in opposition to an unfair system that privileged aggressive male academics; and how James spoke of feeling '*restricted to a classroom*' as a teacher against how he '*enjoyed the freedom of leadership*' in the '*free-wheeling*' worlds of FE, vocational education and commercial industry.

As Vivienne, James and Patrick each recalled meeting with the unexpected, they spoke of the various ruptures to their own habitus and the ways in which they had navigated the tensions that had emerged as new perspectives collided with their own. They each took an authorial stance in response to how they were positioned, or sought to claim position, in relation to various tensions and expectations of organisational worlds. This resulted in a variety of responses, possibilities and constraints as participants' were positioned, or sought to position themselves, within the structures of power and privilege as they crafted their response to their organisational worlds through their identity work. Many orchestrations of discourses and improvisations of various selves appeared as they each tried to navigate their responses to various tensions in ways that addressed the powerful expectations of the organisations they inhabited, or in some situations, were acts to change those worlds through 'serious play' and 'world making' (Holland et al, 1998). Overall, organisational cultures and contexts were important influences to the formation each participant's subjectivity as their various identities continually developed heuristically over time.

Theme three now follows, (subchapter: 4.3) now moves to explore *Stories of LMD programmes and training*.

Subchapter 4.3. *Stories of study and training*

Subchapter Introduction

This subchapter discusses the third of five themes emerging from the analysis of the interview data. As the participants spoke of experiences of leadership practice, they each offered stories of leadership and management development (LMD) programmes, training courses and other forms of study as influential to how they had come to understand leadership and themselves as a leader. As the last two thematic subchapters discussed, by drawing on Holland et al's (1998) notion of co-development, identities were argued to be heuristically developed over time through a range of experiences across different cultural worlds, such as early life, schooling, and organisational workplaces. As argued, an individual's history-in-person is the sediment from their past experiences that forms the basis for improvisation, resulting in their heuristic development. Therefore, as the discussions from those subchapters presented, cultural models were important influences to each participant's identity construction through the powerfully institutionalised discourses that presented authoritative and internally persuasive voices that had been influential to their apprehension of their various social worlds (Holland et al, 1998).

In this subchapter, it is discussed how LMD programmes and training experiences also appeared as influential discourses and, as a figured worlds analysis offers, these were cultural resources that shaped each participant's understanding of the various 'norms' expected within leadership practice and attached to 'leader' behaviours. Thus, this subchapter argues that their engagement with these discourses was another form of co-development that heuristically developed particular identities over time. Moreover, it illuminates powerful forms of institutionalised thinking present in LMD discourse, and the symbolic value of particular LMD courses as 'artefacts' through how they relate to identity claims in particular worlds.

This subchapter explores these notions through three subthemes:

<i>4.3.1. LMD as Qualifications</i>	171
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4.3.1. LMD as Qualifications

In exploring the programmes of study and development the participants had undertaken through their lives more holistically, it emerged that they had all undertaken teacher training education in England, James in the mid-1960s, Vivienne in the late-1960s and Patrick in the late-1970s. James and Vivienne had both undertaken a Masters Degree programme in educational leadership during the 1990s, as well as being involved with training programmes from the English National College of School Leadership (NCSL) in the 2000s in different capacities (now National College of Teaching and Leadership) later becoming facilitators of different NSCL LMD programmes.

Vivienne had attended many Local Authority training programmes for middle leaders in education before her Masters degree and James had undertaken a professional personnel management programme through a UK professional institution during the 1970s and also undertaken an accredited psychology qualification. Patrick spoke of undertaking a HE sector leadership development course late in his career as well as undertaking various forms of informal management training in the different HEIs he had worked across. Patrick also mentioned his Australian PhD studies and undertaking a sociolinguistics course as a trainee teacher in England. Patrick also mentioned the NCSL, mainly as an aside based on research work he had undertaken on school development in England during the last decade (2000s). As such, they all shared some similar experiences of particular models of training and particular historical periods offering exposure to a range of similar discourses. However, there were often tensions present as these discourses offered many competing perspectives resulting in a complex heteroglossia (Holland et al, 1998).

For instance, Vivienne often spoke of her leadership journey as ‘*a developmental process*’ describing the many discourses she had encountered and how she had struggled to make sense of the various ways that leadership had been presented to her. She often spoke about a ‘*mis-match*’ between being a teacher and being a leader which suggested quite an interesting tension in her narrative in terms of how she was understanding leadership and teaching.

VIVIENNE: ...I came to work for [The University] [...] the thing that surprised me is that when you are training teachers about leadership, they often talk about having a leadership style which is quite bureaucratic and not supportive and yet as teachers we are trained to help our pupils, to be supportive, to scaffold them, to you know, listen to their problems to help improve etcetera, but when people move into a leadership position within education they seem to get the stick and carrot out, and I've questioned this on numerous occasions but I've never quite worked out why that is. [...] Do they move into a leadership role and think 'I am going to be in control and I'm going to have rules' but there's a mismatch there to me between what you know as a teacher works with children but then it doesn't always translate into adults. Very interesting thing to think about. [...] ...leadership is very closely related with understanding how people learn and how people develop, [...] as a primary teacher you understand motivation as that is what you are having to do with young children all the time.

The discourses of ‘teaching’ and the discourses of ‘leadership’ often collided rather ‘untidily’ for Vivienne, as Holland et al (1998) would suggest, as she drew on discourses that she struggled to reconcile together, such as ‘collaborative’ versus ‘controlling’. Vivienne often spoke of her experiences as a teacher during the interview, recalling often how she had been a ‘teaching’ deputy headteacher as well as memories of her teacher training. Through this, as she spoke of the relational aspect of her practices with others often. Therefore, she often authored herself in a dialogic sense, through frequent claims to a teacher identity. The teaching discourses she spoke of encountering contained various resources and *artefacts* that had become quite deeply embedded within her habitus, as institutionalised ways of thinking, acting and regulating her inner speech, in the way Holland et al argue through Bakhtinian dialogism. Hence, teaching discourses were internally persuasive for her in terms of how Vivienne narrated her worlds, and in how she often claimed this ‘teacher’ identity.

The tension for Vivienne was then how she spoke about her beliefs and discourses around teaching and education as being starkly different from how she had experienced more 'telling' and 'controlling' and transactional discourses of leadership in education. Vivienne also articulated a close link between leadership and how people learn and develop which was an interesting reflection that resonates with emerging arguments in contemporary leadership debates (e.g. Carroll, 2015; Day et al, 2014).

Vivienne returned to the resource of her 'Masters Degree' often as she explained her understanding of different perspectives in leadership and how her experiences on this programme had developed her thinking, yet also resulted in further competing discourses being added to her already existing myriad. In this sense, as she drew on LMD programmes, she was explaining how these experiences had provided new set of discourses she had been able to improvise to negotiate this tension as it emerged in the space of authoring between her understanding of teaching and her historical understanding of leadership up to that point. As Holland et al (1998) would suggest, she was orchestrating the resources from her LMD experiences to answer and address the world claiming an authorial stance towards how leadership appeared to her from the positions she was afforded in relation to the various discourses available to her.

FC: *...what would you say was the most important aspect of the knowledge that you got out of [your Masters degree]*

VIVIENNE: *I think it was two things. I think it was leadership styles, the different leadership styles you could... that were sort of in theory and at the time I didn't really understand how leadership styles worked. But second thing was also the sort of human resource management part of it – sort of the... the... managing humans and the fact that humans were different and therefore you had to have different techniques to actually manage different people, erm, I've always been a people watcher, so, for me going to a train station is great because I can just sit there and watch people and it fascinates me, so actually then translating that back into my organisation it was very much starting to, sort of, watch how people interact and then of course we had the emotional intelligence came on the scene in the early 90s and that was a real light bulb moment of 'wow'... this is something really interesting to show how people are working and developing, so it was sort of those three aspects that really sort of interested me...*

FC: *Can you tell me a bit about that and what you understand it to mean and how it's influenced you?*

VIVIENNE: *My understanding of emotional intelligence is actually taking the hard decisions. I know a lot of people see emotional intelligence as being a... a soft option whereby you are nice to people, but I see emotional intelligence as looking at a situation and seeing how can I best deal with this situation, you know, what's the best way to handle this situation to make an improvement and that doesn't always mean it's an easier option. For me emotional intelligence is usually a hard option in that you have to tackle people if they are saying the wrong things or treating people in the wrong way. You – if – if you were using emotional intelligence you can't allow people to carry on with behaviours that are not good for the organisation.*

As Holland et al discuss, Vivienne was often building her response with pre-existing materials – a Levi-Straussian *Bricoleur* (1998:276) – to claim a position in relation to those worlds, which often led her back to her teacher-self as she found herself continually at odds with dominant notions around leadership. She often moved back to a rejection of 'bureaucratic' and 'telling' forms of leadership in response to these discourses as she told a story about herself as a person who was not controlling, telling or autocratic. As such, particular discourses became quite dominant in her story, such as discussions around humanistic and relational forms of leadership and emotional intelligence. Indeed, emotional intelligence was quite an important discourse for Vivienne and she returned to it at various points as she explained how she understood social interaction. It was interesting how this discourse appeared alongside notions of having '*to make the hard decisions*' for '*improvement*' and to '*tackle people*' and as a way to avoid saying the '*wrong things*'. For Vivienne it not only appeared to be a tool of leadership practice and a way to regulate her behaviour and influence that of others, it also appeared to tell a deeper story about leadership as it illuminated notions of cultural scripts around behaviour and the treatment of people.

Reflecting back on the last subchapter, Vivienne had strong cultural scripts around behaviours drawn on from her early life which influenced her notions of professionalism in the workplace and the behaviours she expected. As such, the discourse of emotional intelligence appeared here, reflecting the way Fineman (2004) suggests, as a form of rational control in the workplace. However, as Holland et al (1998) argue, from a figured

worlds perspective, and indeed as Vivienne also debated at times, it is argued that what counts as emotional intelligence, or indeed any leadership discourse, depends then on the values-laden cultural models that posit normative assumptions and expectations around subjective notions, such as behaviour. Thus, the cultural models that influence an individual's history-in-person again become important as they are mediated alongside various discourses and inform the very meaning of particular leadership discourse, such as emotional intelligence. As a skill that cannot then be performed rationally and objectively, as Hatcher (2008) argues, emotional intelligence, first becoming popular in the 1990s, and has become '*an everyday expression that 'today's 'good' leader is expected to have*' (Western,2013:202), positing it as a rather performative discourse (Fairhurst, 2009).

As Western further argues, there is still a considerable systematic reproduction of most mainstream LMD programmes that focus on '*reifying the individual and rationalising leadership into individual traits, competencies, skills and behaviours that can be learnt*' (2013: 306). Importantly, this illuminates the debate around the meaning and purpose of particular leadership discourses and how they can be discursively advanced through LMD programmes, training and literature as the tools of leadership in the workplace, as Gunter and Ribbins (2002) and Close and Raynor (2010) argue. Indeed, like Vivienne, James also spoke often of how particular LMD programmes were influential to his practice by the way they offered skills and resources he could draw on in a similar way as he rationalised much of his learning. Although James often spoke of his lived experiences as his most powerful leadership '*learning moments*' through his career he often shared a strong psychological discourse around leadership as he spoke of teamwork, influence and motivation. He came back to the personnel management programme he had attended at several points.

FC: *How did that [LMD programme] help your understanding of leadership?*

JAMES: *The [Personnel management programme] gave the basic principles, you know all the classics, we did - strangely we did economics, statistics – work that one out – erm, but the other stuff was motivation, was social studies and so on, so it was very much socially based at the time, the curriculum is totally different now. I did psychology, sociology, social studies, so they were people based learning, a lot of people based learning and it was very very influential because there were things I had never even thought about.*

James interaction with the personnel management programme and his qualification in psychology appeared as deeply influential to the way he had come to understand what is meant to be a leader. As Bakhtin (1981) would argue, like for Vivienne, these particular discourses had been assimilated and tightly interwoven with James' own words and language. Hence, as Holland et al (1998) argue through Bakhtinian dialogism, this discourse had become a form of inner speech, becoming a part of James' dialogic-self, an embedded way of thinking, internally persuasive to him as a leader, and he used this discourse in his self-authoring at various points. For instance, James came back to the National College of Teaching and Leadership (then called National College of School Leadership) programme he facilitated, explaining '*discretionary effort, in other words the amount of extra effort you give at your own discretion. Now I think that's a great phrase...*' and explained how he had embodied that way of thinking in his practice.

JAMES: *I joined [National college programme B] and... there's some powerful stuff in there [...] Now that formalised something that I'd already picked up on informally [in prior workplaces] ... [National College programme B] demands – I don't know if you know the programme – but it demands that [school leaders] have to ask, on a three hundred and sixty degree anonymously, ask people what they think about them their leadership style. And it's tough to take. And I used to do it regularly, I used to do it regularly when I - after I got the right to do it – I used to it, I used to ask my colleagues, people who knew me.*

FC: *And how did that feedback influence you?*

JAMES: *Oh yeah, you've got to listen to it as I say. You don't have to listen to it change your character, you don't have to do that Fiona, you don't have to say 'oh god I need to change my character' but you do have to listen to it to change what others see and think, you know. Your character is fundamentally set - I remember reading this somewhere – and it is true because I'm British Psychological Society when I was doing psychometrics – your character is fundamentally set when you're fifteen, fourteen fifteen... your personality. So you are not going to change that, you can change habits by doing something for six weeks. So when you get the feedback you can change your habits which give others a perception of you, but you can't change your personality.*

Appearing as deeply embedded within James thinking, almost automatic, strong individualistic, psychological discourses around leadership traits and behaviours appeared as often habituated as part of his identity as a leader, or 'fossilized' in Vygotskian terms, as Holland et al (1998) would argue. As with stories of his childhood

and early life, James often returned to the importance of individual perception when managing leadership interactions and the focus on who and how a leader should be, offering leadership as requiring '*a fixed identity or role*' (Edwards et al, 2013:4). James' statement '*after I got the right to do it*' as he referred to become qualified to undertake particular psychological evaluations in the workplace was then quite interesting in terms of his self-authoring. He spoke of gaining this qualification, the status of the British Psychological Society and other institutions with a sense of privilege and prestige attached, talking about the success it brought him individually and how he was then allowed to help organisations and other people to improve in particular ways. As Sinclair (2011) argues, there is much pressure on practitioners to market and brand themselves, which James offered through how he spoke of the prestige of these *artefacts* and his status in relation to them.

Furthermore, this psychological and individualistic discourse was quite interesting in terms of the historical period of time in which he had undertaken LMD programmes. During the 1970s, there was quite a dominant discourse around humanistic forms of leadership and still much focus on trait and behaviour theories (Western, 2013) and thus, the sociohistorical context at the time had advanced strong notions around leader personality. James' time with the National College (the then NCSL) during 2000s was also very influential, particularly as the programmes he encountered appeared to embody many of the individualistic and psychological discourses that were quite persuasive for James. As such, James spoke of such institutions, like the National College and other professional institutes and his formal qualifications as important resources of status which had allowed him to make various claims to privileges, positions and behaviours in his various leadership worlds. Their levels of prestige and symbolic value were accepted by James as particular institutionalised ways of thinking emerging through how he described the structures and expectations of his historical past in relation to leadership, carrying much of this into his various worlds as symbols of his status and identity.

Therefore, as Holland et al (1998) would argue through Bourdieusian notions of power, Vygotskian notions of semiotic mediation and Bakhtinian notions of dialogism, these LMD programmes were important cultural resources, or *artefacts*, in leadership worlds that James used to negotiate his access and position, as well as for improvisation within his practice as the tools of leadership. Indeed, Vivienne too spoke of how she had

undertaken many courses designed for middle leaders aspiring to become headteachers before her deputy headship, as a departmental leader. For her, like James, these *artefacts* were understood as important resources that helped them both to gain access to particular positions within the world of school leadership. However, for Vivienne they were less about status and power as the tools of practice. Patrick's narrative in relation to LMD was a bit different, speaking only briefly once about specific leadership training in HEIs, as the next subtheme moves on to discuss.

4.3.2: LMD as part of leadership in HE

As the last thematic subchapter explored (4.2: *stories of organisational life*), Patrick had spent the most part of his career in HEIs and narrated those worlds as very positional worlds where particular *artefacts* were important in gaining access to the academic leadership world. Patrick had undertaken various programmes of study, for instance the sociolinguistic course he had mentioned during undergraduate teacher training, as well as his Masters and PhD in Education. He also spoke of the social and cultural capital he had accumulated in the academic world, such as successful research grants and a publications record, as well as serving on various committees.

These appeared as important resources that allowed access to particular '*ranks*' in the academic world and to work his way towards accessing academic leadership. Similar *artefacts* to Patrick's story also featured in James' narrative, such as research and publishing, appeared again as important resources by which to gain status in academia. Thus, despite gaining many of the artefacts he described above, apart from a PhD, James illuminated a similar institutionalised way of thinking within academia to Patrick around access to leadership '*ranks*' and the importance of artefacts that represented status.

FC: ... establishing yourself in that [HEI] community ...how did you go about [that]...?

JAMES: *Only by the successes, only by the successes of what you were doing, otherwise you'd have never have gained credibility, particularly in Higher Education. Erm, writing a book because that's what they value, doing research because that's what they value. [...] teaching... the three things they valued were research, teaching, publishing, so basically doing what they valued. I was a member of [Theta University] but I don't think I actually was a full management member (laughs). I sort of attended there. [...] later on the titles were given of [associate dean] to the role we were doing, but it wasn't. I just did my own thing.*

However, as the previous subchapter (4.2: *stories of organisational life*) presented, James had often spoken of his struggle to belong to the HE community he inhabited later in his career. Speaking with a sense of distance by narrating the community as 'they', he often positioned himself as an outsider in his stories as he explained how he had never felt completely accepted in that community and struggled to claim an academic-leader identity authoring himself more as a 'free-wheeler'. James spoke of the vision, successes and experiences he had in other education sectors, and in industry, yet explained he felt a sense of rejection in HE, feeling that he was not seen as a legitimate member by the HEI community, articulating how members had very different ideas and '*traditions*'. He recalled his efforts as spoke of feeling increasingly isolated as he had gained position based on his successes in generating income for the faculty through his work, yet struggled with social and cultural capital amongst his senior management colleagues.

Vivienne also mentioned similar *artefacts* in the academic world, like research and publishing, but she did not possess a PhD. Vivienne was a programme leader for most of her time in academia, which was over a decade in total. Research and publication were a more recent feature in her career as she explained her reaction to losing her programme leader role after restructure in her HEI faculty had reorganised several departments, with many programme areas merged under areas led by others.

FC: *...you mentioned ... there was a restructure and you are no longer a programme leader... what was this like for you?*

VIVIENNE: ...I had to decide, do I get myself all stressed out about fighting for something which might never happen anyway, and I decided no - let's take the least line of resistance which actually possibly has worked out quite well because I might be in a better position in the next few years to actually take a fuller role in the initiatives that might be happening. [...] ...the more strategic direction that the dean wants us to go down, which is more of a balance between research and teaching [...] I think the two things that have happened is that I have put in this paper with [a colleague] to [a conference] that's quite a controversial paper and I think that my head has also gone... 'well you can retire in a number of years so why not just shout your mouth off, what are they going to do – sack you?' (laughs) and then the other thing is that there is a book that [some colleagues] are writing and I am doing a chapter...

In being positioned outside of the formal leadership community of her faculty, Vivienne had spoken about her upset at this and her sense of loss at losing this aspect of her role as she narrated the constraints the changes had brought and how she no longer felt she had much of a voice now she had lost her responsibilities for programme leadership. However, she was still imagining future possibilities for herself as she began to talk more about new expectations within the faculty around research, in ways that reflected Patrick and James' narratives. Indeed, Vivienne's HE career had been predominantly focused on teaching and leading a specific programme and she had offered a sense of wariness and hesitation around research fearing being to 'vocal' may be a risk to her position. However, in resistance to her recent positioning within the faculty, research work appeared to offer a way to gain sense of agency and a negotiate possibility for a better future. Therefore, artefacts were figured by Vivienne as cultural resources she could use within her own identity work to subtly resist her current positioning and work toward potentially regaining the sense of agency she felt she had lost.

A shared story was then how the participants' narratives overall reflected specific shared cultural expectations around LMD in academia, with many artefacts understood as important symbolic resources for claiming status and position. However specific LMD programmes and training were not something that appeared within stories of HEIs with the same kind of presence to other institutional worlds. In the world of primary school leadership authored by Vivienne and the world of commerce authored by James, LMD programmes and training, were important to achieve in order to gain access to a leadership position, as the first subtheme in this sub-chapter reflected, which did not

appear as the case in stories of HEIs. However, interestingly, Patrick spoke of a one LMD programme he had undertaken late within his career but did not mention any specific leadership qualifications as important cultural resources in academic leadership worlds.

PATRICK: *I should tell you as well, I attended leadership training... run through the Leadership Foundation, the Universities Leadership Foundation. [...] I was the only one [from the HEI] who could go because it was three thousand pounds. Two two-day workshops run by Lawrence Olivier's son who has a drama group. It was centred on Macbeth and the different leadership roles exhibited within Macbeth so it was really, really good. I was there with administrators, senior folk from around the universities, Head of HR and whatever else, from around the country. And it was good being in there to realise that you know, I'm not out of place here. I am quite comfortable here...*

FC: *How do you think it influenced you?*

PATRICK: *It kind of confirmed where I was at. There are two types of courses, there's 'Preparing for Senior Strategic Leadership' which is for people who are aspiring to become Heads of Department or Deans, and there's another one, something like 'Sustaining Strategic Leadership', you know it's for people who are in Dean positions or Head positions who want a refresher. And half of me thinks I needed to go to that one rather than the 'Preparing for Senior Strategic Leadership', because I'd been [Associate Dean for Research] for [several years], a Director Professor [...] and a Professor for [several years], so I'd been working at that sort of level, but it was good to be amongst similar minded folk from across the university sector, that was really valuable being able to do that as we tend not to do that in the university system. You don't sit down with the head of HR and just have a chat for an hour which would be a really useful thing to do. it was good to 'have you thought about this and what about that' to share our experiences and it was quite nice. I'd really recommend that everybody does it, it's just ridiculously expensive.*

FC: *What other management and leadership training experiences have you had?*

PATRICK: *Oh, I've ticked all the boxes and done them all, I've done HR, I've done the finance, I've done risk, I've done first aid, I've done diversity, I've done chairing committees, I've done... oh a lot really.*

FC: *Were they training workshops or formal qualifications?*

PATRICK: *Training workshops. Universities are generally moving towards online training which is really... I wouldn't hold much store in. But, yeah, there's not really much. You get a position as a Head of [division] [...] and then in your first week you had to get your formal training for risk, HR and all the rest...*

Overall, the leadership foundation course appeared as an important programme for Patrick where had he the chance to interact with others and construct new ideas and

possibilities from what he had learned with those others. Appearing as uncommon within HEIs from his experiences, Patrick described it as coveted programme and as rather expensive and exclusive presenting a sense of status attached to attending it that reflected Holland et al's (1998) notions of positionality. It appeared as an *artefact* that was rather inaccessible more generally across academic leadership in HE was not something that was not particularly common to gain access to. As Patrick assessed and claimed his position as an academic leader in relation to the 'otherness' of those attending alongside him, it reflected his authoring of a claim to various positional identities, offering a strong claim to an academic leader identity. This was in contrast to the '*training workshops*' he spoke of which appeared as an expectation when entering a leadership role. Indeed, he narrated these as based more on basic management skills, and as limited and more suited to those who '*just manage*'. This again reflect Patrick's tension with the lack of 'leaders' in HE, as highlighted through subchapter 4.2 (*stories of organisational life*) thus placing the Leadership Foundation course as an important artefact through which to claim a 'leader' identity in the way he understood and could reconcile as something that went beyond prescribed management techniques.

As Mabey and Finch-Lees (2008) argue, functionalist approaches to LMD often focus on a 'tool-kit' approach to management, like what Patrick had narrated through his experience of 'management training'. Offering various techniques that those in management and leadership positions can use to attempt to reach organisational goals, they are argued as often presenting a more 'skills-based' approach to LMD as Mabey and Finch-Lees (2008) further reflect. Suggesting a potentially broader story about LMD within the world of academic leadership in HE, as Patrick spoke of his past positions and how there was '*not much*' training in leadership and management, it almost seemed that specific LMD training or qualifications were more of an 'aside' for someone in research and academic leadership, especially as an associate dean already holding the required *artefacts* of leadership position in the academic world, for example leading research and gaining grants. The faculty and HEI training opportunities he spoke of were narrated as not particularly helpful to his leadership development. In knowing the focus of this research, on identity development and leadership, it could have also been an influence as to why Patrick chose to tell this story in terms of how he introduced it by saying '*I should also tell you that....*' going on to cite it as important, yet not readily

available. This could be a potential response in terms of him addressing the focus of the research, in a dialogic sense. It gave the sense that perhaps there had not been many opportunities, which might actually be beneficial for a 'system' he feels has an inadequate amount of 'leaders' and too many '*managers*' who '*bean-count*' and do '*the non-exciting stuff*' only possessing a functional skill-set to manage existing targets.

PATRICK: *...two deans I had a real problem with because they just didn't work as a dean should, you know, through the committees for example. One of them didn't have a PhD and wasn't a professor, was only just a senior lecturer, you can't have someone in charge of a 180 staff who is just a senior lecturer and hasn't got a PhD, you can't, you just can't have that in the university system.*

FC: *Why not?*

PATRICK: *Well, the university system is all about status, hierarchies and power. It's not about knowledge at all (laughs) that comes down the way... but... you need status and position. [...] So, the subsequent deans for me were much more problematic, because there was nothing for me to respect them for. They didn't have a publication record, neither of them had had research grants, there was no evidence they had done anything in the university system other than manage...*

Patrick's stories reflected how he had worked to gain legitimacy and position within the hierarchies of 'the system' through experience and *artefacts*. Thus, he began to narrate a tension as he found others were gaining positions without legitimate *artefacts* that he identified as important cultural resources of the academic leadership world, thus underpinning the importance of these resources in his construction of leadership and his claim to an identity of that world. Patrick shared his frustrations of the lack of focus on knowledge and knowledge-exchange as he spoke about the lack of research, tensions around inwards-facing HEIs and self-interested staff. He spoke often of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) and the need for strategy within the wider HE field. For Patrick, his understanding of being a leader in HEIs did not reconcile with what he was experiencing later in his career, as sub-chapter 4.5 (stories of managing a leader image) explores further. In LMD, as Bolden (2010) argues, the focus is often the acquisition of knowledge and skills, yet one of the main benefits is often on creating a space for dialogue and reflection through an appropriate balance of knowledge-exchange, action and reflection, which Patrick's reflection of the Leadership Foundation course offered. This reflected how Dopson et al (2016:7) highlight the paradox of absent knowledge

around leadership development and its effectiveness in the '*knowledge industry*' that is the HE sector, which certainly reflected Patrick's tension around a lack of focus on collaboration and how the university system is '*not about knowledge at all...*'. As Western (2013) argues, developing leaders involves the crucial process of collective dialogue that allows for shared meanings and multiple perspectives, purposes and identities to be explored as they are the very aspects that hold organisations together. This is certainly an interesting area, and as Harrison et al (2010) note in their research report for the Leadership Foundation for HE, there have been an increase in the number of LMD activities for staff in HEIs the sixty HEIs institutions they surveyed since 2000, however they note that 80% of budget for those activities was focused on individualistic development of senior leaders. Harrison et al explain that this appeared despite clear indicators that LMD only contributed to the performance HEIs when used 'as part of a '*bundle*' of activities' (2010:4). Indeed, one of their concluding remarks was:

...university managers and leaders need to involve LMD specialists at the outset to talk about the desired outcomes and how LMD enables, supports, delivers that achievement alongside the other functions that decide upon and deliver culture change. There is little or no evidence that LMD is plugged in to what it needs to be plugged into - all the strands need to knit together, driven by the will of the senior management team.

(Harrison et al, 2010:19)

This was very reflective of the frustrations Patrick narrated, as a lack of collaboration, democracy and vision for the 'bigger picture' was lacking in many of the HEIs he had worked within. Perhaps then, this individualistic focus on senior leaders and their development is not helping that matter; indeed, there needs to be a focus on leadership development, not just leader development as Day et al argue with '*leader development (intrapersonal, focused on individual leaders)*' and '*leadership development (interpersonal, focused on enhancing leadership capacity)*' (2014:63). As Mabey and Finch-Lees (2008) argue, an awareness and engagement with a multi-discourse approach within LMD may certainly be beneficial in academic leadership in HE, as well as in educational leadership and leadership more widely, as other scholar also argues, e.g. Western (2013), Gunter and Ribbins (2002), Close and Raynor (2010), Bligh et al (2011); Collison (2011), Day and Harrison (2007); Bolden et al (2007). As Dopson et al (2016) concluded from their review of research and literature on LMD across HE in England. They found that LMD has not been explored empirically in depth across HE

appearing concluding that the data available is '*small scale, fragmented and often theoretically weak*' (2016:42) as they call for large-scale empirical research across academia from whole institutional to faculty and department level. They go on to suggest that many '*innovative*' ideas, such as '*arts-based methods and play*' (Dopson et al, 2016:42), along with methods that explore participant's personal experiences and expectations with a contextual emphasis following those journeys over time, as well as exploration of the formative spaces where narratives, subjectivities and perspectives are constructed and negotiated. Such as the approach in this thesis, life history research, with the interview as a space for reflection and dialogue, has been interesting and has had an impact on the participants, which the final thematic subchapter (4.5) discusses.

4.3.3. LMD as '*lived experience*'

In narrating particular experiences around LMD, like qualifications, the importance of lived experience was consistently interwoven with notions of 'learning' about leadership, reflecting arguments by Carroll (2015), Day et al (2014), Mabey (2013) and Day and Sin (2011). As chapter two explored, leadership development is increasingly being argued as an ongoing learning and development, longitudinal in nature and beginning in early life, as the first thematic subchapter noted (Day et al, 2014). As the last two subthemes in this chapter reflected, despite the various LMD artefacts of important narrated through qualifications and training, Patrick, Vivienne and James had all often spoke of their lived experiences as the most influential and developmental aspect of their leadership 'learning' describing many '*powerful learning moments*'.

FC: *What ...moments have been really powerful ...in helping you to know about leadership and how it works?*

PATRICK: *Seeing others work. [Stuart – Beta University] ...he was Chair of Senate, the highest academic committee in the University and I was on Senate but I was mainly just watching. [...] ...so you know just learning through things like that has just been brilliant, like how to Chair a Committee rather than how not to Chair a Committee.*

Going back to the first thematic subchapter and Patrick's early life stories of the Boy Scouts, he had explained that is when he felt he had become a leader. He also spoke of

the expectation he felt to be *'a bit of a leader'* as a PE teacher. For Patrick, leadership development appeared as heuristic in nature, like it had for James and Vivienne. He often spoke about learning through mentors, observing others and making connections to share experiences which continually came back to a social constructivist and dialogical process of co-development (Holland et al, 1998). Indeed, the sense of heuristic development reflects arguments by Carroll (2015) and Mabey (2013) around the importance of on-going forms of learning. This is not just through powerful *'crucible moments'* as Carroll (2015) argues, which reflects the *'powerful learning moments'* the participants raised, but also through the everyday mundane of daily life, the *'small'* experiences, which Edwards et al (2013) and Sinclair (2011) argue as they talk about the impact of practice on identity development and vice versa.

Interestingly, as James and Vivienne spoke of their LMD programme experiences, they both debated how and when LMD training should actually take place for a leader to support development, like Patrick raising how experience was an important part of the leadership development journey.

JAMES: *...what did I learn by the Masters – a refinement of a lot of the earlier stuff [personnel management programme] – and with more experience you can apply more of the principles. Some of the principles, when you were doing them, you would think 'I can never see that I can use that', but things like, erm statistics so you can interpret trends and you can interpret information. I could never see the point in it. But when I did my Masters I could see the point that actually as a CEO with over [a thousand] staff, if I had known that at that time, I'd have been a damn sight better off. I'm glad I learned reflective practice very very early, because if I hadn't, I just wouldn't have survived basically [...] I'd done the [personnel management programme] but I just didn't apply it. [...] So I think this is why I am on a dilemma about the value of formal courses. At what point should they be introduced to a manager's leadership training? Should they be introduced early, but do you see the relevance? I didn't. Should they be introduced alongside the experience, or after the experience? I don't know, you know what I'm saying, I don't know. My own experience would seem to indicate that I wish I'd done it alongside at the time, but you don't.*

James' struggle with his earlier LMD experiences offered a sense of how, as his position had changed and he was accessing new worlds and new perspectives, his understanding

of particular discourses and the relevance of them, and his introduction to new ones, changed over time. As Close and Raynor argue, leadership is all about *'paradox, dilemma and debate, not uncritical skills transmission and simplistic solution-seeking'* (2010:222). This reflected how a singular LMD programme, focusing on particular skills and techniques without drawing on context and culture had not always been helpful for James. The *'reflective practice'* James noted was interesting in terms of how leadership development again appeared as ongoing development in his narrative, as Holland et al would argue, in terms of how the participants were continually engaged in the negotiation of meaning through their experiences. The LMD programmes that were offered, appeared as short-term and in rather contained ways – as fixed temporal bounded blocks of study – and it appeared difficult for James and Vivienne to both reconcile when to 'do' an LMD programme as they remained unsettled as to whether it should be early or later within career as they had found a range of organisational experiences and discourses useful in developing their understanding of practice.

VIVIENNE: *I think working at different schools helped because there were different challenges within each of those schools so I think I built up the skills of how to, sort of, talk to people and how to listen to people, over time. [...] I actually feel that I got more out of my Masters Degree later on in my profession because I had developed some of those skills so I had almost mini-case studies to draw upon when I was reflecting and writing about it, whereas if you are only in the second year of your teaching career you haven't got all those life experiences, so I am not saying you shouldn't do a Master's degree in your second year, but I feel I got a huge amount out of doing the leadership and management stuff, because I got all those background experiences to reflect on.*

As a tension that Vivienne and James highlight, a leader does not emerge from training (Western, 2013) but through as process of co-development, as Holland et al argue (1998), which reforms subjectivity over time as identities heuristically develop through engagement in social practice. This tension reflects the dominant focus often found in LMD programmes, as noted in chapter two, as often *'reifying the individual and rationalising leadership into individual traits, competencies, skills and behaviours that can be learnt'* (Western, 2013: 306). For instance, the leadership programmes that Vivienne, and especially James, offered contained notions of leadership identity as a rather fixed notions and specific way of being with prescriptive tools to be used in

practice, as Ladkin (2015) and Ford (2015) highlight. Mentors were a strong feature in learning leadership through lived experiences, particularly for James and Patrick, which the next thematic subchapter discusses in more depth (4.4: *stories of influential others*).

As chapter two also explored, leadership is highly discursive and performative (Fairhurst, 2009 and Crevani et al, 2010) having '*its own discourses, which shape how we think about leadership*' (Western, 2008:149). It was discussed how there are many institutionalised ways of thinking about leadership, with individualistic and leader-centric discourses predominantly positioned as normative taken-for-granted assumptions (Western, 2013), particularly in LMD programmes and training (Edwards et al, 2013; Fairhurst, 2013). As Cunliffe (2011) further argues, these normative assumptions (norms) influence the construction of leadership identities as individuals seek to become '*a certain kind of person*' (Gee, 2011:30) in leadership worlds. Indeed, reflected holistically across the participant narratives through broader stories about practice, as further thematic subchapters will explore, there were many discourses of leadership present that reflected the findings of the literature review. This included various leader-centric individualistic discourses with powerful psychological discourses around leader identity with heroic notions of disposition attached, such as tough, ethical, visionary, self-sacrificing, good and successful. Furthermore, autocratic and bureaucratic discourses appeared as well as democratic, humanistic and relational discourses. The myriad discourses were often orchestrated in participant's narratives in the way Holland et al (1998) suggest, as they were crafting a response to various expectations and internally persuasive discourses as they embodied certain discourses and rejected others. The LMD programmes and the discourses that they contain were presented as an important aspect of identity development yet reflected the rather individualistic and static approaches that have been dominantly critiqued in LMD research and literature as they focus on behaviours, skills, competencies and technical tasks (Gunter and Ribbins, 2002). This sat in tension with participants' experiences as the debate around if, when and how LMD programmes of study should feature to be of the greatest support to leadership development surfaced as the dominant model in LMD education was challenged, particularly in HE.

Overall, discourse around LMD appeared through participant stories as rather deeply complicated as value-laden historical perceptions around cultural expectations and subjectivity around cultural morals and values entered conversations and underpinned the many leadership discourses highlighted as culturally and historically infused, rather than as sterile neutral objective tools and skill-sets. Hence, understanding LMD through one prescribed means is unhelpful, as Bligh et al argue (2011:1059), since organisations are too complex and in a constant and dynamic state of flux. For the participants, this untidy myriad of discourse reflected the many authoritative voices and internally persuasive discourses that travelled with them, '*colliding*' with the multitude of contextual circumstances they found themselves within over time (Holland et al, 1998:46).

Subchapter Summary

As this subchapter explored, despite the differences present in the participants' narratives, LMD programmes and training were drawn on by each participant. It was a further context for the construction of leadership and various identity claims where issues of positionality, authoring, world making and the negotiation of meaning were all present in how the participants spoke about their LMD experiences. What a figured worlds analysis further offered was how LMD programmes had been understood by each participant as resources that contained artefacts that could be used in leadership practice for various purposes and were a context for their practised identities (Holland et (1998). However, they also appeared as powerfully discursive expectations and normative assumptions of leadership practice and leader disposition, as well as how these *artefacts* of their various leadership worlds had allowed access to particular worlds and for claims to various positions to be made.

Furthermore, the findings from this subchapter strongly reflected that leadership is highly discursive and performative (Fairhurst, 2009 and Crevani et al, 2010) having 'its own discourses, which shape how we think about leadership' (Western, 2008:149). Indeed, the participants' stories illuminated LMD programmes and the discourses that they contained reflected the rather individualistic leader-centric ways as having quite a

powerful presence which has been critiqued in LMD research and literature. As several scholars argue (e.g. Western, 2013; Ford, 2015; Lumby and English, 2009; 2013; Fairhurst, 2009 and Sinclair 2011; Mabey and Finch-Lees, 2008), within LMD it is important to explore the convergence of the many discourses of leader development and leadership development. Dominant functionalist discourses, with constructionist approaches that explore meaning and how to navigate the collision and conflict of multiple perspectives, as well as drawing in dialogic approaches that attend to multiple voices, local relations of power and the highly contested space leadership occupies through discursive notions of leader identity, as well reflecting critical approaches that explore knowledge control and challenge broader structures of power are more useful.

Similarly, Western (2013) argues for the importance of this awareness to challenge perceptions of dominant role expectations and as the previous subchapters have so far highlighted, as the literature review presented, the individualistic focus of leadership discourse certainly needs to go beyond the functional individualistic notions that appear as dominant in LMD. This is especially interesting the HE leadership context and certainly is an interesting area for further exploration beyond the limitations of this research.

As the stories in this chapter, and so far across the thematic subchapters have presented, practitioners would benefit from LMD programmes that explore leadership in ways that draw on lived experience, self-reflection and can unpack cultural assumptions, norms and expectations to reflect how leadership is actually experienced in practice with all its uncertainties, ambiguity and problems (Glatter, 2009) as a form of on-going heuristic development. Indeed, as the narratives reflect and as Day et al (2014) argues, focus on leadership development beyond leader development is required and a multi-discourse approach, such as Mabey and Finch-Lees (2008) and Western (2013) argue, is certainly an important further consideration within LMD research more widely as well as in education, and specifically within academic leadership in HE outside of the limitations of this study. The next subchapters (4.4) now moves to explore a further context for identity development through *Stories of influential others*.

Subchapter 4.4. *Stories of influential others*

Subchapter Introduction

This subchapter explores the fourth theme emerging from the analysis of the interview data, which focuses on the role of other people. As an important aspect of identity development, the dispositions and actions of other people, particularly those in leadership roles, were narrated as an important aspect to the development of various leader identities. These 'others' were narrated in different ways: inspirational characters as mentors and role-models; figurative dispositions of 'good' leaders they wished to embody; adversarial characters or 'bad' leaders. The characters narrated often represented embodiments of various leadership discourses and cultural dispositions as each participant figured 'ideal' leadership worlds and oppositional counter-worlds narrated as how leadership ought not to be (Holland et al, 1998). These juxtaposed worlds contained characters appearing as what Holland et al argue as figurative identities and counter-identities – or heroes and villains – of leadership worlds representing the way in which participants each took an authorial stance in relation to the positioning of these characters to claim various identities.

As chapter two explored, Holland et al (1998) argue that the standard-plots and stories of tension that emerge in the space of authoring illuminate narratives and scripts about cultural values, ethics and being a certain kind of person in those worlds. As this subchapter explores, the stories of 'good' leaders and 'bad' leaders that were constructed across the participants' narratives through these various characters were not only interesting contexts for authoring identity claims. Indeed, these stories were telling a deeper story about the ambiguity and tension of the heteroglossic discourse of leadership in lived experience. They greatly reflected the struggles of identity work within what Western (2013) argues as 'the gap' between rhetorical societal narratives of greatness, heroism and masculinity attached to the role of 'leader' and the tensions of lived practice in the realities of social worlds. Illuminating '*the tension, struggle, and ambiguity of leadership identity construction processes*' (Fairhurst and Grant, 2010:192) through the following subthemes:

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4.4.2. <i>Stories of mistreatment from others: ‘bad’ leaders</i>	201
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4.4.1. *Stories of inspiration from ‘good’ leaders*

As Holland et al (1998:128) explain, as individuals figure the various worlds around them ‘*many of the elements of the world relate to one another in the form of a story or drama, a ‘standard’ plot.*’ (Holland et al, 1998:53). Thus, casting characters in stories can be understood as one of the elements through which leadership worlds were figured as participants symbolically drew on their imaginings of leadership worlds, discourses of practice and sociohistorical experiences of other people to construct particular figures of expectation in leadership worlds. As Holland et al (1998) explain, these stories and the characters in them represented authoritative voices of expectation and internally persuasive discourses assimilated into their own figuration of how leadership worlds and ‘leaders’ ought to be. As explored in chapter three (*methodology*), ‘*characters (such as self and others) emerging in time and space as prot- and antagonists or heroes and villains*’ (Bamburg, 2010:13) were positioned in stories by the participants in particular ways as an authorial stance was taken make identity claims.

As noted in subchapter 4.3 (*Stories of study and training*), lived experience of particular institutional cultures was cited by each participant as a very powerful influence to the construction of their understanding of leadership. These experiences included particular ‘others’ they had learned from, narrated by the participants as influential role-models, mentors or colleagues. Mostly appearing in stories from their early careers and early lives, their presence mainly reflected transitional points as the participants were developing and learning about leadership as novices or middle managers. Indeed, as Day (2000) reflects, mentoring and coaching as a form of leadership development is based on developmental relationships as a form of ‘*on-the-job’ experiences for leadership development*’ (2000:593) and can be unplanned and not formally initiated, as was reflected in participant stories. As earlier thematic subchapters discussed, particular

cultures had expected a movement into a leadership role and the stories told described participant's relationships with others as an important forms of learning. There was an interesting theme in that Patrick and James recalled their experiences of inspirational leaders and others they had watched and learned from, reflecting how they had tried to embody these dispositions, yet Vivienne did not narrate any such characters. However, she did reflect on a mentoring experience from her early career as quite influential to her development by how she saw what 'not' to do, as this subtheme will later explore. Turning to Patrick's experiences first, highlighted in the previous chapter (4.3: *stories of study and training*), Patrick often spoke of [Stuart], his mentor and professor at [Beta University]. In Patrick's narrative Stuart was cast as a successful, ethical, strong and supportive academic leader and often featured in Patrick's figurations of how a 'leader' ought to be.

PATRICK: ...I always have to go back to a guy called [Stuart]. He was [a prominent researcher] [...] [Stuart] was magnificent for me at [Beta University, AUS]. He took me under his wing, he didn't have to at all, he wasn't in my little group. He took me under his wing and I felt as if I could go to him for anything and it was lovely [...] [Stuart] had gently warned me about the politics of research... So, [Stuart] was really influential to me so I feel kind of beholden to do the same thing with other people. ...he [Stuart] was great for me so I will just pass that on and help people and support people as much as I can. So I have always had that and it does stem from [Stuart]. [...]

FC: ...getting to know more about leadership as you have gone through your career, what has been most useful in helping you to know about leadership and how it works?

PATRICK: Seeing others work. [Stuart] again, he was Chair of Senate [...] Yeah, just watching people and learning from people, seeing good leaders and I've seen a few bad leaders, but trying not to do what they did [...]

FC: ...what makes a good leader?

PATRICK: A good leader (laughs) is somebody who gets the job done but in a way that's a decent and reasonable way to do it, gets the outcomes or the outputs whatever, yeah, for me leadership is about relationships really, get the relationships right and everything else will fall in. [...] I think that is right in university settings, you get the relationships right then everything else will follow, you know, I'd had people going way over and beyond because they knew I respected them and I treated them right. And that's really important.

Patrick also offered various other characters described as *'interstellar'* research academics, early career tutors, and faculty members who had inspired his thinking about leadership. He spoke about how he was inspired by leaders who had *'vision'* and who *'supported'* and *'encouraged'* others, in addition to possessing the sorts of cultural artefacts he associated with academic leadership as the last sub-chapter explored.

For Patrick, his figuration of an academic leadership identity embodied a particular relational and collaborative habitus and he often came back to this as his *'ideal'* as he rejected other ways of being and democratic forms of leadership were often present in Patrick's narrative. The way he described his role-models and the dispositions he had spoken of enacting, this often reflected a paternalistic and servant-leadership discourse. At times as he spoke how he had been *'taken under Stuart's wing'* and said he had felt beholden to pass that on to others as he spoke of *'serving'* others, building trust and motivating them. Hence, as Patrick narrated various discourses as he described the *'leader'* role and reflected on his own performances, he was positioning himself in ways to claim particular leader identities in relation to these discourses.

In a similar way to Patrick, much of James' narration around the dispositions he expected, and assumed as normative aspects of the *'leader'* role in organisational worlds, was reflected in how he described his role-models. For James, role-models and mentors strongly featured as inspirational *'heroes'* within his narrative. A charismatic and transformational disposition appeared often as embedded within his habitus, as thematic subchapter (4.2: stories of organisational life) explored, which often reflected characters that he said he had *'imitated'* and *'followed'*, explaining how he had tried to model his performances to reflect dispositions of particular *'leaders'* he had admired.

FC: ...what sort of leader did you want to be?

JAMES: *Fabulous question that! Fabulous question that. Erm, yeah, ok yeah. I thought long and hard about this one, erm, you are influenced – I was influenced by my dad. He was a trade union leader and he led by consensus. He led by consensus and, erm, he was friendly but - I actually made notes on it – people never saw the other side of him [...] so I tried to imitate him by being friendly and nice and everything to everybody. I didn't see the hard side because it was my dad!*

FC: *So how did you go about learning about it [leadership] back then [as acting headteacher at Barton SS]?*

JAMES: *[Charles] [the Headteacher] was a wonderful man, a natural leader of men and the things that I learned from him, erm... you might call it obfuscation [...] I followed him, imitated those actions, but he was a wonderful man. He'd been a [military] leader, he'd been [involved in combat and had been injured] so this was a guy who'd done it properly, you see what I mean and... yeah, that's where I got my ideas of leadership from: right or wrong; actions, actions, actions. [...] [Frank – the MP] was a great leader, erm, a lot of false, conceited, ego-centric – you name it in [Frank] – but wonderful to work with. ... I had not long met him [...] and I was showing him [around an area in the city] and there was an almighty bang and someone had thrown [an object] from [a building above] and it landed on top of the limousine that we'd been in, and I was mortified. And I said '[Frank], this is not [the city], this is not [the city's] people!' Immortal words of mine! And he said '[James], if I was in a [building] up there, unemployed, two screaming kids, I'd throw [an object] at me' (laughs) wonderful! Real understanding of people, a real understanding ...*

The disposition of 'leader' he associated with often, as how a 'good' leader ought to be, was an identity claim that James made often as he reflected on the actions he had taken, including the risks and the hardships practice, in trying to embody the dispositions he spoke of. Interestingly, the toughness of James' 'heroes', as fighters and 'action'-centred men, were certainly reflective of a 'heroic' transformational leadership discourse. Yet at times, they also reflected a paternalistic servant leadership discourse in ways that Patrick had raised, such as how James also spoke of protecting and 'fighting' for his staff, trusting them and expected them to follow the vision '*for the greater good*'.

The theme of gender came in to the stories of these mentors and 'good' leaders, in that all of these characters were male and narrated with more masculine notions in relation to leadership, such as toughness, being hard, fighting, competition and aggression, as the subchapter 4.2 (*stories of organisational life*) reflected. Patrick's role models and mentors were also male, yet interestingly Vivienne did not offer any particularly role-models like James and Patrick did, but offered one story of a 'mentor' from her early career, however, this appeared in a different way to the historical characters of past mentors as 'good' or 'great' leaders that James and Patrick had offered, like Stuart and Charles.

VIVIENNE: ... at the first workplace [Acorn Primary School in Southernshire] ...I was not officially mentored by somebody but it was mentored to sort of be – a sort of leader for environmental science – and I learnt a lot from that person about how to move environmental science on. Interestingly he wasn't a particularly good people person but we complemented each other because I am a reasonable people person so I was actually good at working with staff and getting staff to move on although I didn't have an official role in that... that was my first experience of watching somebody lead and sort of... taking part in leadership.

FC: What sorts of things would you describe as leading, what was he doing, that you observed?

VIVIENNE: I think the way he led, he, pushed initiatives through. So from an environmental science perspective he, erm, developed a woodland and got the staff involved in that and the children involved in that [...] he was very initiative driven, he had different initiatives that he pushed through but he didn't always take the people with him, and that was probably an important learning point for me was that you need to take the people with you otherwise the initiative doesn't always happen in the way that you as a leader think it ought to.

Vivienne's story of being mentored, reflected how, like Patrick and James, mentoring was an important aspect of her leadership development, albeit on a much lesser scale in individualistic terms. However, rather than individual 'leaders' being cast as a hero character of sorts, her focus remained on the culture of the school she had worked within as developmental in a group sense, rather than coming back recurrently to particular early career or early life individuals like the James and Patrick did. For Vivienne, she remained wary of leadership in individualistic terms, as the previous subchapter (4.2) explored, and this individual 'mentor' she cast was a character who embodied a sort of counter-identity for Vivienne. This was reflected in terms of him representing for her what a 'leader' ought not to be. Thus, she was rejecting his disposition and positioning herself as an oppositional character to him, again drawing on the importance of relational and democratic approaches in leadership interaction.

VIVIENNE: ...I am very much a collegial person whereby I prefer... I prefer to sort of make decisions as a group which – which might sound a bit of a cop out in a way in that you are not then carrying the can as a leader but I... I very fiercely believe, and I'm using that word because I do fiercely believe, that the only way you are going to get people to follow what you are thinking as a leader is for them to be actively part of the decision making.

As Vivienne held onto collaborative, relational and participatory forms of leadership rather than the '*adversarial nature of male norms such as controlling, competing, organising, establishing rules and regulations and deferring to a higher authority...*' (Fitzgerald, 2014:103), she was often rejecting the 'normalized' role of masculinity within leadership discourse, particularly in relation to notions of power as dominance and control (Karlberg, 2005; Sinclair and Evans, 2015). Hence, rather than diminishing the power of others, as Karlberg (2005) explains, Vivienne found that the discourse of leadership as controlling and domination was something rather unpleasant and unpalatable, as she resisted it in most of her stories.

As Blackmore and Sachs (2007:13) argue, historically in the 1990s women were positioned more within popular discourses around a '*women's styles of leadership*' as a more '*caring and sharing*' discourse which reflected more nurturing forms of leadership. Regardless of how this was translated in democratic forms of leadership, as oppositional to authoritarian forms, such as control and domination, it was how women were perceived and judged, and how they perceived themselves in relation this discourse was highly gendered reflecting the masculinity of leadership. Thus, Vivienne's resistance of authoritarian forms of leadership could indeed be her resistance to the way in which the discourses positioned her, however she may or may not be aware of this. Overall for her, the masculinity of leadership continued to sit in contradiction to her participatory and supportive discourse. Therefore, although her mentor was narrated as influential to her identity development, gender was again an interesting influence that interplayed within this in relation to leadership and the dominance of masculinity as she challenged and rejected how he 'pushed' ideas forward without taking others with him.

Reflecting back on the sociohistorical context and the cultures that the participants inhabited through their careers, and early life, was quite interesting in relation to this male-dominance of inspirational leaders as mentors and role-models. James and Patrick inhabited male dominated institutions through their careers and early lives, as reflected across earlier subchapters (4.1: *stories of early life* and 4.2: *stories of organisational life*). Vivienne had inhabited a highly feminized world for much of her teaching career where leadership is often more male dominated (Skelton, 2012) where '*women teach – men*

manage' (Brinia, 2014:179). She then entered the world of academia, which Patrick raised as very male-dominated through his discussions of the issues of gender imbalance in senior levels of academia. This historical positionality of the academic world and of primary school leadership, would therefore reflect the lack of opportunities to learn from female leaders as there were many fewer present. As Morley (2013) argues, higher education globally, including Australia, has a history of masculinity in leadership. Historically for Patrick, his stories of his developing career in academia reflected the heavy presence of men in HE leadership. Indeed, more recent statistics reflect this as quite an historical tension in academia globally where less than 20% of professors are female, which David (2015) describes as the patriarchy within HE, as the subchapter 4.2 (*stories of organisational life*) discussed. Indeed, reflecting back on what Patrick highlighted about the cultures within HEIs he had experienced, he came back to the tension of gender in *'such an aggressive, male, dog-eat-dog, 'all about me' world'* and how he resisted that culture, as explored.

PATRICK: *...It's a very male world the university system, and I've really struggled with that. [...] Quite often women don't have the same opportunities as men for all sorts of reasons [...] That notion of 'subject to opportunity' just does not exist here [UK]. So men have more opportunities [...] I think I have rubbed men probably the wrong way...*

Although Patrick reflected some differences between HEIs, and between England and Australia, as Morley (2013) argues there are still ongoing tensions within senior levels of leadership. Australia had a particular voice in gender equality debates during the 1980s and 1990s as there was considerable tension and debate in the Australian media around equal opportunities and the *'individual merit'* quota (Blackmore, 1997:76) was pushed through legislation in the 1980s, which Patrick referred to as *'subject to opportunity'*. As Blackmore (1997) argues, although much work was done to promote gender equality in Australia in the 1980s, women were only occupying 2.5% of executive or senior, management positions across the Australian workforce in 1990s, including education; in the Australian education sector Blackmore and Sachs (2007) reported this as 3.5% in 1998. Indeed, Blackmore reflected that in the 1980s, HEIs saw equal opportunity agenda as an attempt to reduce their autonomy *'at a time when the higher education reforms were concentrating more control in the hands of the males at the top'* (1997:90). This

was during the time Patrick undertook his PhD and first worked within Australian HEIs as an early-career academic during what he cited as the most ‘formative years’ of his career as a new lecturer working his way ‘*up the ranks*’ by watching and learning from other senior academics, who, as the research by Blackmore (1997), Blackmore and Sachs (2007), David (2012) and Morley (2013) reflects, would have most likely been male. Similarly, for James, as earlier thematic subchapters explored, his history as a child in boys’ schools, mixing with women for the first time at teacher training college, but then teaching in back in boys’ schools had created a lack of female leaders and strong role models in his early life, other than his mother, of whom he had retained memories as a hard-worker with a tough disposition through the phrase ‘*work or want*’. Female leaders he did speak of, such as ‘*the hard as nails*’ female manager he hired in a female dominated business he had run, reflected the stories of his mother as a hard-working, self-sacrificing type who ‘just got on with it’ as norms of ‘toughness’, ‘being hard’, resilience and serving others entered his narrative.

JAMES: ...my [first] actual direct line supervisor [at the HEI] was a lady who was hugely professional. Respected her two hundred per cent, forgotten about her! [Charlotte] was superb, erm, dressed superbly, was good with people, good with schools and good with Local Authorities, she was top of the pops. And I thought, yep – she did a good job. [...] [Guy] – a lovely social guy but realistically was as confused as anybody else as to why he had been promoted. He had been promoted by a maverick Dean who, I remember saying [...] he won’t upset anybody’ *woah! No! And he admitted that himself ‘well I don’t upset people’ and he didn’t! And, you had to respect that approach. He was ok that way, but there was no steel, there was no fight, there was no fight for it after some of the other leaders I’d been used to. [...] he was a smashing fella but just didn’t have it as a leader, just didn’t have it and was lovely to talk to, but in terms of getting results for the organisation – and remember my focus on the organisation... no! Disaster, absolute disaster.*

As a powerful part of James’ history-in-person, the dispositions of his father (the trade union leader) and Charles (The War-hero Headteacher from Barton School) were often present in his stories. These reflected much of the way he spoke about the purpose, actions and expectations of leadership as he narrated notions of courage, serving a greater cause and charisma as a part of his own identity performances. Hence, as the excerpt above illuminates, James struggled to identify with leaders like ‘Guy’ from the

HEI who did not embody this way of being. Particularly the notion of toughness – as ‘hard, steel’ and ‘fight’ – in the leader role and resisted the idea of a leader disposition that did not have this sense of fight. Furthermore, James often used the term ‘lady’ when describing individual female characters he narrated, which was an interesting construction of gender in terms of his lack of interaction in early life with women as earlier subthemes have explored. Noting it was at college the first time he mixed with women – whom he described as ‘*very middle class*’ and narrated in ways that positioned them in higher social status to himself as a ‘*working class lad*’, before then working in single-sex schools for boys and male-dominated industries for most of his early career. This ‘lady’ label was interesting as it illuminated James cultural inheritance around the use of the term historically in British society in relation to ‘respectability’ and the tradition of ‘lady’ being of an upper-middle class tradition (Allan, 2009). The ‘ladies’ James narrated came with a sense of respect as he spoke about admiring their efforts or empathising with their struggles. However, it could also reflect a historical construction of gender positioning of women in professional roles, as Allan (2009) argues, particularly leadership positions, in ways that ‘feminise’ women in what was James had predominantly experienced as male roles through much of his early life and career (Butler, 2004). Indeed, in earlier subchapters, the gender imbalances and masculinity of leadership, particularly within Patrick’s narrative, were highlighted as again presenting historical context as important in how participants’ were positioning themselves.

Overall in reflecting on the sociohistorical contexts they inhabited, female leaders were less likely to be present during those more formative years of their careers where stories of role-models and mentors featured greatly, thus perhaps creating less opportunity for female leaders as role models to enter their narratives. Indeed, the continued domination of masculine notions attached to leader disposition are still appearing as the ‘norm’ within HE and school leadership, as subchapter 4.2 (*stories of organisational life*) explored. Indeed, as Ford (2015a) argues, leadership discourses often contain ‘*strong elements of masculinity that act to strengthen male identities and thereby produce asymmetrical gender relations in organisational life*’ (2015a:243). Therefore, these asymmetrical gender relations they narrated within their stories of organisation life also appeared within the stories of role-models, mentors and ‘good’ leaders.

4.4.2: Stories of mistreatment by others and 'bad' leaders

As Holland et al argue, when individuals tell stories about their experiences they often *'include reactions to the treatment they have received as occupants of the positions figured by the worlds'*. (Holland et al, 1998:143). Throughout their narratives, they each spoke of their stories of mistreatment – such as Patrick and his PhD supervisor (who *'stole'* chapters of Patrick's research and wrote them up without credit to him); Vivienne and the [Gameton PS] Headteacher (who made her *'dread'* going to work in a *'toxic'* environment) and James and the St Jasmine's priest (who ostracised him for not being of the Catholic Faith) – they all reflected how these experiences had resulted in tension and conflict with varying responses to how they were positioned by others.

As this section will discuss, the characters within those stories of mistreatment, narrated as counter-identities to how 'leaders' ought to be, were presented as deeply influential to each participant had developed understanding of leadership practice and constituted a subsequent sense of leader-self. Indeed, across the participant narratives, counter-identities appeared often – as villainous characters cast – in stories of mistreatment as they each spoke of their expectations of leadership worlds and of 'leaders'. For instance, Vivienne often came back to a powerful character from her mid-career when she was a departmental leader in a school. She described this individual as deeply challenging many of her assumptions about the ethics of leadership behaviours as she articulated a *'toxic'* culture and how it had shaped the sort of leader she strived to be through a script of how she did not ever wish to be.

VIVIENNE: *I did lead the change of that school [Gameton PS] but what happened then, once I had moved the school forward ...I became a threat to the headteacher because erm... I then knew more than she did and she made my life a misery after that. [...]*

FC: *How did that environment make you feel?*

VIVIENNE: *Dreadful, I didn't want to go to work. I love the children, that was the only thing that kept me going to work was the children, the class, but it was very – I can't think of the word for it – it was not an environment that you could... Toxic – it was a toxic environment, you just didn't want to be there. [...]*

FC: *...In terms of leadership development, how did that influence you?*

VIVIENNE: *I think it influenced me from the point of view that I never wanted to be a leader who, er, was nasty to somebody. I think it made me think that you don't treat—as a leader you don't treat someone like that. If you have got issues with somebody, you have the difficult conversation with them, and you support them to either develop or support them to move on, but you do not set up a situation whereby the person involved hasn't have a clue what is going on and doesn't understand why they are being treated in the manner they are being treated. ...the way I was treated was damaging to me as a person, to me as a professional and I think to the school. I think it did a lot of damage to the school...*

For Vivienne, this story of mistreatment was a central narrative in how she figured a 'bad' leader to be. Through an adversarial caricature of a rather villainous disposition who was controlling, autocratic and unsupportive. This counter-identity Vivienne often opposed in her stories was a juxtaposition to how she figured 'leader' ought to behave. Indeed, as subchapter 4.2 (*stories of organisational life*) reflected, Vivienne had often resisted bureaucratic 'telling' cultures, and her experiences with this headteacher at Gameton PS were narrated as deeply difficult and tense as she attempted to resist how she was being positioned by the headteacher in often constraining ways. As Holland et al argue, an individual may '*refuse the implicit positioning*' (1998:135) through their identity work in practice as they seek ways of being that challenge particular notions. Vivienne offered examples of her resistance to this positioning, however, this was not without consequence to Vivienne as she spoke of the '*toxic*' environment she faced and her '*dread*' of going into work. However, Vivienne had rejected this positioning by moving out of that school. In this example, through Holland et al's notion of 'world making', Vivienne had faced a great collision of perspectives and had improvised her performance, which had brought about new ways of thinking about leadership practice for her, which she spoke of then embodying in later roles. For Vivienne, the experience had been a powerful rupture for her as it had deeply challenged her assumptions around the figurative identity of headteacher she carried with her as part of her history-in-person, based on her early experiences in her career of other headteachers.

VIVIENNE: *...you have this image in your head of Headteachers being, you know, sort of supportive people who would display, you know... good behaviour and then it's a bit of a shock when you find that they don't necessarily display good behaviour and aren't necessarily supportive...*

In casting this particular character as a 'villain' in her narrative – a counter-identity – Vivienne was authoring her rejection of the disposition she attached to this character as she claimed a more relational and humanistic identity often rejected a leader identity completely as she came back to her resistance to bureaucratic cultures, as subchapter (4.2: *stories of organisational life*) explored. However, she spoke of how these events continued to regulate her own behaviours and actions as she took this experience into her own inner speech, becoming a persuasive discourse that mediated her actions and the way in which she went on to reject particular behaviours and enact others to author herself in opposition to this villain. Thus, her experiences of particular individuals like this character, were a strong influence on the development of her own self-understanding and leadership identity.

As a common theme within her narrative, this counter-identity was often figured alongside her rejection of bureaucratic and autocratic cultures, illuminating a link for Vivienne between autocratic leaders and bureaucratic cultures. Similarly, for Patrick, it was interesting how this rejection appeared as Patrick spoke about other individuals as characters from his historical past, like deans of faculty, other professors and colleagues. Indeed, his rejection of autocratic cultures was often narrated through the juxtaposition of similar characters with as figurative 'leaders' and their counter-identities as he returned to a recurrent discourse of participatory and relational leadership in his narrative. This presented in the way that he spoke about his mentors, and offered the figurative identity of professor, as supportive and democratic dispositions in opposition to how he cast 'bad' leaders as '*self-interested, bean-counting managers*' who '*sell*' their '*souls*'.

PATRICK: *I've seen a few bad leaders...*

FC: *...What do you think makes a bad leader?*

PATRICK: *When people don't trust them, they're erratic, there is no sense of right or wrong, they are out for themselves... yeah universities are full of those as well. Try and avoid them if you can. ...[two] deans for me were ...problematic, because there was nothing for me to respect them for. They didn't have a publication record, neither of them had had research grants, there was no evidence they had done anything in the university system other than manage and... the day I'll respect a manager is the day it will freeze over in hell (laughs).*

FC: ...why is that?

PATRICK: *Well, to be a manager you kind of sell your soul a bit and erm... and I am not really too keen on doing that. I much prefer a leader who's got a vision, who can support others, to encourage others. Whereas managing for me is all about the books... the finances, the non-exciting stuff, yeah it's funny, it's really weird, but I need to be led by a leader, you know, not a manager.*

FC: *And you say that he was the only dean, the one at [Epsilon University, UK], that you actually respected. What about throughout your career?*

PATRICK: *Apart from [Beta University, AUS], yeah. I did respect the dean at [Beta University, AUS] until he started selling his soul and became an establishment man.*

FC: *So how does that link to the management, how does the respect element link?*

PATRICK: *Well, I respect leaders and people who are obvious leaders, you know so if you've got a research grant, you've got a European research grant or you written 'the' top book and all of that, that's easy, but if you're just a manager, just a manager and you've balanced your books for five years in a row which is not hard to do because budgets are socially constructed anyway, then that... I... I just can't say it. I've got no words really. I just can't imagine a time I would look up to somebody like that, because it's not hard, managing is not hard, leading is very hard and getting the most out of people and supporting people*

Patrick's '*manager*' figure appeared often as a representative counter-identity in how he narrated a tension with autocracy as he claimed the position of the 'leader' identity he figured as an 'ideal' within his narrative. This appeared recurrently through the characters he offered in particular stories as he recurrently resisted and rejected the dispositions he firmly narrated as having no place in academia.

Hence, Patrick described how he resisted or rejected particular practices through these storied characters and their practices as he held onto his leader identity in opposition to these others. Like Vivienne, there was also a strong story of mistreatment in Patrick's story relating to an incident in his early career with his PhD supervisor, whom he had worked with as a student on his Australian scholarship just before he started his career in academia.

PATRICK: *they [academics] see professors as often someone to be avoided - only out for themselves, self-interested type folk. But that is not how I wanted to be, because I had a really bitter experience with my own PhD supervisor. He... he stole chapters and he wrote them up under his own name without even reference to me. [...] So I have been badly burned, so I know what it is like and I do not want that to happen at all with anybody with me. I'd rather not publish than impose myself or steal somebody's work as that is exactly what it was. Yeah, with new PhD students I would always sit down and have lunch or breakfast or something and we would go through the ground rules in inverted commas, as to – you know what you expect of me and what I expect of you and publishing would always be a topic for conversation and some of the expectations that I would have [...] I wanted to do it right because of what had happened to me from my PhD supervisor.*

FC: *Why do you think that [the issue with your supervisor] happened?*

PATRICK: *I think the pressure on him to publish, you know... the 'publish or perish' mentality was really quite significant so looking back I can understand why he stole some of my stuff to publish, the pressure was on him [...] one night, we were on the balcony of the university, and he gave me this journal article and asked me to read it out loud and at the same time he read from his PhD out loud and it was the same words for page after page after page, somebody had done to him what he had done to me, kind of a 'do one' culture. And that is why I was really paranoid about it, that I was determined that wasn't going to happen to me or any of my PhD students.*

Patrick's narration of his supervisor, appeared as quite a powerful event for him as he explained the sort of PhD Supervisor he felt he had been. Prior to that event in his life, other characters, like tutors and friends, had been narrated as helpful and supportive, even inspirational with regards to his childhood from the Boy Scouts (see subchapter 4.1: *stories of early life*). For Patrick, his experience with his PhD supervisor was a rupture in how he had expected someone within a role like that to behave and he deeply rejected this sort of disposition and behaviour. As a research leader, his authoring had then orchestrated various dispositions as way to resist being seen, and positioned, by other academics as the same kind of 'villain' he narrated, which he described as a common experience within the HEIs cultures he had inhabited. Thus he continued to resist cultures of autocracy and inequality, and like Vivienne, Patrick's characters were narrated alongside his dislike for autocracy. As such, the rather villainous figure of 'manager' was often placed in juxtaposition to how Patrick spoke of his 'good' leader character who did not embody the collaborative, supportive and ethical dispositions he

held onto within his own habitus as a professor and academic. James' narrative also offered a more villainous casting of some minor leader characters, for instance, as he spoke of his first school (St Jasmine's), discussed in subchapter 4.2, and the tensions he had felt in being '*a non-Catholic in a Roman Catholic school*' and spoke of how the Priest had positioned him as an outsider and how he had struggled to belong to that community. As noted earlier in the previous subsection, James' leader characters were mostly narrated in a rather heroic sense, however, at times he questioned their actions and dispositions. For instance, Frank the Politician was described as egoistical and conceited as noted in the first subtheme, but also as '*wonderful to work with*' as he had a 'real understanding' of the needs of the people he was representing. However, for James, he cast a 'bad' leader as someone who placed their own interests before those of the organisation, which was a story he came back to often, in terms of '*the greater good*'.

FC: *have you come across anybody else that has been in the leadership role either leading you or leading, you know something you have come across, where you have recognised this 'dark side' in them?*

JAMES: *I think [Charles]. I think he had been the biggest influence. [Charles] was probably capable of it. Certainly my dad. Probably those two... [Charles] was never afraid, er, to do what was necessary. I wonder whether that was a – well, not a flawed model because he was a great leader but, you've got to remember that [Charles] was a World War [combat veteran] in a funny situation and as he said he did anything to get the job done when it literally was life or death, so he did anything. [...] My dad? Never knew, never understood really. I think I understood some of his rationale, the rationale behind being a trade union leader erm, with what was really leading left wing unions but equally a conservative himself in believing for the organisation, you know, he often played both ends against the middle really. [...] After that I think it was probably set in stone with me. Have I come across anybody else who would do that, no! One of my big disappointments, and even now when I see people and I go into organisations now, it's very rare paid employees – even senior employees – take the organisation's interests first.*

However, like Patrick and Vivienne, he was telling a story that firmly placed his beliefs around an ethical argument of putting the good of the many (the organisation) above that of the few (individuals). James' discussion of '*the dark side of leadership*' was often

linked to a sense of pressure around the expectation of achieving success and his firm belief in putting the needs of the organisation first.

Being a charismatic and transformational leader was a large part of James' leadership understanding, as earlier themes have explored, and he found it difficult to sustain much of his success after a period of time and found he needed to move on. Although he spoke of this 'dark side' as a negative and 'bad' practice, he wandered into stories of his 'great' leaders – his father, war-hero headteacher mentor and Frank the Politician – and spoke of the way in which he had understood their enactment of the very 'dark side' practices he spoke of.

FC: *Tell me more about this dark side of leadership.*

JAMES: *Well, there are times when you think 'ok, I know what the ethics are. They [the SEND children] need the best education I can give' and therefore you sometimes do things that perhaps are questionable, mmm. [...] Didn't make me very popular but at the same time it got me what I wanted and a lot of these lads were going to go into practical industry based occupations, so it seemed to me that was the right thing to do [...] ...I got [one SEND student] a job – to prove I could basically – in a [local workshop] and I showed therefore the rest of the staff in the department that it could be done [...] but after about three months he [suffered a permanent injury] [...] And I still blame myself for [that permanent injury] for that lad. The company doesn't, nobody else does, it was a less rigorous time for health and safety and they blamed the lad. But I look back on it and I think that was really questionable leadership on my part – to prove that I could do it with probably one of the worst lads – and to show the others I could do it and therefore leave them to it. I'm - I'm still not sure whether I cut corners on that one, still not sure. It worked, all the other lads got placements and it - staff you know weren't put off by it because they say it was possible. [...] So that dark side is always well... facing up to yourself and saying 'well, ok, would others do this?' Probably not, probably not- is it a popularity contest? No! I've always believed that. [...] it's kind of the same flaw again, you know wanting to prove it's possible, it's the same flaw in me all the time when I talk about leadership. [...] Questionable – questionable ethics, questionable leadership...*

FC: *...have you found that dark side, sort of moving in and out of other positions, as you moved forward in your career?*

JAMES: *Always done it, I've always done it. Not proud of it, not proud of it at all. Innumerable examples.*

FC: *How did you come to know what it was and – and learn it I suppose?*

JAMES: *Erm, it's the focus on getting the job done. Erm, jumping about to some of the lessons later on. Get the job done and by any means. Now that's almost... almost a line again and excuse for the Second World War, you know just get things done by any means erm, the end justifies the means, I think is probably the cliché but it's true. In my view one of the flaws of my leadership has always been that I always believed I was right and therefore I was prepared to do anything to prove I was right and to get the job done. [...] So ok, face up to what has to be done and just do it and if they are not going to do it that way, then it's their problem so therefore use the dark side as it were, the dark side of leadership to do it. Not good. Not good at all really.*

For James, his tensions presented as he enacted various discourses, particularly 'the dark side' practice in ways that sat in conflict with the ethics he narrated. As earlier subchapters have reflected, James cast himself as a '*deeply religious man*' with strong ethics around supporting and helping, not harming others. Indeed, '*harming others*' was a tension that came into narrative at times – as only done for the good of the organisation – and was something he struggled with as he reflected on his own actions. Citing the pressure of success, the use of coercion and power had appeared useful for James in getting the results he felt under pressure to achieve, however, this was a contradictory discourse to his own 'ethical scripts' and early life values, justified in stories as a reaction to those not embodying those values at times. This was a deep tension for James as he struggled to reconcile some of his professional actions with his personal ethics as he reflected on his socio-historical past and drew in different elements of his history-in-person to try to navigate that tension in his narrative.

As the next subtheme explores further, this was a deep ethical tension for him as he tried to be a 'good' leader enacting practices that are generally conceived of as negative connotations of transformational leadership (Tourish, 2013) and a form of control and dominance in relation to power (Karlberg, 2010). Moreover, James' reflection of how he used practices like this to 'show others he could do it' was an interesting tension in terms of how he was attempting to position himself in relation to his colleagues to gain a sense of social status, as the next thematic subchapter will explore further (4.5: *stories of managing a 'leader' image*).

Overall, as individuals figure the various worlds around them '*many of the elements of the world relate to one another in the form of a story or drama, a 'standard' plot.*' (Holland et al, 1998:53). Thus, casting characters in stories can be understood as one of elements through which leadership worlds are figured as participants symbolically draw on their imaginings and sociohistorical experiences of other people to construct particular leader characters. As Holland et al (1998) explain, these characters appeared both as authoritative voices, often embedded in the habitus of each participant as assumed disposition, or internally persuasive discourses of practice that had been internalised and embodied within their own identity work. Thus, there was a sense of Holland et al's (1998) world making within their stories as they spoke of how they had imagined different ways to be from their experiences. This again argues for the heuristic development of their identities in practice as they experienced other people and were discursively influenced by them. Trying to make sense of their own experiences was then the orchestration of a myriad of leadership heteroglossia that was part of their history-in-person and the social worlds they inhabited.

In terms of this self-authoring and 'otherness' as participants each claimed their own positions through characters they narrated, deeper of values and ethics person entered their stories and created particular tensions to their practice. Illuminating a sense of navigation through the many expectations of leadership practice in regards to the role of the leader, which the final subtheme of this chapter will now explore more fully, an interesting tension presented in terms of the rather 'heroic' characters that James and Patrick narrated as their mentors, which was absent from Vivienne's narrative.

4.4.3. The ethics of being a 'good' leader

Stories of 'good' and 'bad' leaders began to increasingly highlight what Western (2013) argues as the 'gap' between rhetorical expectations of the leader role, as 'ethical' and 'good' from dominant moralising societal discourses of leadership, and the lived realities of practice in social worlds. Ethics and '*doing the right thing*' was narrated as rather complicated and messy across participant narratives. As Board (2016) argues, the paradox of right and wrong highlights the contradictory nature of subjective notions

such as good' and 'bad' and how *'the right course of action may become unclear'* (2016:115). The shared tension for the participants, and as especially evident in James' narrative, is that issues of ethics and morals in leadership practice are not simplistic and are under constant negotiation across various sociocultural and historical context. This raised the issue of the very notion of what 'good ethics' actually means within various contexts, however, the participants each held onto strong moralising notions of what leadership and leaders are expected to be and do, often also drawn from their cultural value-based scripts. For instance, as earlier thematic subchapters have explored, what it was to be a leader in the 1970s was vastly different in terms of the moral base around notions of equality and values in the workplace than 30 years later. As such, their stories embodied various internalised assumptions and expectations based on many discourses and sociohistorical experiences as they each attempted to find a position from which to author themselves historically, as well as currently in relation to present-day ethical contexts.

It was a tension for James, for example, as he narrated his own (remembered) performances in contraction to his personal ethics and his understanding of leadership. Indeed, a shared tension presented in how personal ethics and professional ethics could not be aligned as much as their historical experiences, understanding of mainstream literature and discourse, learning from leadership development programmes and experiences of their influential others had offered over time. This was particularly evident for all participants as they each articulated finding themselves unprepared, *'surprised'* and even *'shocked'* at times by situations that they had never imagined would occur within organisations and their own leadership practice. When they each found themselves in cultures, or against individuals, where the dominant way of being was not one they ethically accepted, they each narrated their struggles, such as the many of the stories of 'bad' leaders as noted in the previous subtheme. Thus, in articulating their ethics, they were taking a stance and casting themselves in the moralising story of leadership ethics which had been historically constructed over time, drawn heavily from cultural value-based models of being in social worlds – particularly from early life – as well as rhetorical notions around 'leader' greatness as a societal influence around leadership as good and righteous (Board, 2016; Bligh et al, 2011; Brown and Trevino, 2006). For example, as Patrick authored himself he offered strong notions around

democratic practice, equality, transparency and ethical leadership, and deeply opposed aggressive men who only support other men as *'self-interested type folk'*, as explored in the previous two subchapters. However, ultimately his ethical tension began to feature greatly as he reflected how he was part of that system he opposed. In subchapter 4.2 (*stories of organisational life*), Patrick had spoken about the culture and hierarchies of the HE *'system'* and he had reflected that as he had entered senior faculty roles he had *'become part of the system... essentially a messenger for the system – you are the system'* and narrated his caution around interactions and trying to influence the system to make it *'a fairer system'*. However, this was a tension for Patrick as he continued to experience the cultures and dispositions of the *'manager'* character that he opposed. For instance, as Patrick spoke of his difficulty with a dean at [Zeta University] which was a latter career experience when he was an assistant dean, his own positionality within that faculty was problematic as he recalled a lack of agency being able to perform the role he had envisaged in the way he felt a *'leader'* could, finding himself rather constrained by dean at times, whom he described as a *'self-interested'* aggressive *'manager'* type.

PATRICK: [at Zeta university AUS] *I felt it was kind of combative from the start which is shouldn't have been, it should have been supportive, and I tried my best to support him in every step of the way, but one [colleague] – and I didn't have this understanding at all and I couldn't work out where she got it from – she thought that we were like two preening dogs circling, you know trying to get position over each other and I thought... I haven't done anything in my mind to give her that impression, I hadn't opposed the dean at all and I couldn't work out where she got that one from, but anyway that was her understanding. But when it came out that the last [assistant dean] had left under dubious circumstances it became very clear to me that this is how he operated and if he doesn't like what you do then he will create a context for you to leave...*

FC: *So what sort of things did he do to create a context for you to leave?*

PATRICK: *...he would artificially create a context for a fight. Some of the times I would just let it roll and some of the times I would argue against him, but the other staff across the room would be looking at me and doing this, and doing that and shaking in their heads...telling me not to.*

FC: *Is that when you decided to leave?*

PATRICK: *Yeah, there was no future...*

In this discussion Patrick's tension of being 'the system' greatly surfaced as he explained his struggle with how his female colleague had cast him as a '*preening dog circling... trying to get position*' over the dean. This kind of disposition reflected everything Patrick described opposing about autocracy and narcissism in academic worlds – and the 'self-interested managers' as figures representing 'bad' leaders. This story came with apparent discomfort and despondency for Patrick, narrated as a rupture of sorts to his own self-understanding as a 'good' leader as he found himself cast as the 'manager' character he deeply opposed. This contradiction was considerably difficult for Patrick as he had continually resisted '*becoming*' part of the injustice in HE that he opposed – aggressive, male-dominated and positional. He described this as an important, yet sad, moment for him as he had decided to leave academic leadership and HE completely as he felt he could not continue with the tension of the constant battle to change the cultures he opposed. He described feeling unable to resist being seen as that which he opposed, he spoke of his rejection of that world.

PATRICK: *It's just a shame that there aren't more leaders in the university system. I think there are far too many managers ... I think that universities are so banged up with budgets and finance these days that they are the people that are getting promoted, people who are seen to not be rocking the boat, people who will give the party line... the establishment view and I don't think that's what we want really, we want somebody who will tackle the health issues, the education issues in [parts of the UK] and you can only do that by being a strategic thinker who's going to push the boat out, you're not going to get a manager doing that, they won't be interested in doing that, so it's a real shame but I can't see any reason why it's going to change.*

For Patrick, being a 'good' leader was quite an emotional tension as he was constantly navigating the 'gap' between his ideals and the realities of how he was being positioned within the academic world. This will be explored further in the next thematic subchapter (4.5: *stories of managing a 'leader' image*).

In a similar way, Vivienne greatly articulated her ethical tension in how she cast herself within the story. She continually narrated her opposition to bureaucratic and controlling or 'telling' forms of leadership. For Vivienne being an educational leader was all about supporting others, valuing them and treating them fairly. However, as a deputy

headteacher she had found this very complicated as she found herself becoming more 'telling' and 'bureaucratic' in this role, which she often felt uncomfortable within, which reflected how for Vivienne that being a 'good' leader was a contradictory practice.

VIVIENNE: ...There was a teacher [at Delton PS] who always whispered all through staff meetings and it irritated me terribly. I was left to do a staff meeting on my own, the Headteacher wasn't in, and she whispered all the way through my staff meeting and I thought 'I'm tackling this because if I don't I will have said to her that's acceptable to do that to my staff meeting'. [...] That was a very emotionally charged situation for me in that I had really worried about that the previous evening and I'd almost – almost scripted what I was going to say to her because I knew I needed to be so careful and I needed to say it without any emotion because I was quite angry about it...

FC: And what did you do – I think I remember you saying that she ran out?

VIVIENNE: Yeah she ran out. I think I was just so stunned I didn't know whether to cry or what. And I do remember sitting there for a bit thinking 'now what do I do' and that is when I decided I would go and talk to other staff about what had happened and some of them were quite angry with me for making her cry.

FC: And how did that incident, you know, influence you then in that guise of putting on the mask in the future?

VIVIENNE: She was quite a strong character and had strong opinions so I – my expectation was that she was going to have a go at me for pulling her up on that. So I had prepared for that, but hadn't prepared for the tears and that was like 'hmmm didn't see that coming'. [...] It affected more my notion of 'you can't predict people's reactions'.

Overall, as Vivienne she spoke of her efforts to try to hold on to her ideal leader identity, it became clear that 'doing the right thing' by her standards was not always shared with others and she remained extremely ethically wary of her interactions with others as she narrated the pressure she felt in how she was being perceived by others. She held onto particular discourses and cultural scripts around behaviour and came back to discussions around managing her emotions often in leadership roles, which the next theme explores (subchapter 4.5: *stories of influential others*). For Vivienne, finding herself becoming 'slightly more bureaucratic' as a deputy Headteacher was a difficult tension. Thus, for Vivienne, the space of authoring was indeed 'a contested space, a space of struggle' (Holland, 1998:282) as she found herself navigating the gap between the rhetoric of leader role expectations which contradicted the way she figured leaders ought to be. Additionally, as subchapter 4.2 explored, Vivienne resisted the more masculine notions

often expected by wider societal narratives in mainstream leadership discourse. Indeed, these notions were often in conflict as to how she understood education and herself as a teacher. Thus, she resisted claims to leader-identities that reflected those notions, which appeared in the ways she often narrated as counter-identities of ‘bad’ leaders that she opposed. Similarly, James spoke of the moments he had realised he was ‘*doing it wrong again*’ through his return to a debate around charismatic acts and ‘*questionable practices*’ which he felt had resulted in ‘*failures*’.

FC: *Tell me more about this ‘dark side’ of leadership.*

JAMES: *I thought I could do anything. You think you can walk on water when everything is a success – everything you touch is success - you think you can walk on water. Boy oh boy oh boy was that a learning curve and you suddenly realise, no you can’t. [...] it’s one of the things I learned, and you call it charismatic leadership, and I quite freely confess to that. I ran a lot of [my businesses] and all the rest of it on the charismatic leadership - wander in occasionally, boost the manager, you know sort of give him everything else and then sort of pat him on the back and go. Erm, short sharp visits you know so that the charisma wasn’t underlined. Couldn’t do that... and when you get a failure it’s a huge lesson in leadership in that it was a very short lived way of leading people. [...] I desperately desperately tried to change my leadership style. [...] I realised ‘this was wrong’ what I was doing was wrong, again! I thoroughly enjoying it and they thought I was quite successful but I knew I was doing the wrong thing. [...] So it was a learning point again, failure. Failure was a learning point and that’s when I went on my own again. I didn’t want to lead. I didn’t want to lead anymore, had enough. [...] and what happens? ...I finished up going back into the leadership again! [...]*

FC: *What moments made you know that it was failure?*

JAMES: *...I was still trying to run it as though I was the kingpin of the whole thing. That wasn’t the right way to run it anymore, the right way to run it was to have a damn good management team and delegate and I’m crap at delegation so basically it was, you know, the wrong thing... and you recognise then the failure. That’s failure, you’ve failed the organisation. The organisation may be successful but you’ve failed it so it’s time to move on.*

FC: *...all of your experiences across all of those different sectors, how was the leadership experience lived every day?*

JAMES: *Lived every day, mmm. When it starts it’s a drug isn’t it, and it’s a bit like any drug. As you continually take it you need more and more highs and you suddenly find that’s unsustainable. Erm, on a day to day basis when you first start as a leader, you know, there’s things to be done, actions to be shown, gestures to be done because it’s about what ‘they’ see. [...] So first it’s really exciting, it’s very rewarding, then as they start to do the right thing you start to push it more.*

James' story of the '*drug*' of charismatic and transformational leadership and the '*dark side of leadership*' as a coercive form of power over others underpinned how he had found it hard to move away from this dominant identity – this charismatic '*kingpin*' he spoke of. James' closing reflections during the final interview authored his struggle quite overtly. As he entered new worlds with new expectations he had tried to change his practice by rejecting leadership roles but realised how '*he couldn't help himself*' and seemed to always find himself back in a formal senior '*doing it wrong again*'. James spoke of ethics and the '*greater good*' and as he described how '*leaders ought to behave*' (Brown and Trevino, 2006:596) through notions of being a '*good*' leader.

It was interesting how James cast his characters, and narrated himself, as both the hero and the villain of his story which was different from Vivienne and Patrick who figured a separation from '*good*' leaders and '*bad*' leaders and spoke of themselves as trying to avoid being like the villains they cast. James often challenged the reasoning behind many of the performances he recalled enacting and reflected on whether putting the organisation first was '*the right thing to do*' or not. As this tension was explored, James appeared as still trying to make sense of the complexity of his own charismatic performances and how this identity had often sat in tension with how he understood himself as an ethical and authentic person in other worlds, like his religious community. His stories around reflecting on his father's practices were a rupture of sorts for James as he spoke of coming to realise his practice was '*probably set in stone*' from the mentors he had emulated from a young age. As James spoke of '*doing the right*' thing, this was sometimes narrated as both good and bad, as more villainous '*questionable practices*' and a counter-world to the strong heroic ethical world of leaders surfaced through '*the dark side of leadership*' as he spoke of pressure, coercion and having to '*prove*' that he could do it and gain the success.

However, as he had become aware of his performances and the influences underpinning them, he had begun to question that way of being. As James spoke of this, he articulated his feelings of disappointment with himself as he had realised how he had often returned to charismatic approaches, which also appeared as a rejection of that '*charismatic*' identity. Indeed, through James stories of his struggle with delegation by

not 'letting others do it' his sense of frustration as he recalled finding it harder to associate with how leadership was appearing to him later within his practice and struggling to position himself comfortably within other leadership discourses, such as more bureaucratic or distributed forms of leadership.

JAMES: *Ethics. Damn difficult, damn difficult.*

FC: *So ethics ... ethical practice as a leader, how would you define ethical practice?*

JAMES: *Oh... don't hurt anybody deliberately just because it's you. If it means they are being hurt because the organisation is advanced then ok, but don't do it just because you want to do it. There are lots of people I worked with I that I would cheerfully strangle but never do anything just because you don't like them or because you don't agree with their ethics. If it falls that the organisation isn't best served by them, then basically they've got to go. Simple as that. Now in terms of how you then behave, it's then dictated by the organisation. Most organisations have fairly straightforward ethical values – don't steal, don't basically do anything that harms the organisation at all and if you stick to them you'll be ok.*

FC: *What about your personal ethics beliefs?*

JAMES: *Well that's different altogether... personal ethics are different. It's fundamentally [my religious] ethics... I wouldn't do anybody any harm, I wouldn't do any harm to anybody at all... I'm accused of being too soft in [my religious community] [...] But I don't understand... (laughs) perhaps it is I'm just taken over by organisational ethics, perhaps that's all it is. So on a personal view, yeah, it's very different. [...] It [Leadership] is probably about being more pragmatic rather than bloody over ambitious and try and change the world, just change the bit you can and do it gradually rather than all at once, and you know don't be so righteous about it either, that you believe in the right thing. But at the time, my original thought [about being a leader] was 'friendly' basically, then it modified to 'steel' when you have to be, now it's modified to perhaps even be less steely, just be a little bit more pragmatic.*

James found the leadership expectations brought into his practice from various worlds left him in ethical conflict with doing the right thing as he debated the role of leaders as putting the organisation first, even if that meant individuals were sacrificed. Indeed, as Board (2016) argues, religion, literature and science play important parts in shaping an individual's understanding of the world and influences the moral choices and dilemmas faced, hence, personal ethics are often at the heart of decision making. However, as James narrated his ethics in two ways – personal and organisational – there was a clear separation of selves – and ethics – as his authoring reflected his identity work as multiple

selves drawing on a myriad of cultural scripts and leadership models. James' religion often featured in his discussions around 'personal ethics' and early life values, which was very separate to how he spoke of his 'professional' self, whereby his religious-self was an aspect of his personal-self which was kept very hidden in professional life. This appeared as a distancing mechanism of sorts, in terms of how he was separating himself from the more unpleasant aspects of the leader role (Grint, 2010). This is interesting as the ethics of 'right' and 'wrong' are such a paradoxical and ambiguous story (Board, 2016) reflecting that James seemed to have a set 'script' for organisational ethics and personal ethics. Indeed, this separation was important and will be explored in the next theme (subchapter 4.5: *stories of managing the image*).

Overall, James' tension was narrated as he found '*the charisma underlined*' and waning, resulting in his turn towards '*dark side*' practices to achieve what he felt was necessary. Indeed, this reflects Weber's (1978) arguments around charismatic leadership as he believed the charismatic leader has to maintain a particular status, by achieving goals and winning success, as otherwise followers will re-assess the status of the leader and the charisma will dissipate. Indeed, Weber argued that charismatic leaders could not be regarded as 'ordinary' and instead worked to appear as extraordinary to others for admirations to be gained from a community, thus underpinning the power of followers in the process of giving and taking charismatic 'worship'.

JAMES: ...there's always ego in it isn't there. I mean it was great, you know, I was [featured in a prominent sector publication], I was the most successful [...] yeah you know there's ego in it and you think well... yeah! You look back and you think 'well, so what?' but at the time it seems really important, you know to do so. So yeah, and I felt I needed to... well it's what I was tasked to do, it was my job. [...] basically it was a showing off and it was evident it was a showing off and it was great for the ego but plain awful for the actual leadership role. It's just, you know, at the time it's looking around and not ignoring that inner voice which says 'this is just utterly and completely wrong, this is just wrong', you know, because your ego is being satisfied and flattered.

As James mentioned of '*there's always ego isn't there*' was interesting in how he began to reflect on a sense of narcissism and self-interest in many of his earlier practices as he

recalled being ‘*seduced*’ by success and surrounded himself with followers that would accept his way of doing things, as Weber (1978) would reflect as building a charismatic community. However, James spoke of his frustration as he knew it was not the ‘right’ way to lead in the long term, but he recalled how it gained the successes he needed to maintain his position in the organisation and his identity, social status and sense of power as a successful leader. His conflict reflected the way that Tourish (2014) posited the dark side of transformational leadership as struggles with ego and narcissism and how Kets de Vries and Balasz (2011) discuss the dark or ‘*shadow side*’ of leadership. For James there were various notions of sacrifice, distance and separation that reflected much of the darker side of leadership described in literature as he spoke of how leadership was not a popularity contest how he had found himself isolated at times. As Grint explains:

In the case of the leader sacrificing others—physically or symbolically—differentiation facilitates the leader’s emotional detachment necessary for striking the cruel blow that will save the group. Such distancing might also relate to the masculine culture that allegedly pervades much of leadership, in the sense that the emotional distancing of leaders—the ‘loneliness of command’—can be configured as archetypical of men, and radically dissimilar to the more supportive forms of leadership claimed by some to be more typical of women

(Grint, 2010:96)

James, and indeed Vivienne and Patrick also at various points, continually came back that theme of leadership ‘greatness’ – that moralising societal narrative of ‘good’ ethical leadership– either through their acceptance or challenge of it. Each participant had authored responses to this narrative and struggled with the performative nature of the attached discourses in different ways. Norms, assumptions and expectations remained contradictory, yet reflected a heroic character as an ‘otherness’ which required answering and addressing in a dialogic sense. As Fairhurst and Grant argue the ‘*tension, struggle, and ambiguity of leadership identity construction processes*’ (2010:192) were heavily present within participants’ narratives as they tried to position themselves in a simplistic sense in relation to very complex and ambiguous notions. As Western offers, in leadership narratives ‘*characters partially define plots and action...*’ (2013:215) and are the space between individual leaders and discourses – the gap between the rhetoric of the societal heroic narratives and the realities of leadership worlds. Stories of good

and bad leaders and what kind of leader they had each tried to be then highlighted ‘the gap’ between the rhetoric and the lived realities of practice. This highlighted the discursive and performative nature of particular discourses drawing on how cultural narratives of leadership from society, literature, culture and practice mean that ‘*words are not just words, they do things*’ (Cunliffe, 2009:10) as discourses around the leader role, drawn heavily from experiences with influential others and LMD discourse as the last subchapter explored. As Western (2013) argues, their stories demonstrated the movements between discourses as influenced by context, situation, dialogical interaction and sociohistorical experiences in particular cultures where values and ethics are discursively influenced resulting in a performative influence to leadership (Crevani, 2011). This was not without consequence and struggle, some of which has been highlighted here in relation to ethics and morals, however, this will be explored further in relation to the performance involved in responding to powerful discursive role expectation imposed by societal discourses of leadership – identity in practice – and the emotional outcomes of this identity work.

Subchapter Summary

Each participant offered various characters within their narratives that they each claimed were influential to their understanding of leadership, the role of leaders and themselves in relation to it. Overall, the influential characters within their stories were often juxtaposed with each other and narrated in response to the many strong societal expectations in relation to what ‘good’ leaders do and what ‘bad’ leaders to, which their characters – and themselves – were placed in relation to. Thus, there was an underpinning response to those societal narratives that posits leadership as a moralising discourse, an ethical story of good and bad, right versus wrong. There were many critical events with powerful others, difficult situations and even reflections of their earlier selves that they found challenging to situate simplistically between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ as the very notion of this problematic and deeply subjective.

As earlier themes articulated, through their positioning within the moralising 'right and wrong' story underpinning their characters, they drew on various discourses which were influenced by their interactions with others as they negotiated their responses. This strongly presented identity work was a space of struggle and as Sinclair explains, '*...identity pressures are endemic in leadership*' (2011:511) as discourses around the role of 'leader' result in professionals becoming '*enslaved by identity processes...as leaders are either unwittingly or reflectively engaged in responding, colluding and resisting*' (2011:512). As such, the narratives reflected the contradictions of social life, as explored in chapter two, as individuals navigate the tensions between expected discourse and disposition and their positional realities. Hence, the gap between individualistic leader expectations and the reality of organisational practice (Western, 2013) was a space of tension – the space of authoring – and struggle and their stories of 'good' leaders and 'bad' leaders and what kind of leader they had tried to be highlighted 'the gap' between the rhetoric of discourse and the realities of practice through their identity work.

The next and final thematic subchapter (4.5) moves on to discuss living life in 'the gap' as *stories of managing a 'leader' image* highlighted the constant navigation and negotiation of leader-selves in response to the powerful discourses of leader role expectations, resulting in various emotional consequences.

Subchapter 4.5. *Stories of managing a 'leader' image*

Subchapter Introduction

This subchapter explores the fifth and final theme emerging from the analysis of the interview data, which focuses on *Stories of managing a 'leader' image*. Here, the discussion continues on closely from last thematic subchapter (4.4: *stories of influential others*) which towards the end highlighted the 'gap' between the rhetoric of individualistic moralising leadership discourse and the realities of practice. Indeed, it reflected how the participants had internalised powerful role expectations that are heavily criticised by emerging discussions. Reflecting that '*...identity pressures are endemic in leadership*' (Sinclair, 2011:511) as discourses around the role of 'leader' posit strong notions around a leader 'image', this subchapter focuses on how the participants each navigated that 'gap', which can be understood as a contested space, a space of struggle in the way Holland et al (1998) offer the space of authoring.

Moving on from *stories of early life, organisational life, Study and training, and influential others*, the participants each offered stories of their identity work in practice. They each spoke often of leadership practice as a continual sense of 'becoming' and negotiation of particular identities in practice, often drawing on the use of metaphors to describe their identity work, such as '*acting*', '*putting on the mask*' and '*playing the game*'. Through these metaphors, as their identity work in practice, this subchapter explores how they each articulated the façade of an invulnerable tough performance as an expected 'leader' image. However, despite this narration of a 'tough' image, their stories revealed many contradictions to this image as they all articulated feeling rather vulnerable in leadership roles as they of the many emotional tensions in relation to performing this image that had to be presented to others. This resulted in a complex story of trying to craft an image of toughness and self-control in tension with how they each spoke of their feelings, their need to hide particular aspects of themselves from the 'leader' audience and the emotional labour of doing so. This gave rise to discussions around the struggle of being 'a real person' as notions of transparency, trust, self-sacrifice, serving others and being 'true' and ethical as a leader began to enter their narratives. They each often reflected a discourse around authentic and servant forms of

leadership during the discussions, as well as elaborating on the emotional labour of leadership practice. This presented the tension of navigating ‘the gap’ – the space of authoring – through their identity work in practice. This is now discussed through the following four subthemes which emerged across the participants’ narratives:

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4.5.1. *Metaphors for leadership identity work*

As Mabey and Finch-Lees (2008) suggest, metaphors can play an important part in how individuals construe events. Leader role expectations that often featured across participant stories offered a figuration of a strong, courageous, moralising, resilient disposition that reflected the dominant ‘image’ of a ‘leader’ popular in societal discourse across academia, media and entertainment (McLaren, 2013; Sinclair, 2011), as chapter two highlighted. Metaphors were presented by each participant as a way to discuss their identity work. This resulted in a variety of responses demonstrating aspects of their identity work as they each addressed and answered the various expectations of particular leadership discourses and the ‘otherness’ of the world around them. As such, their metaphors described how their identity work became a way for each to regulate their responses to the expectations of their worlds. For example, James’ metaphor reflected back to many aspects of his life revealing the orchestration of various discourses as he improvised his own performances as a way to resist or change particular practices.

JAMES: *You’ve got to learn to lead on other people’s terms... it’s not... it’s not what you think... the classic phrase ‘other people’s perceptions are your reality;’ it doesn’t matter what you think, it matters what they think. So if they perceive that you’re weak, then it doesn’t matter the fact you know you’re not - and you’ve got to have that self-assurance that you know you’re not – they’ve got to perceive that you’re not. [...]*

FC: ... you mentioned your interest in drama and you refer to putting on a persona as a leader... 'the public 'me' and ...'the organisational 'me' the personal 'me' is different'. So how does [the drama group at college] relate...?

JAMES: My interest in drama didn't start until I was at college training to be a teacher [...] it dawned on me really that it was just a role. It was just another role that you played and you could present that face to [people at college] [...] so the drama helped to do that in organisations... there's your personal side and there's the organisational side...

James' use of the 'acting' and 'roles' as metaphors often reflected Goffman's (1959) notions of impression management. Argued as part the sociological notion of dramaturgy, Grint (2008) explains that impression management – or image management – is the basis of much narration of leader selves as a way to create specific images and performances to perpetuate particular cultural and organisational narratives. Thus, it is understood as a social construction of specific personas that are performed with particular meaning and purpose to specific audiences as a way to create a construction of leadership reality (Sharma and Grant, 2011). In a dialogic sense, James' construction of a leader identity was a careful ongoing rehearsal of specifics selves, influenced by his interactions within the worlds he inhabited and his history-in-person. He spoke often of the importance of a strong 'tough' successful self-assured leader required. This was a recurrent identity he drew on to explain his leadership interaction which, as the last subchapter (4.4) explored regarding James' thoughts about the separation of personal and professional ethics, which was deeply influenced by his understanding of transformational and charismatic leadership.

However, as the earlier theme subchapter 4.1 (*stories from early life*) presented, James spoke of a '*brutal*' and '*scarred*' childhood where he had learned to present himself in particular ways so he could avoid physical bullying after being sent to a more prestigious school than his childhood friends when he had passed the eleven-plus school assessment. He then spoke of going to a '*middle class*' college as a '*working class lad*' mixing with the sorts of people he had never encountered before where he felt he had to re-invent himself to fit in. In recalling both of these periods he spoke of feeling ostracized by his peers, such as his former childhood friends and the other six '*working class lads*' from the middle class college who accused him of betraying his class roots.

Furthermore, as James' *stories from organisational life* presented, he again spoke of working hard to fit into a school where he did not follow the same religious faith. He reflected on how he worked with SEN children who were 'removed' from the mainstream and recalled his feelings of isolation in being an 'addendum' to school life in that community. Furthermore, his stories of moving into commercial industry and feelings of having to 'prove' himself to belong to that world combined with the acting metaphor gave the sense of a person who felt on the outside of the communities he narrated. Indeed, seeking ways to belong by presenting himself as 'acceptable' and legitimate were a to particular communities were a feature of his narrative.

Interestingly, his reference to being seen as 'weak' was interwoven with this as James spoke of portraying a 'leader' image and 'acting the part' in different organisations and his early life stories. This led me to ask James about the different contexts he had worked within and I found James' sector variety to be an interesting difference from the other participants. I wondered how context had influenced his 'act' over time and asked him about working between the very large and very small organisations he had described and whether this would reveal any interesting sociocultural factors beyond his early life and early career experiences.

FC: *In your experiences of working ... from very big places to very small places ... what was the point of difference for you in that?*

JAMES: *...a small company is more exciting ...you've got to be more active in a small company, whereas in a larger one you can give people snapshots of you and make sure they always only ever see that one side....it only takes one, one incongruous action, to undo all the others...*

FC: *So how did you go about presenting those snapshots when you were in a large company?*

JAMES: *Oh... you decide what it is that you want them to see from the beginning. You have your own self-perception of the sorts of leadership image that you want to present and you stick with that once you have decided, that's it.*

FC: *How did you know what that is?*

JAMES: *... you can look at context, so for example in a large [organisation] it's very different [...] my role then as a snapshot was to then come in as the kind of, you know, almost benign sort of boss, whereas [the female manager] was the 'hard as nails'.....*

The importance of context appeared often, as earlier themes explored, particularly *stories of organisational life*, and for James this meant constructing a performance that responded to those contexts. This had included many stories of historically acting according to the gender of particular workforces, which was explored in earlier subchapters. However, the main aspect James returned to when describing his leader image related to how he could appear in ways that could attract others to want to follow him, as well as to present a tough and hard image to the men within the workforce, and appear as socially powerful and referent to others as a way to inspire their followership. As Sharma and Grant (2011) argue, the construction of a leader's charismatic identity is achieved through careful impression management and storytelling, which James reflected often in his own recollections of his performances.

His stories presented how he had learned, over time, to improvise and orchestrate various cultural artefacts and manage his own disposition in certain ways so that he could present and position himself in particular ways to others. In drawing on a theatrical performance metaphor, it offers various resources of the acting world as artefacts used within performance such as a set written script, designated roles, a specific frontstage and backstage and a particular audience and so can offer a sense of regulation to performance (Goffman, 1959; Sharma and Grant, 2011). Furthermore, it can also be understood as a way to deal with the unpredictability of leadership practice offering a fluidity to the metaphor, of improvisation. Much in the way that Holland et al (1998) argue 'serious play' and what they draw from Bakhtinian dialogism, argues that individuals drawing on metaphors often orchestrate past experiences and multiple meanings to improvise their performance when unpredictability hits. Thus, for James, he had found himself performing various scripted and carefully managed performances, yet at other times he found '*failures*' had resulted in improvisation, which he also narrated as his most powerful '*learning moments*'. As explored in earlier themes, (e.g. 4.3: *stories of study and training*), James had found unpredictability and various collisions of perspective and ruptures to his assumptions as important aspects of his development as a leader. Indeed, his sense of vulnerability and a lack of belonging often presented a sense of a struggle of confidence at times which his 'act' cast a veil over, as the following subthemes will explore.

In Vivienne's narrative, she also drew on a sense of theatrical performance metaphor, like James, Vivienne also articulated her experiences as form of acting. She also often reflected on how she had developed her ability to construct her professional 'persona' over time as a teacher and her use of the metaphor at times reflected a tool for a more orchestrated 'becoming'.

FC: *Where do you think 'the mask' came from?*

VIVIENNE: *... I do think as a teacher, we are actors. I do think we are very much... we come into the classroom and we become this teacher who is a different persona and that we are acting so that everything we do is slightly bigger ... So I think you develop, over time, this sort of persona, professional persona that you actually put on [...] you can do that during the day but then ... when they've gone you then sort of become your own person. ... I just put on a professional mask*

However, as she spoke about leadership and being in a leader role, her metaphor often changed to '*putting on the professional mask*' as she explained leaving her personal 'baggage' outside of professional life. Vivienne described this 'mask' recurrently as more of a pretence – or façade – to meet leader role expectations. As highlighted in chapter two, much leadership research presents leader identity as fixed and singular, often with prescribed role expectations that reflect a more heroic, masculinized 'perfect' leader image (Ford, 2015; Edwards et al, 2013; Lumby and English, 2013). Vivienne often spoke of how a leader 'ought' to be as she drew on notions that at times reflected those more dominant role expectations, such as being visionary, tough, resilient and transformational. However, as she referred to '*being a professional*' and putting on '*the mask*', '*acting*' as a part of this, it appeared as a rather necessary yet uncomfortable way of being her at many various points. This was quite different to how James described '*acting the part*' as a way to influence others, construct new realities and gain status and social power in organisational worlds.

Indeed, Vivienne appeared to articulate this 'mask' in a way that reflected it as a tool to 'masquerade' herself as a particular kind of leader, because it was expected, yet she had often resisted it, such as her struggle with '*telling others what to do*', as earlier thematic subchapters have explored. For Vivienne, '*the mask*' enabled to her become a certain

kind of person she did not quite identify with and was thus a rather inauthentic performance of self and a difficult space of authoring as she appeared to never quite feel as though she belonged to the role which reflected her struggle in claiming a leader identity. As Biggs (2004) argues, *masquerade* draws on the idea that identity is performative and ‘*put on*’ in relation to specific contexts for particular audiences ‘*even if that audience exists in the inner world of the self*’ (Biggs, 2004:46). This highlights Bakhtinian ‘otherness’ and inner speech, with similarities in what Goffman’s impression management offers. Indeed, Vivienne referred to ‘*putting on the mask*’ as something she ‘had’ to do to ‘become’ that professional persona, as she consistently resisted many of the dominant expectations around leadership presenting some interesting themes around gender and emotion. However, there was also the sense of insecurity within her narration of self that suggested she was struggling to become a certain kind of leader, so was perhaps ‘*putting on the mask*’ due to feeling inauthentic as a leader based on dominant expectations of the leader role, as the next two subthemes will explore further.

Turning to Patrick’s metaphor, he spoke of ‘*playing the game*’ articulating the notion of a sports game at times and at one point he described ‘*playing good football*’. At times his narration reflected a performance metaphor in a similar way to James and Vivienne, in the sense of a set context with specific rules, players and boundaries – such as scripts, designated roles, a specific stage (or playing field) and a particular audience. However, for Patrick the ‘game’ was often articulated as a negotiation of power and position in a similar way to James. However, James narrated his metaphor in a way that depicted the enactment of a rather fixed ‘image’ as a set rehearsed performance, rather than as something more fluid and negotiable which could be gained and lost depending on many factors beyond himself as an individual. For Vivienne, she was more resistant in gaining power, and at some points appeared less confident, yet accepted the need for particular levels of status in organisational hierarchy. In that sense, how Patrick’s narration of ‘*playing the game*’ more often reflected Bakhtin’s (1984) notion of ‘the carnival’ as ‘*an arena of play... to do with social experimentation as well as social production*’ (Holland et al, 1998:238) as well as reflecting a sense of positionality as he spoke of positioning himself within the structures of the academic world by ‘playing the game’ well.

FC: *In terms of that turn of phrase, how would you define 'playing the game'?*

PATRICK: *Understanding the requirements of the job, understanding the context within which the job is occurring [...] knowing the context within which you have to operate, then that's the internal faculty, the internal university and the broader external context. And I guess responding to that context as well. [...] So playing the game, and actually achieving some success I think as well is kind of a re-enforcing of the way you play the game. And that might alter the way you play the game. [...] So that for me is playing the game, you learn from your mistakes.*

FC: *...in terms of knowing how to play the game, where do you think that has come from...?*

PATRICK: *I think the knowledge has come from all of the things like, you know, the committee work, being a reviewer [...] Understanding how to play the game, again, it's coming from winning and losing [...] That's how the game plays. If at first you don't succeed, try again.*

As Holland et al discuss world making, they argue Bakhtinian *carnivalization* as a sense of liberation from the various structures and identities that constrain position and agency. As an inverted response to cultural models that can challenge or break the rules and expectations of that world, Holland et al argue that *carnivalization* as a way to create new imaginaries and practice new rehearsal of the self through free expression. This was narrated by Patrick as how he '*played the system*', '*bent the rules*' or '*rebelled*' as a sense of his agency in how he spoke of creating change within the structures he resisted. For instance, this appeared in stories of various actions '*that rubbed men up the wrong way*', such as supporting the research work of women on faculty committees. He described how this opposed the expected dominant way of being for a male-academic and therefore appeared as a rejection of various expected 'leader' scripts in those cultures as he inverted them to help women gain access to '*the man's world*'. As such, his use of a sports metaphor was interesting as it depicted a sense of competition, and of strategy in terms of the context and the need to play with others in order to 'win'. In offering '*the game*' it appeared that Patrick was saying he had to follow structures and expectation, however his sense of '*playing the game*' reflected an increasing sense of agency than what the theatrical performance metaphor of acting offered. Hence, like the carnival, '*playing the game*' was agency in practice as the opportunity to change the game itself came through identity performances, yet there was still a sense of some structures as being too established to completely '*carnivalize*'. This sense of the *carnavalesque* also

appeared at points within James and Vivienne's narrative, often as the 'rebel' identity, as earlier subchapters have discussed, which also reflected their attempts to claim power through this identity work and re-position themselves in relation to others, however it was much more present and consistent in Patrick's narrative reflecting his claim to more agentic ways of being. Indeed, Patrick's narrative gave the sense of experiencing less constraint throughout his career than the other participants until closer to the end of his time in HE. Perhaps his 'game' perspective had made him less 'rigid' and more 'fluid' to developments.

Overall, how the metaphors were narrated by the participants was quite interesting as their stories illuminated some differences in how they each understood and sought to claim an expected 'leader' identity. There were movements between a 'theatrical performance' metaphor – from a scripted rehearsal and reconstruction of selves to improvisation as a response to unpredictability. This was often presented as a way to embody a rather fixed and expected performance in response to strong dominant societal narratives as well as to improvise various selves when faced with unpredictability was interesting. However, a sense of the *carnavalesque* entered their narratives at times, particularly for Patrick, reflecting Holland et al's world making as an example of serious play appeared often within their stories. Furthermore, Patrick and James' metaphors were often narrated in ways for them to gain position or status, as a tool for their positionality, whereas Vivienne's metaphor was more about enacting expected leader dispositions that were more uncomfortable for her. Thus, the metaphors, as a symbolic vehicle – a cultural resource – to convey meaning, were a way to depict a particular sense of reality (Mabey and Finch-Lees, 2008).

4.5.2: (In)vulnerability

As the last subtheme explored, there was a clear theme of image management articulated through metaphors as the participants related their performances back to what they had each come to figure as a fit disposition within leadership worlds. This was particularly in response to the wider masculinised, heroic and authentic discourses around leadership as the participants each figured the leadership world as a tough and sometimes aggressive place where they could not appear as 'weak' in the role of leader. However, they each articulated the façade of an invulnerable performance. For instance,

James articulated his strong need to present a 'tough' and invulnerable disposition, or 'image', as a leader. As he spoke of paying attention to the context, situation and the 'audience' as important aspects of how he constructed his 'image', he offered the ways in which he had constructed leadership identity.

FC: ...what do you think is the most important thing to pay attention to as a leader?

JAMES: *What people see of you. The image – and it sounds conceited and it sounds shallow but it's true. People – when you are leading people, whether it's a lot of people five thousand or twelve hundred or whatever it is – when you are leading people they only see you intermittently, and they only see you through others. It's like a headteacher, you know when headteachers when they are seen by pupils, it's an important interaction so they've got to make the most of every single interaction with every child because normally they don't see them, they see the staff. So what you've got to do is get what you are through the staff. So it's that constant every single... you don't have a right to have a bad day! You don't as a leader, you don't have a right! If you've got a headache, so what? You know, the learner, the child in education in particular, only gets that one shot with you, they may never see you again or only see you at a distance, they may never get to interact with you again, so you have no right to have a bad day. I believe no teacher does, but that's another story, but a leader particularly – tough, you've got a headache. Tough, get on with it, you know! It's as simple as that. So that, for me, is the most importance principle. Every interaction with every single person has to be thought through, how it's going to take place, what are you going to call them. How's it going to be. That's why I had three secretaries when I had twelve hundred staff, I had somebody who would always be with me on my shoulder, saying 'that's such and such', thank you very much, 'ok, hello John, how's Mary' – it doesn't matter that it's false, because it isn't in a way because you still want to be nice and you would remember if it was smaller, but he remembers that! And that's what you want, that's all you want you know, and he will do better then, and that's all the best you can do as a leader. Bloody hard work!*

Based on the 'otherness' of the leadership 'audience', in a dialogic sense James' reflections on the presentation of his leader-self often appeared as a scripted and rigidly rehearsed disposition. He spoke of his performances in a very controlled and regulated manner as he described his thoughts around the importance of the perception of others. His notions offered the sense of his performance orchestrate to achieve a flawless performance of toughness, courage, invincibility and charisma, which often reflected his internalisation of the 'heroic' leader. Rather than allowing an imperfect vulnerable

human being to be shown, James' stories reflected how he had worked hard to construct a response to dominant heroic expectations of the leader role in how it has presented historically in popular Westernised culture, media and mainstream leadership literature (Western, 2013; Bligh et al, 2011). Indeed, James appeared to strongly believe that when performing the leader role, one could not show any invulnerability as a 'real person'. Furthermore, he offered a strong sense of moral 'duty' to organisation he 'served'.

As he spoke often of constructing a rehearsed 'authenticity' entered his leadership narrative as he spoke of his interactions with followers as described a charismatic discourse. Presenting authoritative voices around social moral responsibilities of the leader to others through notions of servant leadership and self-sacrifice, as discussed earlier. It was interesting in how James reflected on this being reflected on this as both 'false' and 'authentic'. Describing how he wanted to be 'nice' yet this was 'bloody hard work' as he tried to maintain this performance he expected himself to portray, understanding that as crucial in influencing others around him. Thus, his rehearsed authenticity, as part of his charismatic-leader understanding, was a resource to gain power over others by positioning them in particular ways in interactions to influence their behaviours. Thus complicating the notion of authenticity as a leader, James' thoughts on the construction of his image not only presented this invulnerable performance he felt necessary, but presented how he felt he could not show 'weakness' in the leader role, which the next subtheme section explores in which more depth. Indeed, James didn't often narrate himself as particularly vulnerable, instead recurrently claiming a tough and invulnerable identity. He occasionally offered stories where he had felt a lack of power and agency, such as at St Jasmine's, his first school where he felt constrained by the priest as a non-catholic in a Roman Catholic school, as the second theme (4.2: *stories of organisational life*) explored.

Similarly, James authored himself as a child being 'battered' by his peers for going to a different class of school, as theme one (4.1: *stories of early life*). However, even when narrating those sorts of stories, he always returned to 'tough' identity as he spoke about overcoming adversity as he held onto a discourse as a strong person; a 'fighter' and a 'survivor', which reflected much of his depiction of social life during his upbringing and earlier career worlds. However, a deeper story for him was a sense of isolation and rejection as he spoke of struggling to belong to the various worlds he narrated. This

included his childhood peers who ‘battered’ him, the middle class college, St Jasmine’s school, his first time into industry and his time whilst working in HE. Thus, there was a sense of insecurity at times that his claim to an invulnerable leader identity often resisted. This illuminated James as having become driven not to show vulnerability as this was an unacceptable disposition in the figured world of leadership. Turning to Patrick, prior sub-chapters presented how he narrated the academic world as highly competitive and aggressive authoring himself often as a self-assured and strong leader who would often ‘fight’ and ‘battle’ for equality in ‘the system’ of academia. However, this ‘toughness’ was a tension as he too offered stories where he spoke of feeling vulnerable about his own position as he had come to realise that, despite his level of status and cultural capital his practice was often fraught with tensions as persons sought to position each other and ‘play the game’.

PATRICK: *...the research performance of the faculty is – does – reflect on the [Associate Dean for Research] even though it shouldn’t really because in education when you’ve got no money so you can’t do much about it anyway. In the faculty of say, the medical school for example, where nobody knows what money they’ve got but we are assuming they have got lots of research money, the [Associate Dean for Research] there is a significant position. Yeah, it did rub off on me, or show me in a good or bad light a fair bit. [...]*

FC: *...those sorts of experiences, how do you think they influenced your behaviour in future in similar experiences?*

PATRICK: *In the middle of my career, they made me quite bitter and fearful of doing the wrong thing, but towards the end it was, well, they get what they are given really and it was, in the research reporting, it was I will tell them what I want them to know, you know I am not going to tell them anything that would put us in a bad light and it puts me in a bad light and I don’t want that to happen. I wasn’t doing anything illegal or dishonest or anything, I just was just careful with what I gave them. And again understanding the context is all part of that*

Interestingly, as Patrick spoke of ‘playing the game’ his early career stories presented him as following the cultural scripts of expectation in academia closely, working hard to become an accepted and expected disposition of ‘academic’ and ‘leader’. However, Patrick’s sense of fear of doing ‘the wrong thing’ appeared in several of his stories, particularly as he reflected on the middle period of his career. As Patrick explained playing the ‘the game’, not just to ‘win’ but also as a necessity of academic life to remain ‘in’ the game, he often came back to past figurations of himself from earlier periods of

his life to portray his positional insecurities and his own sense of vulnerability. Other powerful characters from his past also featured, along with the figuration and positionality of various identities, such as PhD students and female academics. Indeed, as particular experiences and positions presented a sense of vulnerability, like James, Patrick mediated what others could know about him through identity work to protect his position and spoke of being careful about what aspect of himself he divulged. His regulation of his performances appeared at times as a reaction to his positioning by others, and in response his own inner speech then regulated his behaviour as he answered powerful cultural expectations of male academics in leadership positions.

FC: *Were there any other interesting experiences at [Beta University, AUS] that you remember...?*

PATRICK: *... [Stuart], who took me under his wing, he ended up leaving the faculty because he was in conflict with the vice-chancellor so he did actually do the right thing but it meant that he lost his job and that was really really sad because he announced on the Friday – and this was partly because he was head of senate that he clashed with the vice-chancellor – he announced on the Friday that he was leaving, resigning, and then he was literally gone the following Friday, so we didn't even have a week, we didn't have time to grieve really, he was gone and just left this huge hole in the faculty...*

FC: *What was that like for you, because [Stuart] was someone you described as quite influential, as your mentor...?*

PATRICK: *Yeah, I really respected him too, in taking his stand - in taking his stance and living his belief system, if you like. It was an eye-opener, it was really sad to think that the university could afford to lose somebody as influential as [Stuart], and yet still go on being a useful and interesting place to be. It diminished the university in my eyes quite significantly, and the vice-chancellor was the one I'd been to see earlier on about my career so I felt as if I had some sort of relationship with him, so it was not nice really.*

FC: *So did that change anything for you, any of your other relationships after that?*

PATRICK: *It made me more wary actually, of leadership positions within the university system, you know everybody's dispensable, nobody is indispensable, you know what I mean. [Stuart] was the best [at x] in the world, you know he's so sought after and yet we were prepared to let him go after a personal spat with the vice-chancellor*

Patrick's realisation of how status was not always enough to remain 'in' the game, was quite a rupture as he struggled, not only with his sadness at the mistreatment of his mentor Stuart, but in how it had challenged his beliefs around democracy in the 'system'. Seeing the consequences to his mentor of resisting more powerful others, Patrick's assumptions were challenged and he gained a new regulating discourse that made him more cautious in his own performances, adding a 'cautious-self' to his performances. He reflected on that self as quite present for him for some time afterwards as he experienced other difficult events, such as his own positioning by female academics, as subchapter 4.2 (*stories of organisational life*) had reflected. Patrick recalled how he thought his career '*was going downhill rapidly*' recalling feeling quite insecure about his sense of belonging to the academic world, illuminating his vulnerability within it. Thus, '*playing the game*' began to appear as a way for him to avoid being placed in a vulnerable position as he narrated it has a mediating resource to how he could '*understand the rules*' of various contexts he entered.

However, the 'game' was also appeared as a way for him to construct a performance of himself, like James had done, that depicted him as following the rules. Indeed, when he often spoke of 'playing the system' in ways that enabled him to have greater agency over his practice so that he could construct a new, and fairer, game. It reflected the way that James had said '*it's not what you do, it's what others see that you do is important*'. Patrick appeared to be constructing various performances that were 'double-edged' as he worked within the constraints of the system, yet also outside of them. As Patrick spoke of the 'the game' through sports metaphors like '*playing good football*' he described the ways in which he had been able to create a sense of 'bluff' as he played in ways that would present particular images of himself to others. The sense of 'sport' offered him as playing against the positions of others as he came up with his own strategy to 'win' the game as he spoke of bending the rules, which in a way reflected the sense of a performance of role Patrick's expectations, yet also reflected Bakhtinian *carnavalesque*. Indeed, the '*game*' metaphor presented a sense of a structure with rules, and rehearsed positions, yet offered much more by way of improvisation than '*acting the part*' or '*putting on a professional mask*' represents how he could take different positions within the game and play it in different ways to 'win'. Therefore, 'acting' metaphors appeared much more rigid in authoring responses to the world, based on a

set disposition, answering the requirement to 'become' a set disposition. Whereas the 'game' metaphor offered a sense of 'serious play' depicting a greater sense of individual agency through awareness of the broader field of power around. Indeed, the notion of the game as a football match, which Patrick depicted at various points, offered the playing 'field' of the 'match' as a wider landscape where he was strategically improvising his movements, whereas the 'acting' metaphors offered a more localised sense of performance with less room for improvisation.

Moving to Vivienne, spoke the most of feeling rather vulnerable, particularly as a middle leader and deputy headteacher. Like Patrick, she also articulated a sense of fear and wariness that began to enter stories from her middle career. She also narrated the importance of not to appearing '*weak*' to others as a leader, as well as '*not showing others they can upset you*'. However, in contradiction to those notions, Vivienne often narrated herself as a rather sensitive and cautious person, wary of her leadership performances. This often came back to stories of the difficult incident with the Gameton PS Headteacher, who Vivienne had felt created a '*toxic*' environment which had left her feeling '*awful*', as highlighted in the previous subchapter (4.4: *stories of influential others*). Vivienne, recalled how she had become '*very wary*' and '*careful*' of her interactions with others after those events, again similarly to Patrick and James, she had begun to manage her interactions with others carefully in terms of how she presented herself to them.

VIVIENNE: ...as a leader if you are not careful, you can become very reactive because people are always wanting you, they are always wanting to ask you things, they are always wanting you to make decisions for them. And I think it's made me do the sort of phrase 'now that's really interesting, let me think about it and I'll get back to you' more than make an instant decision because I am much more aware of erm... how people think, how people react, how people have different positions and the power – the whole power issue. So I think I am much more careful about....people can bully and push you into making a decision as a leader. So I am very, sort of, aware that you have to, you know - follow things through, find out the rationale behind what's happened before you actually react to it.

In this discussion, Vivienne's return to power as an 'issue', as 'someone who doesn't want power', was interesting as she reflected on how she felt others could 'bully' and 'push' leaders around. In this sense, her depiction of a leader identity was of a more vulnerable character in the story. Reflecting back on the masculinity of leadership discussion in subchapter 4.2 (*stories of organisational life*), Vivienne articulation of power was often appearing as her rejection of more domineering and controlling discourses and her claim to a more supportive teacher-identity.

FC: ...moving in to the deputy heads role [from a department leader], what were the differences between those roles for you?

VIVIENNE: *I think the difference between the roles is... I had to stand by my decisions. I had to make quick decisions and justify why I have made those decisions... I had – educationally – had to justify myself in my previous roles, you know so if I wanted to do something educationally. But now I was almost having to justify myself personally, for my personal beliefs and decision making, so it wasn't just about my educational skills, it was also about my life skills and I was having to then justify why I had made decisions in that sort of way, which was quite... quite difficult and... erm... quite worrying in some sorts of way in that for the first time I think I felt... 'oooh am I making the right decision', whereas previous to that I was so secure in my educational thinking so I could lead from an educational perspective with, not force, but with confidence and then suddenly I was supposed to be leading from an organisational point of view which is... which is very much to do with your experience, your beliefs and your attitudes.*

Vivienne spoke of her move from department leader to deputy headteacher as quite a difficult transition as she recalled going from a position of feeling very secure in her abilities as a teacher, to one where she felt she did not quite know enough as a leader to justify her decision-making. She reflected that despite her training courses and prior experiences, she had not felt prepared for a leader role and had felt very vulnerable for a time. Vivienne had often spoken of the importance of experience, and her lack of whole-school leadership had certainly been a tension for her in claiming a more secure leader-identity when she discussed her move into deputy headship. Talking of starting her Masters degree, she explained that as time passed she had started to feel more self-assured and trust her own judgements. However, she also reflected on how she had

become *'slightly more bureaucratic in that role'* taking a more assertive and directive approach in her interactions with others so that they would not seek to challenge or her as much or *'bully and push'* her into decisions. This was interesting in how she had moved to a more senior role, in a culture where there were strong expectations of her role, she had become less resistant to more autocratic ways of being as she had begun to understand the culture of the school as requiring a more directive approach. She spoke of how she had developed her identities to respond to that world. However, it also reflected on her efforts to slowly influence the development of that culture to encourage more collaboration as she found ways to resist that discourse. Nevertheless, she still held onto a sense of caution and wariness in her stories but had appeared to keep her more vulnerable-self hidden from those she had led; indeed, for Vivienne, a sensitive disposition appeared as a great tension in leadership worlds.

Overall, as leadership has *'colonized many fields of social endeavour form... large corporations to self-direction in everyday life'* (Alvesson and Spicer, 2012:384) the deeper story offered holistically by the participants in this subtheme was the sense of their navigation of the gap between the rhetoric of a 'tough' leader character within the heavily romanticised story of leadership and the realities of practice in organisational life (Western, 2013). As Lumby and English argue

'...identity is self- and co-constructed to achieve a sense of coherence, worth and belonging, primarily through ongoing narratives and relationships. As a consequence, a leader must construct an identity performance to take up the role of leader, develop narratives and adapt identities to the ongoing surveillance of an accountability audience'

(Lumby and English, 2009:95)

Indeed, the participants' stories presented their identity work – through the use of metaphors and role expectations – as constructing their identities to take-up the role of leader as Lumby and English (2009) suggest. Mistakes, failures, self-doubt, weakness, fear and uncertainty were often presented as a vulnerability to leadership practice, which are aspects that historically dominant leadership discourse has little place for (Ladkin, 2010).

As chapter two highlighted arguments within the literature of how the less desirable aspects and tensions of leadership practice are rather absent from mainstream leadership discourse (Collinson, 2011; Bligh, 2011). This was also reflected in how the participants offered a return to leadership as a story of toughness and invulnerability. However, this was juxtaposed with how they narrated their own vulnerability. Therefore, the dominant societal narrative and its influential storylines, standard-plots and 'leader' characters resulted in participants trying '*to craft a response*' to that narrative and the expected dispositions attached (Holland et al, 1998:272). '*Putting on the mask*' '*playing the game*' and '*acting the part*' allowed them to '*put on the persona*' as they enacted performances they felt required yet this was not without dilemma and complexity. They had each gone about constructing their performance to maintain a presentation of their professional selves in their leadership worlds, however, behind the scenes of this 'act' were quite vulnerable people, filled with insecurity, self-doubt and questioning their worthiness and belonging to particular leadership expectations. Overall, believing those aspects to be incommensurate with the dominant expectations of the leader role, they kept these selves rather 'hidden', which greatly complicate dominant notions around authenticity in leadership practice, as the next subtheme now explores.

4.5.3: Being authentically 'hidden'

Following on from the last thematic subchapter (4.4: *Stories of influential others*) and the discussion on '*being a good leader*', the participants often presented a response to moralising ethical discourses. This appeared in stories of right and wrong – 'good' leaders and 'bad' leaders – in their narratives. As a great source of tension in practice the dominant moralising societal discourses that posit authenticity within leadership highlights the 'gap' between rhetorical leader role expectations and the realities of being a 'leader' in practice, which the last chapter began to articulate through stories of leader characters and ethics. Here, through stories of managing a leader image – or as Holland et al (1998) terms authoring to craft a response – there was much contradiction to how the professional image of self as a leader was narrated as a construction, especially of the metaphors presented. Notions of a 'true' and 'authentic' leader-self appeared

through various discussions around being ‘true’, ‘honest’, ‘transparent’, ‘trustworthy’ ‘credible’ alongside notions of ‘serving others’ and ‘self-sacrifice’.

Through the participant’s stories, these notions were deeply subjective, values-based and complicated. Reflecting much of the dominant thinking around authentic leadership, as chapter two explored, there are strong societal narratives around leader authenticity that present a dominant individualistic view. This often posits a fixed singular leader identity as a powerful moralistic story through notions of ethics, transparency, self-awareness, and by enacting a true-self and serving others (Tourish, 2013; Brown and Trevino, 2006). As explored in the last theme (4.4: *stories of influential others*) a tension was often presented across the narratives around notions of being a ‘good’ leader, which was argued as highly moralistic and problematic. Here, the notion of authenticity in leadership practice presents in a similar way; as equally moralistic. As Advares-Yorno (2016) offers, the concept of identity as multiple and fluid deeply contradicts essentialist notions of a ‘true-self’ that often dominant discursive notions of authentic leadership, which tend to overlook multiple identities in practice (Gardiner, 2013). For example, as discussed earlier, James engaged in image management to construct a ‘leader’ identity which he explained was based around charismatic performances. He spoke of ensuring that qualities incommensurate with this desired image were careful ‘hidden’ away, such as his ‘soft’ disposition, as he explained his ‘private me’ and reflected on particular aspects of himself that were not part of his identity performance in the leadership world.

JAMES: *I’ve been surprised over and over again in so many different situations by people who called me a ‘hard man’ at work and I don’t think I am. I always felt I was a bit of a fraud really, because I didn’t think I was that ‘hard’. All the decisions I made weren’t particularly hard... I’ve been consistently surprised how my own view of myself – which is interestingly what I said to you before about the personal view you have – differs from those of others on a personal level, not from an organisational level, but from a personal level, you know. I wouldn’t do anybody any harm, I wouldn’t do any harm to anybody at all – in fact people accuse me – in [my religious community] – of being too soft on people.*

FC: *And how have you found yourself, I guess, trying to assimilate your ethics as a person into that of the organisation?*

JAMES: *I don't. I don't. I just see the role and just do what the role demands for the good of the organisation. But the private me is very different to the public me. Very very different, in fact, most people – [a close family member] even says – most people don't know me, I just treat it as that. It was just another role that you played...*

For James there was considerable contradiction in his narrative where authenticity as a leader was concerned. Indeed, his interactions were deeply rehearsed and constructed to appear as authentic to influence those around him, as the last subtheme highlighted. Indeed, in articulating his leader identity as '*an organisational view – a public me*', it reflected James' sense of separation and distancing of his personhood from aspects of leadership. For James, it appeared that if he presented his 'true-self' and this softer side of his being, this would shatter the tough and invincible image he felt was necessary to show as a leader. As Grint reflects:

Everyone sees what you seem to be, few touch upon what you are, and those few dare not to contradict the opinion of the many... This has profound implications for those seeking to become leaders because the ability to control distance, especially to keep others at bay and yourself beyond their gaze, is critical to maintaining the mystique of leadership....

(Grint, 2010:94)

As Grint, argues, and Sharma and Grant (2011) and Tourish (2013) also explain, this sense of distancing is a way to maintain a particular image as a leader to others, especially in terms of controlling what the 'audience' sees and regulating any aspects of the self that is not consistent with a specific leader identity. James' story often reflected Grint's (2010) notion of the 'mystique' of leadership through this sense of control and self-regulation. The sense of '*failure*' he often narrated reflected many of the times he had felt '*the charisma was underlined*' and thus his impact on others had waned over time, as the previous subchapter explored. This reflection touching upon Weberian notions of how a charismatic leader must constantly achieve success and 'win' to retain the admiration of the charismatic community of followers they build around them. For James, his statement of feeling like '*a bit of a fraud*' was an interesting comment in relation to the 'mystique' of leadership. Exploring this through Bakhtinian dialogism, this argues that, for James, the rhetoric of being 'hard' was something that had been co-developed through his sociohistorical experiences. Indeed, the other leaders he spoke

of as mentors and role-models, the tough workplace cultures, his 'brutal' childhood and the many psychological, charismatic and transformational discourses of leadership he had come across in practice and via training placed notions of image management and authentic leadership in tension with each other. Controlling distance and what others saw of him was a part of how James understood leadership as important to maintain his 'mystique'. Furthermore, authoring his working class background and his religious community along with many other aspects of his own development as earlier subchapters have discussed, this offered the notion of a true authentic-self again as deeply problematic when faced with the myriad of discourse that influences the construction of a professional identity within leadership practice. Additionally, as Grint argues, distancing can be a mechanism or 'device' for '*facilitating the execution of distasteful but necessary tasks*' (2010:95). Therefore, distancing the 'personal-self' away from the 'organisational leader-self' could be a way of achieving respite from issues James struggled with, such as the '*questionable practices*' and '*questionable ethics*' he narrated as part of the '*dark side of leadership*', as explored in the last thematic subchapter (4.4: *stories of influential others*).

FC: ...where do you think that the 'showing off' mentality came from and where do you think the 'inner voice' came from?

JAMES: Oh, the inner voice came from, literally all the reading and the earlier childhood (laughs). It's a scarred childhood, so you know, do the right thing, don't give in, you know, work hard. [...] So the inner voice was easy – do the right thing. [In my religious community] do the right things, always no matter what it costs you, do the right thing. The showing off? Probably from a little bit of revenge from an earlier childhood erm, you know of being able to say 'see this is what I can do' now despite all those years of being thrashed and battered and everything else' you know, yeah probably from there, probably from a desire to get your own back. Childish, very, very childish when you think about it, because you know it wasn't their fault, but you know. Yeah, probably from there.

Indeed, as the last subchapter explored through notions of '*being a good leader*', much of what James spoke of resulted in him questioning and challenging some of his own practices as he thought about where they had come from. This illuminated the very subjective notions of ethics and values as cultural scripts of taken-for-granted norms presented, such as '*doing the right thing*'. He spoke of the 'private' things that others in the workplace did not about him, things he kept hidden from his 'public me', such as his

‘deep sense of religion’, his meticulous nature around self-presentation and his self-organisation. As such, James’ identity work was complex as he struggled to associate aspects of his many selves with his figuration of a hard leader identity as he appeared to be masking particular aspects of himself, his ‘hidden selves’, that he did not associate as fitting with the image of a leader in those worlds. Furthermore, history-in-person and the heteroglossia of voices that were mediating his responses were ongoing influences, as ‘hidden selves’ were also voices of influence to identity construction.

‘Hidden selves’ were an interesting part of *‘playing’* the game as Patrick offered various stories of being careful about what, and when, to present particular aspects of himself, such as his experience, skills, achievements or information, reflecting his constant negotiation of his position as a senior academic. As Patrick spoke about how many aspects of faculty life could affect his status and position, as the last subtheme discussed, he found himself having to increasingly manage and conceal aspects of himself to others. He too struggled between managing an image of expectation and one of authenticity as he understood it, this illuminated a tension for Patrick as he often came back to the importance of transparency and trust in his interactions as a leader.

FC: ...how did you go about building those relationships with people –what were the most important aspects...?

PATRICK: Trust was important for me, telling people I trust them and showing them that I trust them, giving them opportunities to flourish, asking people to represent me as formal representatives and things like that I think are really important to do. Erm... work with people, write with people [...] in the current university system, that it such a different mind-set to have, people view professors and research and so on... they see it as a chore, they see professors as often someone to be avoided... only out for themselves, self-interested type folk. But that is not how I wanted to be.

FC: When you have been a line-manager, what have been your experiences in doing that sort of work?

PATRICK: ... I start from the premise of trust, and I trust everybody until you give me a reason not to.

FC: Have you always done that?

PATRICK: I have always done that. Absolutely always done that. It sometimes causes problems you know, like when the trust does break down, it is difficult to get it back then... then there is a serious conversation got to be had, like you know you’ve let me down, I’m disappointed, it’s put me in a difficult position but

it's put us in a difficult position. Yeah, there are other people who they absolutely blossom with that level of trust [...] Yeah I have always done that... Yeah, I am a great believer in trust. [...]

As Patrick often spoke of his resistance to the *'aggressive, self-interested type folk'*, he came back to a strong discourse around *'serving others'* as he articulated how he felt *'beholden'* to support others as he reflected on receiving support in his early career, and as someone who was more experienced. His reflections on strong relationships reflected authentic and servant forms of leadership as he spoke of self-sacrifice and serving others before himself as he remained in resistance to particular dispositions.

PATRICK: *A part of being a leader and being a professor is about bringing on other people, it's about working with other people and supporting other people. You know ... all I do is service other people. [...] ...I serve people, you kind of make yourself become second and that is a strong thread coming through in my career.*

However, as Patrick was also often engaged in forms of image management – as a regulation of his own performances – this again complicated any singular notion of a fixed *'true'*-self as Patrick had to *'play the game'* in ways to maintain his position that sometimes *'bent the rules'*. As Patrick was also often engaging in what Holland et al (1998) argue as Bakhtinian *carnivalization*, as noted earlier, his stories of being trustworthy and serving others authored his resistance to the cultures he had experienced, as his trustworthy, transparent, servant self was the juxtaposition of the self-interested academic *'to be avoided'*. Patrick's focus on trust and transparency in leadership interaction was quite passionately narrated and as he often juxtaposed these notions with autocratic and rather deceitful academics as he took an authorial stance in his story. However, there was a sense of how he had felt his authenticity was at times compromised by virtue of his position in *'the system'* and the self-protection he felt he had to engage as he managed his leader-image and retain his position. Thus, there were many dilemmas and tensions narrated in the management of performances within practice, which again deeply complicates the notion of a singular authentic-self performance as the leadership world in HEIs represented a constant reproduction, and co-development, of identities in a heuristic and dialogic sense.

Similarly, as Vivienne spoke of trying to present herself as a *"real person"* and how she had to handle incidents as a *'professional'* and not as Vivienne *'the person'* through

careful performances, it again underpinned the paradoxical complexity of 'being authentic'. This became a tension she continually challenged as she tried to figure how to be that authentic person in leadership worlds where leaders were not often expected to be 'real people' in the way she felt.

FC: *And how do you think [putting on the mask] has affected your interactions when you've been working alongside or leading people?*

VIVIENNE: *...people sometimes don't know me as a person. People don't know that I have quite a temper. ... people sometimes mistake my persona for being a pushover and they then get quite a shock when I kick back in the nicest possible way [...] I am always stunned when people are shocked at my reaction. I am always stunned that people think 'well she said no – she doesn't say no' so I suppose it is because I am professional so I don't show that side of me, so yeah people make the assumption that I'm a weak person...*

FC: *And how do you think that [putting on the mask] influenced your day to day interactions with people...?*

VIVIENNE: *...I only interact in-depth with people that I... who know me really well and trust me really well. I think I have quite a superficial relationship with a lot of people [in the HEI]. I suppose I am also very careful – I have been very careful in the past in the way I talk to people who I don't trust. Erm, so yes I suppose it's made me quite cautious in some ways.*

There was a sense of distancing from others in Vivienne's narrative as she spoke of feeling cautious and wary, and 'putting on the mask' to 'become', to use Vivienne's metaphor. This appeared as a way to distance herself and to veil her 'hidden selves', not only to portray particular leader performances. Her careful self-regulation of particular aspects of her person were then sometimes used as ways to resist others, and also to position herself as a particular kind of person, which again complicates the notion of an authentic-self. As aspects of personhood were hidden and an image constructed which can be understood as not a true-self, it appeared in some respects, from stories of difficult events and 'mistreatment', as the last subchapter explored (4.4), that Vivienne was cautious of getting too close to others in the workplace, referring to keep her parts of herself hidden and separated. Thus, it presents the paradox of how authenticity is constructed in the leadership interaction. As Ladkin (2010) offers, enacting an authentic or 'true-self' places leaders in a vulnerable space, which Vivienne often articulated and many of her stories presented her wariness of entering.

FC: ...how to actually to do the act, or learn to put this mask on?

VIVIENNE: ...as a child I – I was hurt very easily about things [...] I think it's more that I've developed it as part of my persona over time. Whether that's a good thing or a bad thing I don't know, but yes, I think I've always had that sort of side of me that's protected – it's a protection mechanism to a certain extent I think. [...] it's a protection mechanism from the point of view that you are being a professional, this is not personal... this is not personal to me – it's a professional thing. So instead of dealing with it as a person, you deal with it in a professional way. [...] I could sit here and wax lyrically about why you shouldn't have a professional persona and you should be a real person and you shouldn't be putting on... you know. But I do feel that it has held me in good stead in a lot of situations in that if I had reacted slightly differently I could have made a situation a lot worse, and because I have actually taught myself – because I think it is a taught thing, I think you learn it and hone it over time – taught myself not to react emotionally straight away.

Vivienne's narration of 'the mask', as discussed earlier, often appeared as her way to distance herself from others, as a mechanism of 'self-protection'. Indeed, as Biggs argues, masquerade '*...allows some control of the distance between oneself and other people*' (2004:52). Hiding the more sensitive parts of her persona, like her 'easily hurt' self, her division of herself as a form of distancing, like for James, and was quite a recurrent theme within her narrative as she drew often on the notion of 'being a professional'. This notion was an interesting resource within her narrative, which the next subtheme will explore in more depth as an interesting gender tension again surfaced in this 'self-protection' mechanism for her more sensitive emotional-self.

Identity work as a form of distancing, of 'hidden' selves was overall an interesting notion as both Vivienne and James' talked about their private selves and public selves and maintaining distance to others in their professional worlds, explaining how other people did not know who they really were. To a lesser extent, Patrick discussed how he was careful in what he divulged to others about himself in terms of how he narrated '*playing the game*'. Overall, as each participant kept parts of themselves hidden, specific selves, they had deemed as not fitting for the disposition of 'leader' that they had come to assume and expect in leadership worlds – it contradicts the notion of an authentic-self in leadership practice. However, 'hiding' selves appeared as a way in which they each tried to enact expectations of an authentic leader image as conceived from their own assumption of how a leader 'ought' to be, from many of the moralising discourses and

societal narratives of the leader role. Indeed, there is considerable pressures to lead ethically, morally and with a 'true-self' (Ladkin, 2010; Advares-Yorno, 2016). As argued in this subtheme section, the narratives deeply problematize this as they presented the myriad of subjective expectations and assumptions that collide in everyday life resulting in tensions to negotiate (Holland et al, 1998). Therefore, identity as multiple and fluid sits uncomfortably with fixed notions of authenticity as identity work attempts to answer discursive expectations, history-in-person and social positioning.

Overall, leadership appeared through a myriad of discourse, with various choices as to authorship – some more constraining in certain cultures than in others – yet the shared issue was articulated through the tensions that emerge from having to 'act the part' of an invulnerable, strong and authentic leader that much of the mainstream leadership literature presents (Ford, 2015a; Western, 2013; Sinclair, 2011; Collinson, 2011). Being 'authentic' was a performance constructed in relation to the assumptions and expectations of the organisational worlds they inhabited but also of those they personally held in relation to leadership. Hence, discursive notions and cultural models were embedded within history-in-person and were an important part of regulated performances. This is where ethical and emotional labour underpinned the space of authoring as a space of struggle as identity work itself was a consistent struggle, as Svenningsson and Larsson (2006) argue, as the participants each tried to be a certain kind of person in the face of powerful expectations as leadership was narrated as both a vulnerable and invulnerable practice.

4.5.4: *Feelings and emotional labour*

Deeply reflecting '*the tension, struggle, and ambiguity of leadership identity construction processes*' (Fairhurst and Grant, 2010:192) an analysis through Holland et al's (1998) identity in practice framework again illuminates identity work as a space of struggle (Svenningsson and Alvesson, 2003) and attention in this subtheme turns to feelings and emotions. Emotional labour, a term posited by Hochschild (1983) who argues that '*the preservation of our professionalism involves suppressing our own negative feelings as we skilfully manage the negative feelings of others*' (Hofmann-Downes, 2013:114). As Crawford (2009) notes, in educational leadership 'professional' behaviour is often seen as rational and rather emotionally controlled. She challenges

this in an increasing climate that asks for more from educational leaders, like headteachers, arguing emotions as an important aspect of the culture of educational organisations.

Emotional labour, in the way Hoffman-Downes (2013) describes surfaced in many stories and the metaphors used by the participants as they described their mediation of behaviours and actions to embody particular 'leader' roles. Indeed, the participants' narratives were filled with tensions, whereby the leadership world was often seen as a more rational place and not as a place for their 'private, personal' selves – with hidden and imperfect vulnerabilities – as the earlier subthemes in this subchapter have reflected. Thus particular selves and elements of personhood were distanced from the leadership performance though the crafting of particular leader identities more consistent with the desired and/or expected leader image they had come to understand, which represented a kind of emotional labour as their identity work was not without emotional tension. For example, Patrick's narrative reflected his deep tension around the ethics and values of others within the HE system that did not reflect his own and he spoke often about how he increasingly struggled to find strategic thinkers that would tackle the tensions in HE around funding, vision and research that he felt were growing. His resolution was to leave that system, which was not without its emotional turbulence. Indeed, his emotional journey continued beyond him leaving HE and taking semi-retirement as he spoke about the impact of his experiences and how they had influenced the way he was envisioning his future.

PATRICK: *I honestly wouldn't advise anybody to go to university, only for the social side of things. I don't think what they gain in a degree from a university is worth the certificate it's printed on these days, if it ever was. But that's me. Sorry (laughs). ...hopefully I'm a better person [for leaving], you'll have to ask my wife I think (laughs). I know that leaving the university system has made me a much better person. I don't get het up or worried about anything...*

Despite his upset around what he had believed academia and HEIs had become – a counter-worlds to how it 'ought' to be for him – he spoke of being 'happy' with his resolution of that tension and now focusing on doing some independent research. His discussions reflected how he was still world making in Holland et al's (1998) sense, despite being out of 'the game', as he drew on his past experiences to imagine new

possibilities for himself outside of HE as a researcher and as a person, rather than a professional. His story reflected the many moments of ‘sadness’ he had experienced, yet found him reflected on a generally successful career he was proud of, and a sense of knowing he had done the ‘right’ thing in leaving HE despite academia being a big part of who he was a person. As he reflected on the futility of continuing to fight a system he opposed and could not change, he described his emotional well-being as healthier for his decision to reject that tension and find another possibility for himself elsewhere. Similarly, James often spoke about his passion for leadership as the pursuit of organisational success and development, drawing often on his charismatic performance and a transformational discourse of leadership. However, as earlier thematic subchapters explored (e.g. 4.2) James authored his struggle with the pressure of success as he reflected on his personal sacrifices and ethical dilemmas, in addition to being ‘*too stiff necked*’ and ‘*bloody righteous*’. This was certainly an emotional tension for James that he had struggled with as he spoke about how he could have done things differently and how leadership came with conscience and learning to live with his decisions.

JAMES: ...You are doing more because more is demanded as you are being more successful [...] So frustrating, really was! And you recognise it because you think ‘hang on a minute, I haven’t had a day off for...’ including Saturdays and Sundays for nigh-on a year, and you’ve neglected your family again, and you know... I’ve done it repeatedly in my life I neglected my family because you do it, that’s what you do. Wrongly I think, and I don’t deserve the impact there but it’s what I did. [...] I worked too hard. [...] So the consequences were possibly... definitely neglect of home life, erm... not health because I was ok with it, but certainly an alienation from [family] [...] I think I gave myself too much heartache too much er, not strain or stress because I just got on with it but, just too much work to do by not having the correct mental toughness and not knowing it [...] I had to do it my own way which alright perhaps a more reflective approach would have worked better, but funnily enough it turned out career-wise to be more successful but the cost? I don’t know if it was worth it. My final reflection would be, know yourself, know your own toughness. Everything else really, the intelligence and everything can be learnt, but the mental toughness has to be there to be able to say ‘can I take the knockbacks’.

Reflecting on the personal sacrifices he had made, such as not spending enough time with his family and friends due to his focus on work, he spoke of the various consequences and whether it was all ‘*worth it at the end*’. James discussion was interesting in that, as a theme of his narrative, he was positing that success is important

and can be exciting, but it involves self-sacrifice and ethical and emotional labour. For James, he was explaining that a person must decide what *'the right thing to do'* is based on their conscience and values and what they can emotionally and ethically live with doing and what they cannot. Indeed, as Delaney and Spoelstra (2015) reflect, there is limited literature on the risks and dangers of charismatic leadership to individuals and to organisations. As Tourish (2013) suggests, there is a dark side to transformational leadership, which is linked to charismatic leadership, power and even narcissism in leadership (Ladkin, 2015; Tourish, 2013; Grint, 2008; Kets de Vries, 2014). James was still working through the emotional fallout of the tensions he had faced during his career beyond his departure from educational leadership on retirement. However, he too was 'still learning' as he drew on his volunteer work within his religious community and was still imaging how he could improve and develop from his experiences.

FC: *...dealing with interactions every day, with people in a leadership sense, what do you think is the most important thing to pay attention to?*

JAMES: *Probably to their feelings. Probably more to their feelings and to their context than your own in the organisation. [...] otherwise it's going to be impossible to lead it. If you are trying to do good for the organisation and they are not right for it – so what do they really feel? What are they like? Who are they? Who are these people, not... who are you.*

FC: *And how would you go about finding that out?*

JAMES: *Ask them, talk to them. Find more time with them. Spend more time with people. But you see it's against that isn't it when you go into leadership! You see you've got no choice, you got a limited time and you've got to get out there and do it and you've got to produce results you know. So, that's what I'd do, that's what I would certainly do. Instead of hurting people where 'they've got to go', look at it from the other angle - 'would you be better going and can I help you?' you know. But that's a need to solve your own conscience really if you stop and think about it, it's not a good thing is it. [...] if I was doing it again on a big job I think I'd make the whole thing more clear to people what I was about. Instead of just taking the tough line ...I think I would take more time setting out the strategy. I used to say it to people when I was teaching this stuff – and I would think 'but you've never done that' – I used to say 'make it real, make it so that you can touch it, feel it, see it, the... objective, the aim' but on a personal level I used to go 'oh well if they don't believe that's their problem not mine'. [...] Be more clear in your communications.*

Overall, throughout his narrative, James claimed a strong identity as a successful strong leader, yet also presented an emotional story of man coming to terms with the harsh

realities and sacrifices of leadership practice and his own ethics and conscience. Furthermore, he was still learning about leadership and what being a leader actually means to him through his reflections as he was imagining what leadership could still be like in practice. As such, his heuristic development as a leader, and the impact of his identity work over the years, was still on-going despite his career having come to a retirement end. For James, like Patrick, his story continues on.

Turning again to Vivienne, she shared similar tensions as she reflected back through her career and spoke of seeing how ‘difficult’ some situations had been and how she had gotten through them and learned a lot from those experiences. As she reflected on her own emotional labour, how she spoke of suppressing particular issues was interesting.

VIVIENNE: *I think it's been a really interesting process for me, to do these interviews with you. I think it's... what's it's brought out in me is that there are moments in my career that have been difficult and are actually difficult to talk about which I hadn't realised because I think, as I was saying earlier on, I am very good at putting the end to. And then when you do something like this process you suddenly realise that actually you haven't drawn a line under it, it's still there and it's still wants to come back and whack you round the head. So for me that's quite an interesting process in that it's... it's taught me something about that yes, you can think you have addressed something, but you haven't. So maybe that's what other people are doing as well, there are things which reinforce this 'being really careful what you say to people' because you don't know what their experiences and baggage are. But it also has said to me, you can't always be that careful as otherwise you would actually just freeze yourself up as a leader, you know you've got to be true to yourself and every so often you will make a... a mess.*

Vivienne's underpinning tension appeared in how she spoke about how a leader can ‘freeze up’ through caution, which was present in many of her stories, particularly from mid-career onwards after some difficult events in the workplace. However, in reflecting on how ‘every so often you will make a mess’, her realisation appeared hinged around having more self-belief and in understanding that mistakes will happen and this is normal and not to be feared. As she envisioned her future, her imaginings of retirement were focused on how she could continue to help and support others, as she spoke about aspects of her selfhood that were important to her sense of identity. In a way that reflected James' and Patrick's imagining, she too was still world making as she imagining

new possibilities from the many sociohistorical experiences she carried within her history-in-person and the cultural heteroglossia she continued to orchestrate and improvise. Overall, participants all articulated their emotional labour and how they had struggled with having to regulate their performances against their feelings, however, also often sharing their feelings through responses such as contempt, competition, fighting, battling and even anger. As Fambrough and Hart (2008:743) reflect, *'organizations in their most perfect state have traditionally been shaped in an idealized male emotional image of cool restraint'* citing how emotions have often been masculinized within organisational worlds through masculine notions such as aggression, anger, contempt. However, for Vivienne, she often rejected those more masculine notions within leadership at times, yet she appeared to accept the sense of 'cool restraint' as she spoke about *'the mask'*.

FC: ...when you are putting on this mask, the leadership mask, this persona, how do you think it relates [to emotions]?

VIVIENNE: ... you need to get to know all the people you work with quite well and you also need to have – you need to almost develop a poker face in that you don't show people how you are feeling all the time because, if you show people that – that they are hurting you or getting to you they then could potentially become worse. The downside of that though is that I also believe that staff – staff do need to be aware that you are angry. There is a school of thought that staff should not know the feelings of the leader whereas I actually believe that, on the whole yes that's correct, but I also do think that the people you are leading need to know when you are frustrated, when you are really angry about something, as well as when you're really ecstatic about something and really pleased about something, so I think it's a balance between not sort of showing every emotion everyday but also allowing people to know that you are a leader do get frustrated about things.

FC: And why is it important to show those... to show people how you are frustrated.

VIVIENNE: I think – I think to show people you are real, because everybody has emotions. We know everybody has bad days, we know everybody has things going on in their life that are very sad and if you appear as a leader that nothing like that is happening then how can you be a real person.

FC: ...when you are putting on this mask, the leadership mask, this persona, how do you think it relates [to emotions]?

VIVIENNE: *so that if you are dealing with a difficult person, and really you want to scream and shout at that person, you can actually keep those emotions below the surface and be more rational because I think – I think emotions sometimes aren't rational at all, erm, so I think that is where it really comes from. It's really sort of erm... 'not carrying your heart on your sleeve' as they would say. So that you are... you are taking yourself a bit out of your normal self so you're trying to sort of be more professional.*

Reflecting back to discussions in earlier thematic subchapters, the masculinity of leadership and gender tensions were again interesting alongside Vivienne's experiences within the feminized world of primary teaching (Skelton, 2012). Vivienne's debate as to whether a leader should or should not show emotions was interesting as she narrated the need to remain calm and 'professional' within her interactions, in contrast to 'fighting' and 'battling' that Patrick and James spoke of. Vivienne's debate appeared to reflect a tension between the cultures and discourses from her primary teaching experiences and those from her leadership experiences, as the last two subchapters explored. As Sachs and Blackmore's (1998) research with primary school leaders presented, a consistent story around emotional management appeared as the biggest challenge in leadership for the women of their study, who were in primary leadership around the time when Vivienne was a deputy headteacher. Their findings argued how *'being in control of your feelings and emotions was important if you wanted to be taken seriously in the job'* and *'you never showed that you couldn't cope'* (Sachs and Blackmore, 1998:271).

Moreover, their findings presented an unwritten 'professional' behavioural code directing women in educational leadership to be consistently *'compassionate, empathetic and understanding'* (1998:271) with others in the school community appearing in tension with the more masculine notions dominantly expected in leadership. Furthermore, Sachs and Blackmore found that all of the women they interviewed spoke of their *'professional persona'* and of *'presenting themselves as professionals'* concluding that *'being professional' was a code word for being in control'* (1998:271). These findings, although from research undertaken in Australia with female headteachers, were very similar to how Vivienne described her *'professional persona'* and using *'the mask'* as a *'poker face'* to regulate her performances through a sense of calm restraint as a primary school leader.

VIVIENNE: ...as a leader you almost have to go into the role of leader so that you are not putting your own feelings and perceptions onto the situation that you're in, you are actually looking at the situation as a leader not as Vivienne who's had a bad day...

FC: How did you learn that?

VIVIENNE: I think I first learnt that in the classroom, I think that I first learnt that with the children because however awful you're feeling... the children pick up on it if you allow it... if you allow those feelings. So if I have had a, sort of, bad evening or bad morning or something like that and I was grumpy, the children would be grumpy with me and make my life difficult. [...] then that translated into leadership because I also discovered that how I presented myself affected people I was dealing with, working with...

For Vivienne, emotions and the role of 'leader' indeed seemed somewhat uncomfortable together as she explained that being a leader required a strong sense of self-regulation in relation to emotions. This was similar for James as he said '*as a leader you don't have the right to have a bad day*', and in doing so he appeared to be taking an authorial stance that suggested he felt that his feelings as a leader were irrelevant to the leader role and had no place within his leader performance. Vivienne debated this yet had accepted it as a part of practice as both a leader and a teacher. However, James' narration of emotional labour was certainly reflective of the more masculinized notions, which appeared to present a tough and aggressive disposition rather than a 'cool restraint' which reflected the cultures of historical institutions from his early life and through much of his early and middle career. Yet for Vivienne, in drawing on her own sociohistorical experiences from her time as a teacher and with other leaders as she mentioned that emotions are '*sometimes not rational*', this resonated again with Sachs and Blackmore's (1998) findings. For Vivienne, emotional display was a tension, particularly as early thematic subchapters explored, illuminating her resistance of more domineering and controlling forms of power particularly in bureaucratic cultures, which again had many masculine notions attached. Vivienne's constant rejection of those masculinised discourses, and the difficult incidents she narrated, represented a struggle in what appeared to be an understanding, and expectation, of a role where emotions should reflect that rather detached '*cool restraint*' (Fambrough and Hart (2008). Indeed, as Vivienne reflected how she had '*taught herself not to react emotionally*' she described

events where maintaining her professional persona was a constant struggle and she appeared was wary of losing her emotional control. As Beatty argues:

...the ability to detach oneself emotionally from the situation, as a skill one employs on demand, is perceived as an essential part of leadership, for maintaining control and power.'

(Beatty, 2000:345).

VIVIENNE: *...I learnt very quickly that you had to be upfront and... not show any weakness in front of people displaying those sorts of behaviours.*

FC: *How do you define weakness?*

VIVIENNE: *Crying... not showing that people can get at you. They might later...I might display behaviours that they got at me later but not at the time.*

FC: *...you mentioned emotions and the place of emotions within leadership ...from some of the reading and emotional intelligence you were interested in. How do you think that came about or has developed throughout your life?*

VIVIENNE: *I think it probably developed quite early on unconsciously in that I very much believe that when you come to work you leave the rest of your life outside, so when you're in work you concentrate on work. [...] I know it separates home and work but I think that's actually a good thing because it also means that you don't tend to take work home as much, so the emotional things at work that you are dealing with stay in work and vice versa.*

FC: *Have you ever found that a challenge at times?*

VIVIENNE: *I found it quite a challenge on a number of occasions. The one that I will share with you is er... my husband left me... and that morning the Headteacher was not in the school and a parent came into see me, needed to see me because she needed to tell me that her husband had left her over the weekend and therefore her child might show, you know... sort of... strange behaviours. And I had to sit there as a professional... having... been totally crushed by what had happened, I had to sit there as a professional and not show my emotions and actually listen to this person and try and empathise with this person and show this person that we would do as much as we possibly could to help her child. And that was the hardest one I've ever... done.*

FC: *How did you do it?*

VIVIENNE: *I think I just put on a professional mask... I think I just went.... Because I didn't know what was... what the meeting was about so I sat down and she just came out with this whole thing and I just sat there thinking 'my husband's just left me this morning'... and I think I just pulled a professional mask on.*

As noted earlier the emotional labour of leadership, particularly in educational leadership, involves the maintenance of one's professionalism which is argued as *'suppressing our own negative feelings as we skilfully manage the negative feelings of others'* (Hofmann-Downes, 2013:114). Vivienne's stories were deeply reflective of these notions and they were somewhat present in how James and Patrick had spoken of suppressing their own feelings at times to appear as a 'leader' image (Grint, 2005), such as Patrick explain how he had often spent time observing and watching situations before deciding on how to position himself, or how James had separated his personal ethics from his professional self to 'get the job done', as the early subthemes explored.

As Beatty reflects *'the emotional dimension of our subjectivity has a foundational role to play in the development of our socially constructed reality.'* (2000:335). Thus, as Vivienne reflected, it is not helpful to deny emotions as part of the leader role – to remove the 'real person' from the role – and 'the mask' is then a difficult and unrealistic performance to constantly maintain to all people, both professionally and personally. Although notions of authenticity, emotional intelligence and psychodynamic approaches to emotion have offered much by way of strategies to explore and manage behaviour and decision-making (Ginsberg and Davies, 2003). As Crawford (2014) explains, these approaches are drawn from popular psychological discourses on emotion and behaviour that focus on personal cognition, emotion and individualistic self-regulation often used as a behavioural control tool in organisations. However, they often lack appreciation of the cultural and social aspects of organisational life (Crawford, 2009; Fambrough and Hart, 2008). However, as Fineman (2006) explains, emotions are subjective and socially constructed, reflecting cultural values and as Ladkin (2015) argues, emotional engagement in leadership high and involves working with complex problems and change. Yet the dominant position in mainstream leadership literature reflects emotional regulation and control and procedures through which to manage emotional interaction, such as emotional intelligence (Fambrough and Hart, 2008). As Crawford (2014) argues, educational leaders in particular can feel accountable for many aspects of organisational life because emotion is part of social reality in 'human service' organisations, like schools.

As part of subjective human understanding, reflecting personal values, '*without emotion there is no such thing as leadership*' (Crawford, 2014:185). However, as Crawford (2009) highlighted in her work on emotions in educational leadership, there is limited work on the emotional aspects of educational leadership beyond the dominant conceptualisation of emotional regulation and control that objectifies, separates or suppresses emotions from practice. Indeed, it would appear from the narratives that there was great emotional consequence and personal cost to leadership practice, yet there appeared little by the way of resources to unpack the complexities of these feelings. From a figured worlds perspective, as Holland et al (1998) argue, as a context for practised identity cultural forms and value-based models of expectation become internalised and habituated. Thus, values as subjective and socially constructed, form part of cultural understanding as socially accepted scripts of expectation and assumption around disposition, behaviour, actions and utterance are negotiated in daily life (Holland et al, 1998; Hochschild, 1983; Beatty, 2000).

Furthermore, as Parkinson (1995) adds, emotions are '*intrinsically interpersonal and communicative or performative*' (1995:25) and are therefore a dialogical performance and part of identity work as they are negotiated in practice as practitioners navigate organisational realities where emotions, and behaviours that 'depict' emotions such as anger and 'crying', are contested notions. Hence, leadership and emotions become problematic in relation to forms of cognitive, individualistic, self-help prescriptions on leadership authenticity and behaviour in leadership development as they cannot be 'prescribed'. Therefore, practitioners would benefit from a greater appreciation of fluidity and the complexities of identity development along with much debate and critique around what is deemed as '*leaderly*' (Ladkin and Taylor, 2010:72) in the '*complex emotional arenas*' of educational organisations such as schools (Sachs and Blackmore, 1998:277), including the tension of emotional labour and consequence.

Therefore, emotions – as subjective cultural scripts – are an important part of authoring the self as they form part of our subjectivity as Beatty (2000) argues. In response to powerful societal notions around the leader role, emotions appear again as another aspect of leadership practice laden with masculine notions and tensions around gender. As the thematic subchapters have reflected, identity work was a response to powerfully imposed authoritative voices, where at times there was little room for agency as they

were each positioned by relations of power that had differing degrees of emotional reaction. As Crawford (2009) argues, it would be of benefit to increase the discussion around emotions and leadership. Indeed, exploring the feelings that come with identity work as individuals respond to the world around them would be of benefit to practitioners, especially as response is not a choice – the world must be answered (Holland et al, 1998).

Overall, the frustrations, difficulties, conflicts, failures, insecurities, mistakes and hurts the participants all narrated were tensions they each appeared to struggle with in a solitary way, thus reinforcing much that is said about the isolation of the leader role (Grint, 2010; Bolden, 2004; Sachs and Blackmore, 1998). Indeed '*leadership can be a lonely task*' (Bolden, 2004:29) where '*you never showed that you couldn't cope*' (Sachs and Blackmore, 1998: 271) remaining instead in control of emotions in front of others. As Sachs and Blackmore (1998) reflect there was limited research that discussed the personal costs of leadership, and indeed as Delaney and Spoelstra (2015) argue, there is limited discussion about the risks and dangers of charismatic leadership and the dark side of leadership. As Tourish (2013) and Bolden (2007) highlight, this 'dark side' and the 'unleaderly' would be of benefit to practitioners to explore as they reflect on identity work, just as the participants began to do towards the end of interviews within this research, explaining how their reflections over their careers had allowed them the space to consider tension and possibilities and realise their own accomplishments as leaders.

Subchapter Summary

This subchapter explored how Vivienne, James and Patrick drew on various metaphors to describe their identity work as 'leaders'. As they spoke of their identity work, they began to tell a deeper story of tension around role expectations, reflecting on how they had constructed and managed a particular disposition as a way to enact a leader role, often in response to those role expectations. This had included constructing an invulnerable, tough leader image and regulating various other aspects of themselves that did not reflect this image. As they each also spoke of values, trust, transparency, self-sacrifice and moralistic notions, a tension between the rhetoric of mainstream individualistic discourse and lived realities of practice grew within their narratives.

In response to powerful role expectations and cultural models and positionality, the participants all shared stories of their attempts to perform as particular kinds of leaders, drawing on their metaphors for identity work. However, their stories reflected the paradoxical issues of morals, ethics and values in terms of what 'authentic' actually means and the subjectivities and complexities of the social construction of cultural values, along with what is deemed to be '*leaderly*' (Ladkin and Taylor, 2010). Indeed, emotions, emotional labour and the tensions of authenticity, toughness, masculinity and gender are certainly another interesting area for further exploration in relation to a practice where emotional engagement is high (Ladkin, 2015) and emotional and person consequences appeared entwined within participants' identity work.

This subchapter was the final of five thematic subchapters discussing the data analysis. A very brief summary follows to close subchapter four, before moving on to the final subchapter of the thesis.

Chapter Four (data analysis) Summary

In bringing this data analysis subchapter to a close, identity work within leadership practice has been highlighted through this analysis as involving a complex performance of authoring multiple selves within contradictory and contested social worlds. There were many influences to the participants' identity construction and development as they travelled through many life-worlds, experiencing a myriad of discourse and expectation to which they had to respond. The space of authoring, through which they made their responses to the world, was indeed often a space of tension and struggle as the participants spoke of the role expectations and becoming a particular version of the 'leader' role they felt they needed to be based on all of the influences and authoritative voices around them.

The many roles, performances and images the participants spoke of thus portrayed particular identities, multiple and fluid, as the '*faces of leadership*' (Lumby and English, 2009:96) as they each tried to '*act the part*' in the way they had come to understand and imagine, which was not without tension and emotional labour, resulting in many feelings and emotions about their resulting identity work, and the identity work of others. However, there were moments for agency as they each spoke of resisting particular positions and claiming others as they orchestrated and improvised various discourses of being within their identity performances, which also had many resulting consequences.

Therefore, understanding and appreciating the tensions, complexities and emotional consequences of leadership practice in ways that appreciates the '*balancing and resolution of paradoxes and tensions*' (Ladkin and Taylor, 2010:72) would be of interest to explore outside of the limitations of this study through appreciation of the fluidity of identity work in leadership practice. Many aspects of interesting further exploration were highlighted through the analysis subchapters which offers many insights to LMD programmes of study, research, literature as well as to practitioners, research and scholars in the educational leadership field.

The final chapter of this thesis now follows, chapter five: *conclusions and reflections*, bringing together the key findings from the data analysis to answer the research questions and the contributions and implications is offer to the LMD and educational leadership fields. It concludes with reflections on my journey through this research and what areas I would like to explore further, and offers some final remarks that bring the thesis to a close.

Chapter Five

Conclusions and Reflections

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CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusions and Reflections

Chapter Introduction

This final chapter of the thesis offers an overview of the research, highlighting the main findings in relation to the research questions. Organised in to five sections, after answering the research questions, it outlines the contributions the research offers to leadership debates, my plans to share the findings and develop further work. Offering my reflections on the doctoral research journey and my development through the programme, the thesis comes to a close with some concluding remarks.

A reminder of the research statement

This research is interested in the exploration of leadership identity as a relationship between self and society. Appreciating leadership as a discursively influenced social construction, situated in the social worlds of organisations, this study is a narrative inquiry, drawing on a sociocultural lens – Holland et al's (1998) identity in practice – to appreciate the importance of social constructivism, dialogism and relations of power in identity construction and leadership practice.

Through the analysis of practitioner stories, its aim is to offer an exploration of leadership identity that contributes to the growing body of knowledge within leadership and management development (LMD) research, wider leadership debates, and the educational leadership field.

The research Questions

5. *What do stories of leadership practice offer as influential to the construction and development of leadership identity?*
6. *What insights does the study of identity, from a sociocultural perspective, offer to wider leadership and management development debates, that informs the educational leadership field?*

5.1 *Answering the research questions*

The narratives collectively offered a sense of leadership identity development as the heuristic development of self (Holland et al, 1998) as the participants each acclimatised to new ways of being over time. Vivienne, Patrick and James all spoke of many contexts which had been influential to how they come to understand leadership practice, and themselves in relation to it. There were many interesting insights into their leadership worlds and the wider sociocultural contexts they have inhabited, offering points of further exploration that would be beneficial to LMD research, and to the educational leadership field.

The overall findings from across the thematic analysis are now discussed by answering the research questions.

5.1.1. *Constructing leadership identity in practice*

Question 1: What do stories of leadership practice offer as influential to the construction and development of leadership identity?

Within the participant narratives of leadership practice, stories of ‘struggle’ illuminated their identity work and presented how the space of authoring was indeed the contested space that Holland et al (1998) argue it to be. As many cultural expectations and assumptions featured, tension was often articulated as their habitus – featuring discursively embedded ‘standard-plots’ of leadership practice – faced ‘ruptures’ and ‘untidy collisions’ of perspectives that placed them in contradiction with contrasting cultures and the habitus of others (Holland et al, 1998). This reflected how Svenningsson and Alvesson (2003) articulate leadership identity work as a space of struggle in organisational worlds where meaning is contested and always in negotiation. As each participant spoke of the ways in which they each organised their identity performances, their stories illuminated the positional nature of organisational life where they each responded to the expectations of leadership doxa and positioning. Through ‘*moments, of production and reproduction of social practice*’, their identities presented the ‘dense

interconnections between the intimate and public venues of social practice' (Holland et al, 1998:271) as they authored themselves in relation to the world, claiming their various positions as they navigated the social landscapes of life. This was articulated through many stories that which they had sought ways to realise a modicum of agency in practice as they faced various constraints. Sociohistorical experience interplayed within their intrapersonal being and resulted in many performances and improvisations of selves – identities in practice – as they were positioned, and attempted to position themselves, in response to the 'otherness' of the worlds around them. This resulted in a heteroglossic authoring of the self through various identity claims as they answered and addressed particular discourses and others within their worlds. Hence, the stories of practice presented their 'co-development' or what Holland et al (1998) argue as a constant subjective reformation and improvisation of multiple selves. For the leadership practitioners here, identity involved a constant negotiation of the relationship between the self and society, not just of leadership and organisation worlds, but of the wider social world and all of its many influences and historical contexts.

As leadership has been argued as a social process – as interactive, relational, dialogical – the practice of it is then argued as an on-going process of learning and development. As identity is argued as a heuristic development of self, or rather, a process of continuous social learning through engagement in social worlds, leadership and identity are then also argued as intrinsically and importantly linked as an on-going process of learning and development in practice. As the five thematic subchapters presented, there were several shared contexts through which they explained how they had come to understand and enact leadership within organisational worlds:

- *Stories of early life*
- *Stories of organisational life*
- *Stories of study and training*
- *Stories of influential others*
- *Stories of managing a 'leader' image*

Vivienne, James and Patrick each drew on their social backgrounds, cultural models and values from their early life and upbringing in England as children, adolescents and

students at teacher training college. These contexts of activity were *'historical phenomena'* and the frames of meaning that contained *'processes or traditions of apprehension which gather us up and give us form as our lives intersect with them'* (Holland et al, 1998:41). Therefore, these early life experiences were important in the construction of professional identities, as their history-in-person – *'psychohistorical formations'* sociohistorically constructed over time *'populating intimate terrain'* (Holland et al, 1998:5) – travelled with them as a form of cultural inheritance as they moved through various life-worlds and organisations. Hence as a form of co-development between individuals, cultural models, and social position, as Holland et al's (1998) identity in practice suggests, the self is multiple and filled with historical voices that become internalised over time, taken into their habitus as part of an individual's regulating inner speech, often remaining part of history-in-person. Indeed, James' *'working class lad'* and Patrick's *'boy scout'*, and Vivienne's *'easily hurt'* childhood-selves all offered aspects of their history-in-person, often becoming the basis for their own reformed subjectivity as they moved through life, reflecting their heuristic development in social worlds. Indeed, as reflected earlier, *'the culture of a particular social group is embodied (internalised) in the individual, during the socialisation process beginning in early childhood'* (Bourdieu, 1990:63). Therefore, the wider cultural influences and societal notions of positioning, like gender, ethnicity and social class, were important influences to how participants narrated their understanding of leadership as cultural models and doxa – as moral scripts and subjective assumptions of values and understanding from their upbringing – were carried with them through their careers as part of their history-in-person. In telling a story about themselves as educational leaders, they indeed drew recurrently on stories of their early lives, with many subjective aspects, remaining with them as important authoritative voices that influenced their sense of self and understanding of the world, thus influencing the construction of their leadership identities in practice.

Stories of organisational life reflected various discursively influenced expectations of leadership practice and a sense of structure and positionality which were also very heavily cited as influential to the construction, development and enactment of leadership identities. Through the organisations the participants had inhabited, they had each retained a strong attachment to early career cultural models of leadership which

they narrated in particular ways, such as '*collegial*', '*vibrant*' and '*democratic*' in opposition to '*paternalistic*', '*bureaucratic*' and '*autocratic*', constructing identity claims that positioned themselves in relation to those cultures. Power was a complex and broad aspect of organisational worlds interwoven with cultural expectations and wider societal notions of social positioning – particularly gender – offering a deeper story of micro, meso and macro tensions which often problematized their own assumptions and values.

Alongside these stories of cultures and institutions, LMD programmes, particularly formal qualifications, appeared as important *artefacts* that could be used as resources in leadership practice for various purposes, particularly to gain position and make claims to a leader identity. However, they also appeared as powerful discursive vehicles of expectation and normative assumptions about leadership practice. In particular, functionalist discourses were a dominant feature positing individualistic moralising role expectations, such as transformational leadership, authentic leadership, leader behaviours and styles, emotional intelligence and psychodynamics. There was considerable movement in narration back and forth between LMD experiences and organisational life in terms of how they had applied their LMD experiences in practice. This offered an interesting debate around the content and timing of study as well as the availability of training, particularly in HE, that the next section of this chapter will explore shortly. Furthermore, as they each spoke of their experiences through different organisations and life-worlds, they offered *stories of influential others* narrated as people who had been an important influence in how they had come to form assumptions and expectations around the 'leader' role. As '*good*' leaders and '*bad*' leaders were cast in their stories – as heroes and villains of leadership worlds – this led to stories that included various levels of acceptance and resistance to those dispositions and the more dominant expectations of the leader role they represented, which is heavily reflective of the individualistic focus of functionalist leadership discourse, as chapter two highlighted. As Patrick, James and Vivienne narrated their stories, and positioned themselves in relation to the characters they cast, it was then the ruptures to their assumptions, the collisions of perspectives and conflicts with others that highlighted the heteroglossia, contradictions and tensions of leadership practice in social worlds where expectations, values and assumptions are contested, as Holland et

al (1998) argue. It was then, as their stories began to reflect '*...the tension, struggle, and ambiguity of leadership identity construction processes*' (Fairhurst and Grant, 2010:192), that discussions illuminated the ways in which they attempted to navigate the myriad of influences, through *stories of managing the image*. Through the use of metaphors to construct and manage a 'leader' image, they were often answering and resisting the dominant functionalist discourses of a moralising disposition of an invulnerable, tough and emotionally controlled leader (McLaren, 2010; Western, 2013, Crevani et al, 2010). It was then the complexity of this discursive expectation, with attached notions of 'a great leader' that illuminated the struggle within the 'gap' between this rhetorical 'leader' identity and the positional lived realities they inhabited (Western 2013). As trying to enact this rather fixed 'leader' image appeared as increasingly problematic in their stories, and was often resisted, they each reflected on the many tensions experienced as they each found this image hard to sustain. Indeed, they were each at times offering stories that reflected them as '*enslaved by identity processes ...unwittingly or reflectively engaged in responding, colluding and resisting*' (Sinclair, 2011:512) as they each tried to response, resist or accept what was deemed to be 'leaderly' in their worlds (Ladkin and Taylor, 2010). Hence, in attempting to perform their own version of 'leaderly' they often met with various consequences, conflicts, difficulties and possibilities which resulted in varying emotional responses. Emotion was an interesting concept as a debate around masculinized notions and emotional labour emerged as many discourses of leadership and expectations from machismo cultures were highly internalised within their identity work and often in conflict with each other as they attempted to navigate the bumpy terrain of organisational life. Indeed, many organisational cultures narrated often depicted '*asymmetrical gender relations in organisational life*' (Ford, 2015a:243), as the next section will further discuss shortly.

Reflecting Holland et al's 'space of authoring', the participant narratives overall offered that, as they each navigated the 'gap' between dominant 'leader' rhetoric and the lived realities of practice, '*identity pressures*' (Sinclair, 2011:511-12) were often the tension of practice, and the struggle of identity work. Indeed, living life in the 'gap' was then often '*a bit of a mess*' as practitioners '*put on a professional mask*' to '*act the part*' as an automated response to discursively imposed expectations of what it means to take on a 'leader' role. In enacting performances of expectation, this indeed often resulted in

many tensions in the realities of practice. However, 'life in the gap' was also the space of possibility. As reflected across all of the subchapters, by orchestrating the heteroglossia of discourse around them and improvising their identity performances within worlds that '*must be answered*' (Holland et al, 1998:272), identity work reflected their agency through identities in practice that sought new ways of being, such as the 'rebel' identity that often featured across stories. Hence, living life in the 'gap', with many available artefacts and dispositions through which to author the self, not only resulted in an automated response to powerful expectations but also provided the space for agency in which to '*play the game*' by purposefully orchestrating and improvising identity work to influence change within their worlds. In improvising their performances, they were then engaging in what Holland et al (1998) term as 'serious play' in ways that brought about new possibilities for their practice, and others in the worlds around them, and thus, there was always a sense of the participants 'making worlds' in Holland et al's (1998) sense.

Overall, practice was narrated in contradictory ways reflecting both constraint and liberation, such as: '*rebellious*' against bureaucracy; '*fighting for the underdog*' against '*aggressive, self-interested*' autocrats; challenging gender positioning in '*the man's world*'; managing a '*tough*' invulnerable image to remain 'authentically hidden'; debating emotional labour and ethics; and even engaging in power-play, micro politics and '*the dark side of leadership*'. As such, the 'gap' represented identity work as the complicated struggle between expectations, structure and agency – as the space of authoring, a contested space, as Holland et al (1998) argue. Identity development was longitudinal and continual, influenced by important events that were powerful 'learning moments', as well as the mundane everyday '*small ongoing experiences in life*' (Carroll, 2015:106) as their subjectivities were formed and reformed over time (Holland et al, 1998). Context, and the many discursive influences to their various contexts, was indeed important to identity work and as they each responded, negotiated and navigated the contestations and complexities of leadership practice and sought to become what was expected of leaders, they also challenged expectations and sought to influence change within their various worlds. This reflects Holland et al's (1998) argument that persons are not only social productions, they are also social producers capable of great improvisation and possibility through the ability to imagine new ways of being.

5.1.2. Leadership identity in practice

Question 2: *What insights does the study of identity, from a sociocultural perspective, offer to wider leadership and management development debates, that informs the educational leadership field?*

As the participant narratives presented in this study, understanding leadership through one prescribed means is unhelpful as Bligh et al argue (2011:1059), since people, social life and organisations are too complex and in a constant and dynamic state of flux. Leadership, as a social process, takes form through the performance and dialogic interaction of various leader-selves – as identity in practice – which is constructed through time and experience in social worlds. The contexts of identity construction and development are wide-ranging and on-going as the first research question discussed, which reflects growing arguments around leadership learning and development as longitudinal and beginning in early life (Day et al, 2014). Indeed, as Carroll (2015) argues, learning and development are integral to leadership as development is a dynamic process influenced and shaped by many factors over time through engagement with others in the social, cultural and historical contexts they traverse through time. As such, these contexts are vital to explore in terms of how they influence identity construction and performance, which is intrinsically linked to leadership development (Carroll, 2015; Western, 2013; Mabey and Finch-Lees, 2008).

As Day et al (2014) argue, it is then important to understand the basis for adult development as practitioners would benefit from understanding leadership as an on-going development of identity, as well as the influences to the construction of identity. This can be continually beneficial for practitioners when they enter new organisations and roles as they undertake, experience, or plan to take up, particular ways of being. Therefore, continually engaging in reflexively in practice, appreciating leadership identity as a heuristic development of practice over time (Holland et al, 1998) is argued as useful. However, there appears to be limited LMD discourse or empirical research across the literature, including education, that explores leadership identity in ways that appreciate the struggles of leadership practice and professional lives within social

realities from practitioner perspectives. This includes a lack of exploration around the impact that identity work can have on personal and emotional aspects of selfhood and organisational cultures (Carroll, 2015; Crawford, 2014; Lumby and English, 2013; Tourish, 2013; Sinclair, 2011; Ladkin and Taylor, 2010). The findings from this analysis have especially illuminated the complex interwoven tensions of power dynamics, the rhetoric of discourse that posits role expectations – including gender positioning – and the lack of exploration of the ‘dark side of leadership’ reflecting the ‘dark secrets’ of LMD activity and the emotional consequences of identity work, all of which LMD literature and research would benefit from exploring. These aspects will now be summarised below, and this question then concludes with a discussion as to what could be done to develop new approaches to LMD that could benefit practitioners in the field.

Power dynamics

As Carroll et al (2015:xxvi) argue, *‘power is at the centre of leadership’* and stories of power were interwoven through the participants’ narratives, often appearing through masculinized notions of dominance, control and competition (Karlberg, 2005). Deeply reflecting positionality in organisational worlds, identity performances were also presented as purposeful and intentional in the pursuit of agency and position. As the dominant view in leadership discourse, and LMD literature, is associated with powerful, high-ranking individual roles that have authority over others, as Carroll (2015), Ford (2015b) and Malby (2007) argue, position power in Weberian terms (e.g. Weber, 1978) through legitimate structures of authority is still a ‘reality’ of leadership worlds as top-down approaches continue to dominate. This was certainly reflected in the analysis of narratives and there were many pressures cited around role expectations and the pressure of decision-making, being ‘in control’ and being ‘right’ as a leader, which will be explored further shortly. However, beyond hierarchical notions and matters of position, power also appeared in more discreet, subtle and covert ways as stories of manipulation, domination and coercion – as a form of power at its worst as Kalberg (2010) argues. Power was also used in symbolic ways to gain social cultural status, through *artefacts* of value such as expertise and qualifications, as well as appearing in referent forms, such as through the use of charisma and social relationships and status. Thus, power was complex and broad-ranging going far beyond the authority of position

power which the dominant view often still posits. As such, power and identity work were a performance of positionality and a negotiation of various forms of capital in leadership worlds under constant negotiation as being a 'leader' resulting in varying access to, and degrees of, power between contexts and relations. Therefore, exploration of the complexities of power in its various forms, and the interplay of power within leadership practice, would be beneficial to LMD activity, discussions and discourse, through which practitioners could consider *'the relational and contextual dynamics that leading and following are embedded in and opens up new strategies for learning...'* (Carroll et al, 2015:xxvi).

Role expectations

Particular assumptions and expectations of the 'leader' role deeply influences leadership thinking in many ways as leadership learning begins early in life, as a longitudinal process of development through a variety of experiences, as Day and Sin (2011) argue, which the participant narratives deeply reflected. Indeed, many life-worlds, from schooling, family and community groups, to societal discourse present in entertainment and media posit cultural models of leadership where the role of 'leader' heavily dominates and is often romanticised as a moralistic organisational 'hero' possessing all the answers ethically and authentically leading towards 'success' (Ford, 2015b; Bligh, 2011; Sinclair, 2011; Ford and Harding, 2011). These cultural models were often perpetuated in organisational worlds in different forms alongside the interplay of power and positional hierarchies which added much complexity to the dominant narrative of the 'leader' as being 'in-charge', as the last sub-section explored. Furthermore, LMD programmes of study presented across the narratives as powerful discursive models of practice that influenced the construction of professional identities, often positing individualistic functionalist notions, which is seeing criticism across the field for unrealistic expectations this places on practitioners (e.g. Ford, 2015a; Sinclair, 2011). Thus, role expectations were deeply embedded into discourse and practice, and the participants were often answering what Holland et al (1998) argue as deeply internalised voices from psychohistorical formations as part of their history-in-person and resulting habitus – as performances of expectation were then enacted in response. Therefore, role expectations in leadership practice, and how these are discursively

influenced by underpinning sociocultural and assumptions, requires consideration in LMD activity and further critical exploration of the performativity of such expectations on practice. In education, this is important as considerable pressures are cited through performative role expectations attached to school leaders, such as Lumby and English (2009) and Ball (2012) highlight, which are deeply influenced by education policy and the drive for school improvement. For instance, Gunter and Thomson (2009:480) argue how they are *'wary of simplistic suggestions for leadership training'* instead calling for debates around LMD activity as they share their concerns of training programmes being *'dressed'* as policy intervention. They explored the historical development of expectations on Headteachers in England, where the pressure of practice is argued as increasing (Morrison 2013; Simkins, 2012), offering an example of the historical power of role expectation, and how leadership is dominantly linked to organisational performance:

Headteachers had to be transformational charismatic leaders with a 'can do' and change-oriented persona. They had to exercise self-control over their own feelings with refusal to give up, combined with accepting responsibility for policy delivery and policy outcomes regardless of whether they were completely in control of everything that made policy implementation possible.

(Gunter and Thomson, 2009: 473)

The historical meaning of the 'leader' role has to be understood within the context of particular social worlds, such as compulsory schooling as Gunter and Thomson (2009) articulate above, to begin to unpack and problematize role expectations and discourses of influence to leadership thinking. This is important alongside understanding the meso level of organisational culture and the micro-relations between the people therein, in addition to macro levels of social positioning and wider social policy. Overall, the cultural historical inheritance that travels with practitioners as part of their history-in-person, which is continually added over time as Holland et al (1998) argue, is an important consideration within LMD activity. Indeed, the many worlds practitioners have traverse embed particular ways of thinking about leadership that is brought into other worlds over time, as well as being continually influenced by context, in a local and wider sense, constantly reforming leadership subjectivities. Therefore, exploring role expectations in practice could be useful for practitioners in challenging dominant assumptions about what is deemed 'leaderly' and consider other ways of being.

Gender

The participant's narratives often presented masculinized notions attached to leadership thinking, including aggression, self-reliance and power through control, domination and competition (Fitzgerald, 2014; Sinclair and Evans, 2015; Morley, 2013; Karlberg, 2005). Gender presented as an interesting context for leadership identity construction and development, particularly in relation to masculinized role expectations and context. Notions such as 'toughness' and a paternalistic sense of power, control and domination narrated within many stories of organisational cultures appeared through discussion around HEIs and through an unsettled sense of masculinized leadership in the feminized worlds of primary schools (Brinia, 2012; David, 2012). For instance, it was argued that school teaching in the primary and early years sector often reflect strategies to scaffold, encourage and empower learners (Brinia, 2012; Skelton, 2012; Mills et al, 2004). Hence, a 'typical' leader identity as a controlling, dominant and authoritative leader 'in-charge' 'telling' others the answers, sits in contradiction to the teacher-identities that may dominate those sorts of worlds. This also presented in tensions around women in educational leadership roles (Sinclair and Evan, 2015; Chard, 2013; Fitzgerald, 2014) as stories of practice reflected:

...a passive submission to institutional discourses in which leadership theories have presented accounts of gender-neutrality or displayed gender blindness but have inevitably imported masculine values and characteristics as the norm

(Ford, 2015a:239).

As Ford (2015a; 2010) argues, leadership discourse would benefit from exploration of masculinized notions and 'leader' roles expectation; indeed, gender imbalances in academic leadership across HE globally, and the ratio of headteacher gender in compulsory education in the UK particularly in primary headship, has been highlighted within this research. Indeed, the participants' stories illuminated LMD programmes, and the discourses that they contained that reflected rather individualistic masculinized notions as having quite a powerful presence which sits in contradiction to the leadership as an ongoing process of learning and development (Carroll, 2015). Furthermore, the statistics highlighted earlier around 'male whiteness' in HE leadership globally (Morley, 2013; Blackmore, 2007) were also significant in terms of tensions raised in Patrick's narrative and reflected an interesting finding relevant to these arguments. Therefore,

the influence of race and ethnicity on leadership identity construction in academia would also benefit from further exploration as few studies from a sociocultural perspective were apparent. Indeed, Blackmore (2007:438) argues, to begin to understand how gender influences within leadership, there is also a need to understand whiteness and class privilege, therefore it comes back to wider notions of social positioning which were themes present across the narratives. Furthermore, as there is also the suggestion of gender-blindness in LMD research and programmes (Mabey and Finch-Lees, 2008; Carroll, 2015), due to the many dominant individualistic discourses reflect masculinized notions that appear across the leadership discussion more widely, as Ford (2015a) and Collinson (2011) argue, this could then also be a tension for matters of race and ethnicity in response to 'male-whiteness' in academic leadership in HE. Overall, there is increasingly argument of the importance of exploring the masculinity of leadership, and further research on gender and leadership identity, and also matters of race and ethnicity in leadership, would certainly benefit from further research in specific context (like HE and primary schooling) outside of the limitations of this study.

'The dark side of leadership'

Many of the tensions within practice appeared through stories of struggles and conflicts with others. Assumptions and expectations of leadership often collided with the realities of practice and the contradictory nature of power as stories of '*toxic*', '*dark*', '*awful*' and '*rotten*' difficult situations were unpacked. Often reflecting power struggles with others, these difficulties were often illuminating the tensions of what being a 'good' leader means in practice as matters of values were highly subjective. Notions of threats, bullying and blackmail as coercive control often appeared throughout the narratives, as well as the narcissistic manipulation of others and the use of charisma to construct performances to attract, romance or mislead others (Tourish, 2013). As the '*dark side*' (Tourish, 2013; Grint, 2010) or '*shadow side*' of leadership practice (Bolden, 2007), these stories were narrated as the more unpleasant and 'unleaderly' aspects of practice (Ladkin and Taylor, 2010). They sat in contradiction to the dominant overly-simplistic moralising discourses of practice that posit leader greatness and a 'good' leader image in unproblematic functionalist ways (Tourish, 2013; Western, 2013; McLaren, 2013; Collison, 2011; Grint, 2005). Furthermore, they reflected aspects of leadership practice

that are not openly acknowledged in dominant mainstream leadership literature and LMD activity (Board, 2016; Tourish, 2013; Lumby and English, 2013; Collison, 2011; Brown and Trevino, 2006; Grint, 2005). As Lumby and English (2009) explain, *'models of leadership preparation dominated by rational norms fail to account for the 'dark side' of leadership studies'* (2009:96). Moreover, Goffman also referred to the struggle of *'dark secrets'* in leadership preparation as *'facts which are known but not openly acknowledged and which are incompatible with the image [of a leader] that is desired'* (1959: 141). Indeed, these *'unleaderly'* aspects, this *'dark side of leadership'*, appeared as realities of practice that the participants felt unprepared for and deeply struggled with in different ways, particularly around the subjectivities of ethics in practice and what is deemed as *'good'* and *'leaderly'* (Board, 2016; Tourish, 2013; Lumby and English, 2013; 2009; Brown and Trevino, 2006; Grint, 2005). Hence, *'both the "dark secrets" and the "dark side" of leadership should become integral components of understanding leadership identity and preparation'* (Lumby and English, 2009:97). Indeed, as Tourish (2013) further adds, drawing in the less desirable aspects of leadership into LMD discussion and programmes of study, as well as the necessity of responding and the ethical and emotional struggles of authoring leader-selves, would certainly be a recommendation to LMD research and programme development from this research, particularly in terms of the emotional, personal, and career changing consequences the participants' narratives reflected.

As Ladkin (2015) argues and the narratives reflect, emotional engagement in leadership is high within the *'complex emotional arenas'* of educational organisations (Ladkin and Taylor, 2010:72, where *'leadership can be a lonely task'* (Bolden, 2004:29). There appears to be limited research that discusses the emotional consequences, challenges and personal costs authoring of a leader-self as individuals respond to imposed professional expectations placed upon them. Furthermore, as Delaney and Spoelstra (2015), Tourish (2013) and Bolden (2007) argue, there is little about the risks and dangers of charismatic leadership and *'the dark side of leadership'*. Indeed, there is limited LMD discourse around how this authoring ultimately makes practitioners feel as they learn to live with the consequences of their interactions and the resulting impact on themselves and others around them. Therefore, it would be of benefit to practitioners to include a range of perspectives in the leadership debate to explore this,

such as constructionist, dialogical and critical perspectives alongside the dominant functionalist discourses. Indeed, it would also be of benefit to practitioners to increase empirical research and debate around the personal emotional aspects of practice as way to share experiences of the more difficult aspects of practice. As Crawford (2009) suggests, stories from practice can be helpful in exploring the way leadership is shaped by personal emotional experiences, and I argue that further understanding of the emotional complexities of leadership identity work and the impact on practitioners, and others in the leadership interaction, and the consequences of identity work would be helpful to practitioners and organisational dynamics.

LMD: Where to from here?

This research has emphasised the need to avoid '*a fixed identity or role, instead encouraging an awareness of multiple roles*' (Edwards et al, 2013:4) and argued for the importance of exploring different perspectives to alleviate the pressures of practice on practitioners, especially in light of the dominant rhetorical narratives around the leader role and the expectation for 'leaders' to market and brand themselves in particular ways as Sinclair (2011) argues. As this is argued as increasingly unhelpful within complex contexts that require fluidity to practice (Bligh, 2011), encouraging a focus on the study of identity and the exploration of multiple discourses and their influences to identity construction – both in daily practice and LMD activities and resources – would be beneficial, as Carroll (2015), Mabey (2013) and Western (2013) argue. Indeed, building in space for the discussion of multiple perspectives in debates, literature, programmes and training is increasingly important and must appreciate a wide range of perspectives and reflexive approaches beyond functionalist discourse. However, to avoid ideas like 'multi-discourse' perspectives and 'identity study' appearing as yet more prescriptions to LMD (Carroll, 2015; Mabey and Finch-Lees, 2008), it must be understood that tensions and struggles of practice are undoubtedly central aspects of leadership practice due to the complexity and contradiction of social worlds and social beings. Indeed, they are the very essence of leadership development (Carroll, 2015). As Bush (2013:251) argues there is no '*off-the-peg*' solution to leadership practice, learning and development, as the very nature of leadership is navigating contradiction and contestation. Hence, it is necessary to explore the many dimensions to leadership practice beyond the functionalist '*tool-box*' approaches usually prescribed by LMD activity heavily drawn

from mainstream leadership literature (Mabey and Finch-Lees, 2008; Carroll, 2015, Western, 2013). In arguing for other perspectives this does not negate the place of functionalist discourses within practice; indeed, they have their importance. Rather, the argument here is for the addition of other perspectives, as part of a wider 'multi-discourse' approach (Mabey, 2013) that help to problematize practice and explore the uncomfortable 'unleaderly' aspects and contradictions of leadership life (Lumby and English, 2013; Ladkin and Taylor, 2010). As Carroll (2015) argues, there is an important need to bring '*some complexity*' to the leadership debate rather than rely on questions of '*how to make more (effective) leaders*' (2015:102). Indeed, functionalist, interpretive/constructionist, dialogical, and critical perspectives can '*point to tensions in leadership development between performance, relevance, power, means, outcomes, individuals and collectives*' (Carroll 2015:102). As Carroll (2015) further adds, it is important that practitioners can understand and negotiate tensions as this can help them better navigate the growing complexities and contestations of organisational life.

Furthermore, as Western (2013) and Mabey (2013) argue, the awareness of and ability to move between leadership discourse is increasingly important, underpinning the necessity of fluidity to leadership identity work. Indeed, the participants of this research each reflected at the end of the interview process the importance of avoiding becoming too rigid in practice and getting too caught up in expectation, as subchapter 4.5 (*stories of managing the image*) presented. However, as Ford (2015a) and Mabey and Finch-Lees (2008) argue, wading through constructionist, dialogical and critical perspectives is heavy going and unpacking identity work and the assumptions that drive it is not an easy task for practitioners as it can be quite unsettling as long-held ideas are challenged, and subsequently ruptured as Holland et al (1998) argue. Indeed, seeking refuge in functionalist discourses to avoid the inevitable angst other approaches can bring as leadership practice is opened up to more contested and critical thinking can be tempting, as Mabey and Finch-Lees (2008) explain. Functionalist perspectives bring a sense of predictability and control with them as they focus on solutions to 'known' problems (Mabey, 2013; Grint, 2005b) which can allow organisations to maintain the 'status quo' (Ford, 2015a; Mabey, 2013; Western, 2013). However, in education the 'status quo' is problematic as uncertainty and complexity increases and practitioners are faced with increasing performative prescriptions to practice that can constrain space for

other perspectives, particularly as LMD can be used as a discursive vehicle of expectations in school leadership for example, as Gunter and Thomson (2009) argue. Indeed, as Glatter (2009) argues, this is becoming more crucial within increasingly turbulent times in education:

[The] ability to live with uncertainty and learn from mistakes, agility, adaptability, preparedness to distribute leadership, work across boundaries and build trusting relationships [which] are likely to become even more important in the future based on current contextual trends...

(Glatter, 2009:226)

Therefore, it is becoming increasingly necessary to explore and challenge the discursive and subjective notions attached to these fixed and essentialist prescriptions of practice and widen leadership debate, as Sinclair (2011) argues. Indeed, exploring ‘*why people do what they do*’ (Gunter and Fitzgerald, 2008) is crucial to the ongoing development of leadership practice, particularly in the increasingly ambiguities of leadership life in educational organisations which, for example, is especially important in compulsory education in England in light of rapidly changing policy initiatives and the performative pressures they bring (Morrison, 2013; Simkins, 2012; Ball, 2012; Bush, 2011; Gunter and Thomson, 2009). Therefore, exploring identity work reflexively can help to expose the tensions of practice and destabilize ‘norms’, that can bring about new ideas to practice (Lumby and English, 2009; Svenningsson and Larsson, 2006).

As the analysis of the participant narratives presented, there was much to be learned from uncertainty, ‘mistakes’ and the wider boundaries of practices and relations of power within which leadership interplays. As the participants’ stories reflected, there is certainly room for challenging ‘norms’ and looking at new possibilities for practice, and through the orchestration and improvisation of competing discourses and perspectives through ‘serious play’ could be very useful. Overall, sharing and exploring stories of practice and identity work, and the underpinning discourses and expectations, can indeed begin to influence wider leadership discussion, and inevitably influence practice, and potentially make new worlds, as argued by Holland et al’s (1998) figured worlds.

5.2 Contribution

This research has sought to complement and extend growing discussions from contemporary streams of leadership debate and LMD research that explore leadership as a socially constructed, dialogical, and discursively influenced practice. Inspired by social constructionist debates, this research responds to the growing calls across mainstream leadership studies and education for empirical research that explore the lived experiences of leadership practitioners in the complex social arenas of organisational life (Glatter, 2009).

In presenting a narrative study of identity from a sociocultural perspective – Holland et al's (1998) identity in practice – drawing on Bakhtinian, Vygotskian and Bourdieusian perspectives to appreciate identity construction in practice in social worlds, this research has argued that learning and development are intrinsically linked to identity construction as individuals, cultural forms, and social positions come together in co-development and continue to develop heuristically over time. As individuals socially engage with the worlds around them, their leadership identity work is a dialogic performance of many selves under constant subjective reformation, authored in response to powerful discursive expectations as they negotiate relations of power in social worlds. Thus, leadership identity work is argued as a central aspect of leadership development and approaches in this area would benefit from the exploration of identity as a dialogical performance, discursively influenced and socially constructed and shaped by social structure, cultural models, relations of power, dominant discourses of practice and institutionalized thinking in local and wider terms.

Identity work has been argued as a useful lens through which to explore the tensions, conflicts and struggles of leadership practice (e.g. Gee, 2011; Lumby and English, 2013; Edwards et al, 2013). Presenting that leadership identity development was longitudinal, beginning early in life as Day et al (2014) argue, as well as influenced by the organisational cultures, discourses and relationships with others they each had over time, the participant narratives presented an intricate tapestry of co-development across many intersecting life-worlds. Furthermore, exploring narratives highlighted the

possibilities identity work can bring to leadership practice through increased awareness of multiple discourses of leadership that can then be used to navigate organisational life and the wider landscapes of education practice. Therefore, this research adds to understanding within the broader leadership field, as well as specifically to the educational leadership field, through its empirical work and by offering a conceptualisation of leadership identity that contributes beyond what is already discussed in much educational leadership research and wider LMD research, and adds insights to what is not commonly discussed in mainstream leadership literature.

Reflecting many arguments presented within chapter two (e.g. by Ford, 2015a; Crevani et al, 2013; Edwards et al, 2013; Mabey, 2013; Sinclair, 2011; Alvesson, 2011; Collison, 2011; Fairhurst, 2009 2008; Grint, 2011), through the participants' narratives, leadership presented as a constantly evolving and culturally sensitive construct and the analysis illuminated the presence of dominant discourses of leadership resulting in many powerful assumptions and role expectations. Overall, it has been argued here that a vital move forward for leadership research and debate, particularly in broader LMD research and educational leadership, is through approaches that:

- explore lived experiences in ways that appreciate leadership identity work through sociohistorical and sociocultural influences, as well as the importance of dialogic interaction and power relations, in both the local and wider sense, within leadership practice
- allow space for the critique of socially and historically constructed normative assumptions and expectations in leadership discourse and organisational theory and explore subjective moralistic matters, such as vision, values and ethics
- explore the space of struggle that comes with identity work as practitioners' author themselves through stories of practice in organisational worlds, allowing for the exploration and critique of the '*the dark side of leadership*' and the emotional and personal consequence of identity work to self, and others, as well as organisational cultures and dynamics

5.2.1. *Sharing the contributions*

As Crawford (2014:199) suggests, leadership practitioners in education need to explore their own personal narratives throughout practice as they *'face a complex world full of competing agendas and differing values systems'*. This can then enable them to be in dialogue with the many underpinning influences to practice and construct new ways to navigate the complexities they face.

Therefore, sharing these contributions through publications, across academia through teaching and debate, via professional literature and at conferences is important. Furthermore, continuing to research into the study of identity, leadership practice and LMD activity in ways that appreciate the findings of this research is important, as is working with practitioners to embed new approaches to LMD as a leadership educator, which will now be explored below.

Publication

From this thesis, my aim is to initially share the findings through a series of targeted peer-reviewed journal articles and professional publications and conferences aimed at practitioners, both within educational leadership and LMD discussion, as well as in mainstream leadership studies in management and organisational studies. Additionally, social science journals that focus on the study of identity are also an area of publication focus, as are methodological journals that focus on qualitative forms of research to share the usefulness, and complexities, of employing a figured worlds analysis and a narrative methodology that may be helpful to research colleagues.

Further research

I intend to continue research on identity with practitioners and my aim is to deepen the insights offered within this research and to continue to add further accounts and analysis of lived experience to LMD research, and to the educational leadership field,

that can be shared with practitioners through a variety of media, such as publications, practitioner conferences and LMD activities, to include a focus on:

- relations of power and the ‘the dark side of leadership’ leadership identity work in education organisations
- the emotional consequences of leadership identity work to education practitioners
- further exploration of gender and identity work in educational leadership
- inspired by time in practice, explore the influence of government policy initiatives on professional role expectations and identity work for leadership practitioners in: compulsory education school business management (cross-culturally); Childhood Education and Care sector in Western Australia leading centres and programmes

Working with practitioners

Beyond the further research that I intend to continue above, as a leadership ‘educator’ working with practitioners developing and delivering programmes of LMD study within HE and vocational education, encouraging reflexivity in on-going practice will be an important aspect of my practice going forward. In designing and developing programmes of study and LMD activities, I intend to develop and introduce approaches that appreciate the reciprocal relationship between self and society through the study of identity. This includes appreciation of the discursive historical and cultural influences shaping the meaning of leadership and role expectations which can then be critically explored, as well as unpacking the subjectivities of leadership in social worlds, such as values and ethics, to problematize and contextually explore them. This also includes consideration of the interplay of knowledge, power, policy and practice, particularly within educational leadership, as well as working with practitioners to explore the difficulties of practice and ways in which they can navigate the many consequences of role expectations. As the participant narratives offered, this research has highlighted how life history narrative interviews and personal accounts of lived experience of practice can help practitioners to *‘recognize and talk to the different assumptions that are brought to development and the tensions that underpin these’* (Carroll, 2015:103),

as well as encourage others they are in dialogue with to also consider and share their stories reflexively – such as colleagues and other practitioners, as well as leadership tutors, mentors, students, researchers and programme designers. As explored earlier in this chapter, the participants of this research each felt the space of reflection and the reflexive dialogue that the interviews provided was useful in exploring their professional, and at times, personal lives. They noted how it had enabled them to critically evaluate their assumptions and thinking and consider the possibilities their approaches and insights had brought, and indeed could still bring, to leadership practice in education as they continued to imagine possibilities and ideas. In working as a leadership practitioner with others, and developing LMD qualifications and programmes within the education sector, I believe that creating space for reflexivity and debate is an important part of leadership and organisational development and my aim is to encourage these approaches through the various aspects of my practice in leadership development, this includes professional articles and publications aimed at practitioners, involvement with steering-groups, academic practice, speaking at professional conferences and engaging with practitioners in the field.

5.2.1. Limitations of the study

As explored in chapter three (*methodology*), this research study is a small-scale narrative inquiry and I have not sought any kind of generalisable outcome or the answer to a particular hypothesis. Rather, the focus has been on exploration and understanding to present a coherent story that offers insights into lived experience in a way that can provide a meaningful contribution to leadership studies. Indeed, this thesis has offered some contributions to the leadership debate in various streams, yet is certainly not a ‘finished’ article and does not attempt to offer any finality or conclusion to identity as an area of study in leadership. Instead, along with some insights that add to the leadership debate as noted earlier, it also offers a potential methodological approach through which to explore and analyse identity work in the context of practice. Although Holland et al’s (1998) identity in practice framework (figured worlds) is a useful, yet involved approach, I do not argue it as a definitive framework to explore identity as there is indeed still much to learn about identity work from this tradition and how it can benefit leadership research. Furthermore, there is much more to explore about

leadership through constructionist, dialogical and critical perspectives in literature, with many perspective emerging which will continue to develop, such as the approach I have taken. I do argue that an approach like this can offer those interested a starting point, and it certainly did for myself, I intend to continue keep working with this approach to consider its applicability further, as the next section will explore.

Overall, although offering many interesting insights, I feel the work here has barely ‘scratched the surface’ as to the importance of identity in leadership practice, and although much has been shared, there is much more that could have been discussed from the review of literature and participant narratives, yet only so much volume of data and discussion of events can be presented here. Therefore, the work here reflects a beginning, as a starting point – a fragment offered – in the pursuit to understand what identity studies from sociological traditions can offer to leadership practice and development and my journey continues.

5.3 Reflections on the research journey

The research process and the EdD journey have been a reflexive and developmental process that have both challenged me and enriched me as a researcher, academic and practitioner. The journey has challenged, developed and extended my thinking and understanding of social life and professional practice. It has offered many paths of exploration through which to unpack, understand, and deepen my own philosophical, ontological and axiological understanding of researching social life to appreciate and take a stance on identity and leadership. As noted in the introduction, I developed my interest from psychology to sociological traditions to study identity and in finding this deeply enriching I intend to continue working with this perspective. As Fairhurst (2008; 2007) argues, psychology has contributed much to the study of leadership over time, arguing discursive leadership and leadership psychology as alternating lenses and that *‘one is neither superior to nor derivative of the other’* (2008:511). Indeed, Fairhurst’s arguments resonate deeply with my own thinking, and in arguing for a sociological lens here, this does not negate the value of psychological perspectives, rather, it offers another perspective to leadership debate, which is being argued for within LMD

research, and is uncommon within educational leadership. In pursuing a different perspective, my interest in psychology is not diminished, on the contrary, this research has made me aware of how different perspectives in the study of leadership identity can be very useful in exploring practice in context as Ford (2010) also argues. Indeed, Holland et al (1998) brought together differing perspectives to understand identity in social worlds, including social psychology, anthropology, sociology, psychology, constructivism and cultural studies, arguing that combining two major perspectives on identity – culturalist and constructivist – was helpful in framing their lens on identity as dialogical and developmental in social worlds. As Smith and Sparkes (2008) explain, identity, self and social worlds have been conceptualised in different ways over time by qualitative researchers, with some theories having more emphasis on the self over the social and vice versa, but each offering valuable insights from contrasting viewpoints that can inform narrative research in different ways. In this sense, multiple perspectives are of interest to me, particularly as leadership study draws multiple perspectives from across psychology, and now increasingly from sociological traditions, which can offer a rich diversity to leadership study, as Fairhurst (2008) and Ford (2006) argue.

Hence, my aim is to not only continue with sociological tradition in identity studies, such as through ‘figured worlds’ and other sociocultural perspectives, but to also continue to deepen my understanding of other perspectives across identity studies to appreciate a range of lenses that can offer complimenting and contrasting perspectives to the exploration of leadership practice and identity. Therefore, working with figured worlds as a framework has made me more aware of the power of discourse, and provided me with new approaches to explore, question and challenge institutionalised thinking. It has also helped me to consider how discourse could be improvised to create new possibilities to practice, such as by drawing on a range of lenses to explore identity work and leadership practice and what this could offer for practitioners. The participant narratives and their subsequent analysis and implications, certainly resonate deeply with my own experiences as an educational leadership practitioner in many ways and have certainly complicated and problematized my own understanding of leadership, yet have also enriched my thinking. Indeed, the analysis allowed me to explore and reflect on where I have been, what have done and why which was not without discomfort. Engaging in life history interviewing was particularly enriching and the participants also

each explained they had each found the process rewarding for the chance to spend time reflecting on, exploring and discussing their practice and ideas about leadership and what had influenced their thinking.

Inevitably, there are aspects of this process that could have been approached differently and ideally I would have liked to have increased the participant numbers, however this was not possible within limitations of this study, and is thus an intention of further research work. Furthermore, I had been forewarned about the tensions that can come through an EdD journey, however, I had not thought enough about how it would challenge me and my own foundations of knowledge. Indeed, long-held assumptions were shaken and problematized, however, this allowed me to critically question many assumptions and expectations and broaden my understanding and gained a deeper understanding of my own practice. Reviewing the literature, including figured worlds and the many streams around sociology and beyond resulted in an often rich and exciting, yet also a tense and difficult journey, during which I found solace in the words of Grint:

...my understanding has decreased in direct proportion to my increased knowledge: in effect, the more I read, the less I understood... the more I read, the more I realised how ignorant I was. But there was something else at work: the more I read, the more contradictory appeared the conclusions I came to. ...I stopped trying to read everything about leadership and began to try and think through the implications... and at that point, when I had ceased my quest for information, and started my quest for understanding, a light of some form began to emerge.

(Grint, 2000:1)

The range of literature and research explored, along with debates with academic colleagues, fellow students and practitioners around topics raised, although unsettling at times, has greatly influenced and enriched my thinking around leadership. Taking a wider view of practice and exploring identity study offering me valuable insights into leadership practice that I can continue to deepen. Overall, I argue that differing perspectives have a lot to offer leadership study, as noted earlier, and social constructionism, dialogism, and critical theory are interesting avenues of further exploration that can contribute to leadership thinking and inform practice. The final section of this chapter now moves to bring this thesis to a close by offering my final concluding remarks and reflections on leadership identity in practice.

Concluding remarks

My thesis is that identity, learning and development are intrinsically linked and influenced by sociocultural context; as an integral part of leadership practice, the construction of identity is a central and on-going aspect of leadership and management development.

Exploring leadership identity work from sociological traditions, drawing on constructionist and dialogical perspectives, particularly through a sociocultural lens, can illuminate tensions within practice, including the influences to identity construction and the very contexts themselves in which practice occurs.

The research participants' stories offered that, as practitioners, they moved through many life-worlds, underpinned by many powerful expectations and assumptions around leadership, and were continually reforming through co-development, as their identity work evolved over time. Indeed, figured worlds argues for the paradox of human life, in that as social actors, we are not only social reproducers, but also social improvisers, able to find spaces to re-arrange performances that resist expectation and create new ways of being, that can lead to new worlds. Indeed, as Western (2013) argues:

'Acknowledging and naming an underlying discourse can itself be liberating... once a discourse is revealed it can be resisted, shaped, or simply lose some of its power over us... whilst discourses are instruments of power, they are also sites of resistance, offering spaces to contest power.'

Western (2013:152)

As Western argues above, with reflexivity at the heart of practice, this can help to challenge expectations and explore other possibilities to lessen the pressures, struggles and emotional consequences of the 'gap' often faced by educational leaders as they navigate and negotiate rhetorical expectations and the realities of practice and create new possibilities for their practice. Therefore, I find the notions of 'possibility' and 'improvisation' crucial aspects to leadership identity work, learning, and development.

As Holland et al (1998) shared reflections from their own research to elaborate the figured worlds framework, one such story resonated deeply with me from the research Dorothy Holland and Debra Skinner undertook on changing women's identities observed in Naudada in Nepal over several years in the 1980s and 1990s. In the annual traditional festival for women, the Tij (Teej) festival, the Hindu women sang songs about the constraints of their social realities and their roles as women within their cultural worlds. However, they also shared their hopes for new ways of being, as they reflect:

Through the medium of the Tij songs and the collective activity of their song groups, the Naudadan women brought to life an atmosphere of possibility. In the "play" of Tij, women's groups composed and performed songs through which alternative worlds were imagined and experienced... through the medium of the festival, alternative worlds, identities, cultural forms, and senses of agency were codeveloping. This was a path toward a new world...

(Holland et al, 1998:269)

The storytelling within the women's songs began to influence new ways of being for other women and, over a few years, the songs became a way they were able to challenge dominant cultural scripts and discourses and bring about new ways of being in their worlds. Indeed, agency can be an outcome of identity work whereby moments of improvisation can influence change and create new possibilities beyond the structural confines of expectation. As the research participants here each reflected, their development was gradual over time, with powerful 'learning moments' along the way which not only challenged them but created new 'scripts' within their practice, through which they were able to improvise and develop in their everyday realities. Perhaps then, stories of leadership practice, like those told by the participants here, can be used by leadership practitioners to imagine, share and improvise new possibilities that can then evoke new ways of being within leadership worlds, just as the women at the Tij festival did.

The more stories that can be told and shared about the realities of what it is to 'do' leadership identity work, the more the dominant rhetorical narratives will face challenge as other voices gain space and presence in leadership debate, adding new 'scripts' that can be improvised by others. For without possibility, improvisation, and imagination, there is only a repeated scripted performance of the already 'known', and indeed, what

we 'know' needs to evolve as many leadership practitioners, scholars and researchers call for. Hence, narratives of practice, life histories and biographies have an important role to play within leadership debate as a good starting point for exploring practice for a deeper understanding of leadership and context, as well as for searching for new ideas to share.

As this thesis has offered insights into the lives of practitioners and shared the meaning I have made from their stories, as well as my own journey of research into leadership and identity work, I hope it will inspire others to explore and share their own stories of practice and to imagine, and perhaps even create, new possibilities for leadership practice.

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APPENDICES

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(followed by Supplemental appendices for examination purposes only)

APPENDIX 1: Participant Information Pack

Participant Information



21/10/2014

Fiona Creaby
Doctor of Education Student (EdD)
Faculty of Education
Education and Social Research Institute (ESRI)
Birley Campus,
Manchester Metropolitan University
Bonsall St, Manchester M15 6GX
Tel: [...]
Email: [...]

Participant Identification Code:

Interview for Research:

'Exploring leadership in educational organisations through the narratives of leaders'

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study. Before you decide you need to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Please ask me questions if anything you read is not clear or you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. This research study forms part of my Doctor of Education studies and will be a major feature within my thesis planned for submission in 2015/16 academic year and potentially within academic texts, journals and conferences for appropriate future research publication purposes. You have been invited to take part in this study due to your experience as a leader within educational organisation(s) in the United Kingdom and the data collection (interviews) is planned to take place over the next few months.

Description of research

I, the researcher (Fiona Creaby), seek to explore the narrative of others educational leaders through their leadership experiences within educational organisations in order to gain a deeper understanding of and insight into my own leadership journey, and how leaders understand themselves and the organisational workplace around them. Therefore, I am interested in exploring how others came to be educational leaders and two particular areas of interest that have become prominent through my own leadership journey which I wish to explore in depth:

- The journey of legitimacy as a leader within the workplace; what is it like and how does it feel
- Navigating the social dynamics of workplaces as a leader; how do leaders understand, influence and navigate the social dynamics of the workplace particularly when presented with challenging individuals or situations within groups

APPENDIX 1.

Overall, through these areas of interest, the research study seeks to gain a deeper insight into leadership experiences to aid reflection and understanding of leadership as it is experienced and enacted through lived experiences in daily practices. It is envisaged that this study will offer rich discussions and insights into leadership practice and thereby offer useful insights to educational leaders who are seeking to reflect on their own leadership journey.

Reasons for interview

The rationale for interviewing is to gather your lived experiences as a leader and create a leadership narrative for you that tells your leadership story through your life history along with the two specific themes of questioning related to the two areas of interest for this study (as above). Your narrative will be used, along with debates within literature, to allow deeper reflection on leadership agency and on my own narrative with the aim of offering a rich insight and deep understanding of the leadership experiences through the narratives of educational leaders in their daily realities.

Interview process and procedures; what is involved and what is required of you:

The interview process involves three interviews of approximately 90-120 minutes each. The intention is to spread the three interviews over a series of a few weeks, but there is the potential to do them closer together at your request and convenience. The first interview will seek to gather your life history in relation to your career and how you came to be an educational leader. The second interview will focus on exploring your experience(s) as a newcomer leader to an organisation and your journey of legitimacy as a leader within that workplace. The third interview will involve exploring experience(s) of workplace social and cultural dynamics especially in relation to challenging individuals or situations within work groups and what how these experiences influenced you as a leader. As the interviews are open and unstructured there is a key discussion as outlined area rather than actual questions, however the focus topic will be highlighted prior to each interview. Each interview will be recorded and transcribed and you will have the opportunity to review transcripts and the subsequent narratives that are constructed from the interviews prior to inclusion in the thesis. Therefore, as a participant you will be asked to commit to attend three interviews (in a location and time of your choice) and you will be offered the opportunity to review transcripts of these interviews for accuracy purposes, and to review the narrative constructed from these interviews to ensure you are comfortable with what has been constructed. The preparatory information required from each participant is an overview of their career history in a table format to be returned to me at least three days prior to the first interview and is attached as part of this interview information pack.

How the interviews will be used

The interviews will be used to construct a leadership narrative of each participant to inform the work of thesis, which will uphold your right to anonymity (refer to the next section below for information around confidentiality and anonymity as a participant). The narratives will feature within the main body of the thesis and this may include some specific excerpts from your interview transcriptions as relevant and necessary to the research discussion. The interview transcripts and prep information sheet will be used for thesis submission purposes only. The interview data will not be used beyond the scope of this project and all interview transcripts and recordings will be destroyed upon acceptance of this thesis by the board of examiners, however your constructed

Leadership narrative and the findings and conclusions from the main body of the thesis may be referred to or used within further research however you will not be identified in any further research, report or publication and your actual interview excerpts will not be used without your prior consent; if your narrative is planned for use within any publication or research material beyond this thesis, you will be notified prior to publishing.

Your rights as a participant

APPENDIX 1.

As a participant in the research study, it is important to understand how you will be protected, what rights you have and what will happen to your data:

- Participation in this research study is entirely voluntary
- You have a right to privacy; the anonymity of participants is a priority and although anonymity cannot be fully guaranteed, the following steps are taken to protect your anonymity unless you directly request to be named within the study in writing to me:
 - Contact and interaction with you as a participant will be done solely through me
 - The interview location will be chosen by you at your convenience
 - With the exception of the viva committee chairperson, I will not discuss with the viva committee or anyone else any names, locations, or identifying particulars of you or any of the participants.
 - Interview transcripts will be completed only by me, or in extenuating circumstances by a reputable and discreet transcriber. Pseudonyms will be used in the transcripts for all names of persons, workplaces, locations, cities; every step will be taken to disguise your identity within the thesis and within any published materials or presentations.
 - The transcripts will remain in my direct physical possession; all interview recordings, transcripts, documentation and consent forms are kept in a locked cabinet with access limited to myself and digital/electronic material relating to your participation is secured to my personal possession with security features, password protection and encryption of materials; any back-up copies will be security encrypted and stored in the locked filing cabinet and physical/digital materials i.e. recordings and electronic transcripts will be destroyed upon acceptance of the thesis, or at your request sent to you.
 - Updates of the progress of the research thesis will be made to you at timely periods, particularly approaching submission and acceptance, unless you request not to receive updates.
- As a participant, you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without giving any reason (you can withdraw in writing to me at the address above, or via email or telephone). If you wish to withdraw from the study at any point the following range of options are available to you with regards to your data and inclusion within the study:
 - data collected up to your point of withdrawal will still be used within the thesis; all recorded interviews, transcripts, consent information and participant information collected from you will be destroyed upon acceptance of the thesis by the board of examiners and you may request copies of all your data prior to destruction
 - you may review the data collected up to your point of withdrawal, which may include recorded interviews, transcripts and the constructed narrative, and specify which parts of the data you are happy to be included within the study and which parts you wish to be removed; all recorded interviews, transcripts, consent information and participant information collected from you will be destroyed upon acceptance of the thesis by the board of examiners and you may request copies of all your data prior to destruction
 - all data collected from you, including recorded interviews, transcripts, the constructed narrative and participant information and consents will be removed from the thesis and destroyed and you will not feature within any part of the study; you may request copies of all your data prior to destruction
- Participation in the research study is unpaid and no payments or expenses will be made to any participant
- This study contributes to my Doctor of Education thesis as a student through the University and there are no sponsors of this research study.

- The final thesis, upon acceptance, will be made available to you. **APPENDIX 1.**
- The thesis may be used and stored for research purposes and publication purposes and made available to individuals and institutions beyond the university, and an electronic copy of my thesis will be included in the British Library Electronic Theses On-line System (EThOS). Interview transcripts, consent forms and interview prep forms will not be included with the thesis (only for submission purposes) and only the constructed narratives and specific excerpts from transcripts will be used in the main body of the thesis and therefore included.

Benefits and Risks to you as participant:

As the research is seeking to reconstruct your lived experiences as educational leader this may include recounting sensitive information or difficult past events; privacy and anonymity has been addressed in the previous section, however please be aware of the risk of emotional sensitivity for you as a participant. The benefits of taking part for you as a participant is the chance to deeply reflect on your own leadership journey and share your experiences and sense making to gain a deeper understanding of yourself as a leader with the potential to offer insight to the me as the researcher exploring my own leadership narrative, and potentially to others on their leadership journey. This research study has the opportunity to act as a discourse or voice for you as an educational leader and thereby has the chance to influence the wider educational leadership community.

Supporting organisation:

The supporting organising is Manchester Metropolitan University's (MMU) Education and Social Research Institute (ESRI). For information on ESRI please visit the ESRI website: <http://www.esri.mmu.ac.uk/> and for more information on MMU's general research policies, ethics and support please visit <http://www2.mmu.ac.uk/research/>

What if there is a problem or you are not happy with something:

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, please contact me directly and I will do my best to answer your questions: Fiona Creaby: Tel: [...] Email: [...]

If you remain unhappy and/or do not wish to discuss your concerns directly with me, in the first instance you can contact: Dr Linda Hammersley-Fletcher (Director of Studies)
Manchester Metropolitan University: Tel: [...] Email: [...]

Beyond my Director of Studies, if you wish to discuss your concern further, please contact the University's Education Social Research Institute:
[...] (ESRI) Faculty of Education, Manchester Metropolitan University
ESRI Birley, Room 1.06, 53 Bonsall Street, Manchester, M15 6GX
Tel: (0161) 247 2320 Email: esri@mmu.ac.uk

The next steps:

If you wish to be involved in the research study, please contact me as above and we will arrange a time to discuss the study and plan a schedule for the interviews and the return of the prep information sheet. At the first meeting, I will ask you to complete a form of consent for participation in this research.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information, I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Fiona Creaby

APPENDIX 2: *Ethical consent form*



21/10/2014

Fiona Creaby
Doctor of Education Student (EdD)
Faculty of Education
Education and Social Research Institute (ESRI)
Manchester Metropolitan University
Bonsall St, Manchester M15 6GX
Tel: [...] Email: [...]

Consent Form

Title of Project: Exploring leadership in educational organisations through narratives of practice (draft title)

Name of Researcher: Fiona Creaby

Participant Identification Code for this project:

Please initial each box

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet dated 21/10/2014 for the above project and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the interview procedure. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason to the named researcher. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. I understand that my responses will be sound recorded and used for analysis for this research project. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. I give/do not give permission for my interview recording to be archived as part of this research project, making it available to future researchers. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. I understand that my responses will remain anonymous. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. I agree to take part in the above research project. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. I understand that at my request a transcript of my interview can be made available to me. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Researcher

Date

Signature

To be signed and dated in presence of the participant. Once this has been signed, you will receive a copy of your signed and dated consent form and information sheet by post.

APPENDIX 3: Participant background form

Participant information gathering sheet

Research Study: Exploring leadership in educational organisations through the narratives of leaders

To gain a sense of your career history, please complete the following table with as much detail as you can recall starting with your earliest employment (extra sheets attached if you require more columns):

Sheet number: _____ of _____					
	Workplace 1	Workplace 2	Workplace 3	Workplace 4	Workplace 5
Sector of employment i.e. education, healthcare, government, commercial (specify type of business)					
Type of Institution i.e. state school, childcare centre University, small/medium business, hospital, local council etc.					
Phase/age range i.e. early years, primary, 11-16 etc.					
No. of pupils /student on roll (approximates)					
No. of staff employed (approximates)					
Area of work and role /responsibility i.e. class teacher, administrator, head of department, manager					
Formal management or leadership responsibility (if any) i.e. team, department, project, whole-school, faculty					

Researcher use only Participant identification code:

Researcher: Fiona Creaby

End
