University of Strathclyde

Department of Work, Employment and Organisation

Leadership-as-communicative-practice:

Transforming situations through talk and text

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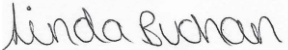
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Linda Buchan

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Abstract

The dominant concept of leadership among academics and practitioners foregrounds individual leaders and views leadership as a 'thing' that can be discovered. However, there is growing scholarly consensus that we need to challenge the assumptions that underpin traditional leadership theories and engage more effectively with the lived experience of leadership. This thesis responds to the call to consider leadership from different perspectives by applying the lens of process philosophy to leadership-as-practice (LAP), an emergent stream of research that has the potential to deepen our understanding of the dynamic nature of leadership as it is accomplished in everyday activities.

To extend the existing understanding of LAP grounded in a process ontology, this thesis brings together two complementary Pragmatist informed theoretical perspectives: the performative theory of organizational communication developed by communicative constitution of organization (CCO) scholars; and John Dewey's theory of Inquiry. The concept of *leadership-as-communicative-practice* (LACP) proposes that leadership emerges in response to ambiguity and uncertainty and is a social and material process that transforms situations. This transformative change is accomplished through the complex entanglement of conversation and written texts.

To explore LACP empirically, a nine-month immersive study was undertaken in a Scottish Health and Social Care Partnership. Through attending designated 'leadership' meetings, two issues emerged that were causing tension within the organization and necessitating leadership. These two situations were then shadowed as they unfolded. The emergent leadership movements within each situation were analysed using two co-productive lenses: Inquiry and co-orientation. Analysing turns in conversations suggested that co-orientation occurred across multiple timeframes, was characterized by dissent as well as consensus, and enabled the talking out of issues, relational dynamics and the discovery of new insights into the situation. Moreover, the findings

highlighted the contribution of documents in carrying the almost imperceptible movements generated through co-orientation through time and space to transform situations.

The study not only adds to the theoretical and empirical understanding of processual LAP, but also provides new insights into the challenges of studying leadership as an unfolding phenomenon. Specifically, *shadowing situations* is offered as an extension to the organizational shadowing literature that engages with the need for more mobile methods. LACP provides an alternative to the dominant leadership concept within organizations and lays the foundation for new approaches to developing leadership that attend to the processual, communicative dynamics of leadership practice.

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Glossary of terms

Agency	The capacity of an actor to act and make a difference
Communication	The establishment of a link, connection or relationship that involves both human and non-human actors.
Communication event	Communication bounded by time and space such as a meeting.
Co-orientation	An ongoing process of organizing involving two or more people orienting themselves to each other and to a common issue or object of concern.
Inquiry	The process of transforming an uncertain situation to a more understandable and predictable future situation.
Inter-action	An understanding of human action that considers that individual entities have an impact on each other but are unchanged by the exchange.
Leadership	An organizing process of producing direction and shaping movement.
Leadership-as-practice	A stream of research that studies leadership as a social and material process.
Materiality	How anything (an object, know-how, attitude, emotion etc.) is materialised and made visible.
Performative	To perform an act or to bring something into being through language.
Process ontology	A philosophical position that views the world as being formed of processes and considers entities as temporary stabilisations within the ongoing flow of processes.
Situation	A unified whole (people, materialities and context) in relation to a specific issue or concern.

Self-action	An understanding of human action that considers individuals as having free-will to act unconstrained by structures, norms or each other.
Substantialist ontology	A philosophical position that views the world as being formed of entities or 'things' that can be identified and studied.
Trans-action	A holistic understanding of human action that sees people, materialities and context as irreducible to separate entities.
Warranted assertabilities	Judgements made as part of an Inquiry as to the best action to transform an uncertain situation.

1.0 Setting the scene

There appears a genuine and strongly held belief in the UK that leadership is important in all aspects of our lives whether political, social or organizational. Claims that we need better/stronger/more effective leadership are commonplace within the British media in the light of the uncertainties around Brexit, an unpredictable US President, and the continuing challenging commercial environment faced by many businesses. The Roffey Park Institute's Management Agenda (Lucy, Wellbelove, Poorkavoos, & Hatcher, 2018) argues that developing leadership skills is the key to sustainable productivity and growth in the UK. The multi-billion-pound worldwide leadership development industry is further testament to the view that investing in leadership is essential for improving organizational performance. Yet, despite a growing sense that leadership is the panacea for many of our current ills, there is little clarity on what constitutes this fabled 'leadership'. The continual refrain for more and better leadership suggests that existing concepts of leadership are insufficient to guide the enacting of leadership in government, society, and organizations. Therefore, the initial question that motivated this thesis was how to conceptualise leadership in a way that offers insights into how to 'do' leadership more effectively.

Turning to academia to answer this question provided a confusing array of answers. The discipline of leadership studies has grown exponentially over recent decades, yet it remains fragmented with scholars continuing to wrestle with understanding what leadership is, what it does in organizations and how it is best developed (Alvesson, 2017). There is still a strong tendency among academics to conflate leaders with leadership and to focus both theorising and empirical research on the skills and attributes of individual leaders and the relationships between leaders and those they lead. Since the 1980s, increasingly insistent voices have emerged advocating the need to study leadership through different philosophical lenses (Barker, 1997; Bryman, 1986), to shift the emphasis from leaders to leadership (Crevani, Lindgren, &

Packendorff, 2010), to take a more critical position regarding power and gender (Fletcher, 2004), and to consider leadership from more discursive (Fairhurst, 2007) processual (Hosking, 1988; Wood, 2005) and practice perspectives (Carroll, Levy, & Richmond, 2008). This thesis responds to this call to look at leadership differently by applying the lens of process philosophy to leadership-as-practice (hereafter referred to as LAP), one of a suite of new theories that challenges the dominant focus on individual leaders and focuses on the social, relational and material movements of leadership as it is accomplished.

The need to look at leadership differently resonated with my own experiences as both a senior manager and an HR professional. I have first-hand experience of the damage wrought in one organization by a Managing Director who perceived himself to be a 'heroic leader' who could single-handedly lead the organization. As a member of his 'leadership team', I railed against the growing individualism this approach encouraged and the increasingly destructive relationships that resulted. Sadly, all this individual leader achieved was to lead the company to its ultimate demise. My more positive experiences of leadership have been when I have contributed to collaborative teams tasked with leading an organization. Moreover, the assumption that being a leader equated to a position within the organizational hierarchy was also problematic for me as I had experienced leadership emerging within teams at all levels in organizations with or without appointed leaders.

Equally influential in motivating this thesis was my experience of attempting to improve leadership within organizations. Having designed, delivered or commissioned third-party leadership development programmes many times in my career, I increasingly questioned their value and contribution to organizational success. Whilst offering excellent personal development opportunities for those either holding or having been identified as having the potential to be appointed into leader roles, the assumption that developing individual skills and behaviours translates to more effective

leadership seemed misplaced. Thus, this thesis is a response to a personal question as to the value of existing notions of leadership and follows my quest to explore an alternative conceptualisation that might be more useful. Moreover, this thesis marks my career transition from a practitioner to a scholar with an interest in understanding more about how this elusive phenomenon of leadership is accomplished and developed; a progressive understanding that informs my teaching and research.

This chapter begins with a brief overview of the challenges of defining leadership and offers a Pragmatist[1] perspective that rather than focusing on what leadership 'is', it is more productive to consider the value of what leadership 'does' in the everyday processes of organizing. Langley and Tsoukas (2010:14) observe that "adding the word 'work' to any apparently static and structural concept is an interesting device for making it more dynamic and forcing consideration of how human agency might operate on it." Therefore, I propose that the 'work of leadership' offers a useful construct to understand the dynamic nature of LAP and offers a point of departure for exploring how leadership is accomplished in organizations. The objectives and research question that underpin this thesis are then presented before the contributions made by this thesis are briefly outlined. The chapter concludes with a map to show the progression of this thesis towards an alternative, processual understanding of LAP.

1.1 Leadership: a contested concept

In his frequently cited quote, Stodgill (1974:7) noted that "there are almost as many different definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept." Therefore, no thesis on leadership can begin without addressing the elephant in the room - what is leadership? Most scholars working within mainstream leadership studies would respond with variations on a theme that leadership occurs when a leader influences their followers/subordinates to achieve a common goal (Bass,

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[1] Throughout this thesis I use the convention of a capital P to describe Pragmatism as a philosophy to contrast this with the commonplace use of pragmatism to refer to practicality and expediency.

1990; Yukl, 2010). Curiously, others choose not to offer any definition, assuming that leadership is self-evident and we all know what it is (Barker, 1997). Scholars advocating different perspectives offer alternative definitions of leadership as a relational process of influence through which social order is constructed (Uhl-Bien, 2006), as a discursive construct (Fairhurst, 2007; Grint, 2005b), or as the enactment of asymmetric and oppressive power and gender relations (D. Collinson, 2011; Fletcher, 2004). Taken to an extreme, the definitional debate has led some scholars to argue that the existence of leadership should not be taken for granted (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2003) or to advocate doing away with the concept entirely (Gemmill & Oakley, 1992).

The seemingly irresolvable debate about what leadership 'is' suggests that leadership may be one of those concepts that is "essentially contested, concepts the proper use of which inevitably involves endless disputes about their proper uses on the part of their users" (Gallie, 1956:169). In addition to being a contested concept, there is a corresponding argument that it is neither possible nor necessary to reach a definitional consensus (Grint, 2005a). As Alvesson (1996:458) contends, "a common definition of leadership is not practically possible, would not be very helpful if it was, does not hit the target and may also obstruct new ideas and interesting ways of thinking." In accordance with this view, I do not intend to enter into a prolonged debate about what leadership is but to outline my position that every definition of leadership will be influenced by the underlying philosophical assumptions of the researcher. To further unsettle the status quo in leadership studies necessitates different perspectives and hence different understandings of leadership.

Throughout this thesis, there is an assumption that leadership exists and is a useful concept within organizations. This view is derived from both my experience of the tangible effects of leadership (both positive and negative) and from the underpinning Pragmatist philosophy that informs my work. In the original Pragmatist maxim, Charles Sanders Peirce encouraged us to "consider what effects, which might conceivably have

practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then our conception of those effects is the whole of our conception of the object" (Peirce, 1958: v. 5, paragraphs 388–410). Rather than regarding leadership as a societal and cultural discourse (Ford, 2006), an 'alienating myth' (Gemmill & Oakley, 1992), or an 'empty signifier' (Kelly, 2014), I view leadership as a social and material process, a specific form of organizing that does something in organizations (Hosking, 1988). Specifically, I adopt the notion of the *work of leadership* to describe the effects or 'practical bearings' of leadership. Whilst this idea has been developed by several leadership scholars (Foldy, Goldman, & Ospina, 2008; Ospina & Foldy, 2010), much of their focus has been on identifying the cognitive processes involved in leaders doing leadership. A more processual understanding that is adopted throughout this thesis is that "[p]roducing direction, and consequently shaping movement and courses of action, may thus be seen as the core of leadership work" (Crevani, 2018:89). Therefore, the focus of this study is on the Pragmatic endeavour of exploring *how* the work of leadership, defined as producing direction, is accomplished in practice.

1.2 The objectives and contribution of this research

This thesis responds to long-standing calls to study leadership from different viewpoints (Bryman, 1986) and adheres to the view that leadership research is being prevented from advancing and creating new and challenging theories by its dependence on a very narrow and limited worldview (Barker, 1997). A process ontology of *becoming* (Langley & Tsoukas, 2010) that sees the world as constituted by processes that are continually in the making rather than things that are already made, has the potential to offer a different vista on leadership; a potential that has been recognised and is beginning to gain greater traction within the leadership studies community (Crevani, 2018; Crevani et al., 2010; Sergi, 2016; Simpson, 2016; Wood, 2005). However, there is scope to take this line of thinking further. Therefore, the initial objectives of this thesis were threefold:

1. To advance an ontologically processual understanding of LAP;
2. To conceptualise how leadership, viewed through this lens, is accomplished in practice;
3. To explore the unfolding of processual LAP empirically in a health and social care organization to gain insights into the doing of leadership.

Immersion in the literature to understand how leadership scholars have utilised the ideas of process and practice to inform their thinking led to the realisation that both 'process' and 'practice' are polysemic concepts (Langley & Tsoukas, 2010; Orlikowski, 2010). The multiplicity of uses and understandings of these terms meant that to have any hope of effectively navigating through the messy realm of a world that is continually becoming, I needed to build a strong theoretical basis for my argument. Pragmatism, and specifically the work of one of the founders of the Classical school of thought, John Dewey, provided one perspective that intertwined both process and practice to create a cohesive foundation on which to develop my position. Having teased out a Deweyan theory of practice, I then used this understanding to develop a processual understanding of LAP, a niche theorisation that seeks to move away from viewing leadership as residing in individuals and instead explore what we can learn when we consider how leadership is accomplished in everyday activities. An emergent insight from this conceptual development was the centrality of communication in the doing of leadership.

To further understand how communication constitutes leadership, I turned to the intersection of the leadership studies and organizational communication literature and to the ideas of the communicative constitution of organization (CCO). This stream of research, derived from Pragmatist principles and the pragmatic linguistics of John Austin (1962), considers communication not as a mere function occurring within organizations, but rather as a performative social and material process that brings organizations into being. These ideas have informed discursive views of leadership

(Fairhurst & Connaughton, 2014; Tourish, 2014) and this thesis engages further with the ideas of CCO and explores how the theory of co-orientation (Taylor, 1999, 2006) and work on the materiality of communication (Cooren, 2004, 2015; Sergi, 2013) can provide further insights into how leadership is accomplished in practice. Therefore, the research question that guided this study was *how is the work of leadership communicatively accomplished?*

Seeking to answer this question provided a methodological puzzle. How could I conduct empirical work that would allow me to experience the everyday unfolding of LAP, access the difficult to see producing of direction and shaping of movement, and explore the communicative nature of performing leadership? An initial review of the methods literature, alongside inspiration from how other LAP scholars had undertaken research, led me first to pursue an ethnographic style immersion in the research site. However, practical difficulties with this design created the opportunity for more emergent and innovative approaches to both creating and analysing empirical material.

This thesis offers three research contributions. The first is to advance a processual, Pragmatist informed theorising of LAP as a social and material process that unfolds over time through the concept of *leadership-as-communicative-practice*. The second contribution is to provide an empirical illustration of the dynamic, communicative constitution of leadership that goes beyond existing theory to extend the LAP literature. The final contribution is to develop greater methodological sophistication in studying processual LAP and to provide insights into designing, conducting and evaluating process research that may be of value to other researchers. Overall, this study offers a supportive voice to those scholars advocating a broadening panorama on leadership to enrich our understanding of this complex, difficult to observe phenomenon.

1.3 Thesis outline

In introducing this study, I have positioned this thesis within the field of leadership studies and highlighted the niche conversation to which I intend to contribute, namely, developing a processual, communicative view of LAP. The final section of this chapter provides a map for the rest of the thesis to guide readers through the developing argument. However, the linearity of the document belies the emergent nature of its creation as the shape and content were continually revised as both the processual nature of the research and my thinking unfolded. To avoid creating an overly sequential text, there are points that are introduced in the early chapters of this thesis that are subsequently revisited in later chapters to refine the arguments, and reflexive passages that describe the messiness and confusion that I experienced as I undertook this research. This is intended to capture my experiences of processual research as a dynamic performance (Sergi & Hallin, 2011).

Chapter two provides an overview of the evolution of leadership studies as a discipline. It is not intended to be a comprehensive review of the extant literature but a brief journey through the key trends in leadership research that highlight the origins of alternative conversations about how to theorise and study leadership. To provide structure for the disparate array of ideas, I have chosen to focus on four main areas: the traditional, mainstream literature that gives primacy to the role of individual leaders, their traits, behaviours and styles; contemporary trends that place greater emphasis on more collective and process forms of leadership and encompass growing interest in more critical approaches to leadership; the developing interest in process philosophy as an alternative way to understand leadership; and the emergent body of work exploring leadership from a practice perspective. I conclude the chapter by arguing for the value of considering leadership through an ontologically processual lens and position my own work in the nascent body of literature on LAP.

Chapter three provides the conceptual framing for this thesis. I begin by exploring the increasing interest in the communicative constitution of leadership before introducing the work of the Montreal School of scholars who develop the idea that communication is constitutive of organization. Two features of the Montreal School's broad oeuvre are discussed in greater detail: co-orientation and hybrid agency. I then outline my chosen approach to 'practice' drawing on the ideas of John Dewey and explore how the theory of Inquiry[2] can elaborate our understanding of leadership processes. By bringing together the complementary ideas of Dewey and the Montreal School, I outline a performative conceptualisation of LAP, *leadership-as-communicative-practice*, that offers one way to explain how the work of leadership is accomplished. Key to this conceptualisation is the complex entanglement of conversation and written texts.

Chapter four discusses the methodological challenges of studying leadership from a process and practice perspective whereby leadership is not an abstract 'entity' that can be measured but a complex, dynamic, unfolding phenomenon. The guidelines developed to assist in designing, conducting and evaluating processual research are then outlined before the novel approach of *shadowing situations* is proposed in response to the need for mobile methods of studying LAP. Two theoretically informed analytic lenses, *Inquiry* and *co-orientation*, are proposed to offer differing perspectives on the movements of leadership. The research site, a Scottish Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), is then introduced before considering the practical aspects of my empirical work and detailing the process of gaining access to the site and creating and analysing empirical material. The chapter concludes with a reflexive narrative about my role as a researcher, the practical difficulties of doing processual research and how best to evaluate the quality of the insights created.

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[2] I use the capitalized Inquiry to distinguish Dewey's notion of a controlled process of observation, inference and judgement that transforms an indeterminate situation to a determinate situation from the commonplace use of inquiry as a request for information or a formal investigation.

Chapters five and six analyse the performance of leadership in the two situations studied. The first situation, Adults with Multiple and Complex Needs, arose in response to growing concerns within the organization about the poor outcomes for vulnerable adults engaging with the available support services. The second situation, the need to develop a strategy for Mental Health Services, emerged from disenchantment with the existing 'death by a thousand cuts' approach being adopted in response to financial pressures on the existing services. By shadowing the unfolding of these situations as groups of people came together to understand and address their concerns, it was possible to follow the work of leadership in producing direction and shaping movement and to tease out the relationship between conversation and documents.

Chapter seven explores the implications of the emergent insights and reflects on how the empirical work supports and extends the conceptual framing of this thesis. The idea of *leadership-as-communicative-practice* proposed in chapter three is further developed to illustrate how movement emerges through numerous overlapping, seemingly mundane, conversations that enable the co-orientation of people around a common issue. The 'talking out' of a shared understanding of the issue at hand creates action, and through co-orientational turns in conversation, the group progressively moves through the fluid process of Inquiry. The material nature of leadership practice is foregrounded as the agential role of written documents in generating movement is examined. I conclude that people and documents are irreducible actors in performing leadership. Reverting to the uncertainties that triggered my personal interest in how leadership happens in practice, this chapter concludes by considering the implications of this new concept of leadership. Specifically, I explore the potential of a processual understanding of LAP to provide a new way of looking at how leadership is developed.

Chapter eight goes on to conclude that what emerges from this study is a greater understanding of the communicative process by which the work of leadership is accomplished. This engages with the academic debate within LAP as to how leadership

is communicatively performed in organizations and offers new insights embedded in a process ontology to complement existing understandings. Moreover, the empirical study contributes to LAP by illustrating the practical nature of these ideas. A final contribution is to develop the ideas of organizational shadowing and offer 'situation' as an alternative focus for the shadow to follow. The thesis concludes with the hope that the ideas of *leadership-as-communicative-practice* offer an alternative conceptualisation that will provide useful insights for academics and practitioners alike as they continue the quest for the holy grail of effective leadership.

2.0 Leadership studies: An evolving landscape

The volume of leadership literature is overwhelming. Searching for 'leadership' returns more than 180,000 leadership books on Amazon and 34,000 articles on Web of Science, indicating our ever-present fascination with the idea. Given the enormity of the literature, which "would take years to read never mind assimilate and review" (Grint, 2005a:1), it is neither practical nor useful to undertake a comprehensive review of the literature here. Instead, the intention of this chapter is to explore the alternative conceptions of leadership that have arisen in response to the heroic, individualistic and positivistic orientation that prevails in the mainstream leadership literature (Barker, 2001). Implicit in developing an 'alternative' view is that it contrasts with an existing perspective. Therefore, to understand the origins of alternative theorisations of leadership, it is first necessary to explore the mainstream academic thinking and the resultant frustrations with this approach that triggered new streams of research. The emergent collective, process and critical perspectives on leadership are discussed before the argument is made that an ontologically processual view of leadership offers a productive lens through which to study the dynamics of leadership practice.

The chapter begins with a brief chronology of historical developments in the traditional, or mainstream, field of leadership studies that gives primacy to the role of individual leaders. A critique of this body of literature highlights several assumptions and limitations that contributed to the rise of what has become known as 'post-heroic' and critical perspectives. Having briefly outlined some emerging trends that can be loosely grouped under the umbrella of 'contemporary' approaches to leadership, I explore two lines of thinking that are central to the alternative conceptualisation of leadership developed throughout this thesis; leadership as a process and as practice. The chapter concludes by identifying the research space to which this thesis will contribute, namely, the development of an ontologically processual understanding of LAP.

2.1 Mainstream approaches to leadership

Much of our existing knowledge about leadership stems from a view that leadership emanates from leaders, and from a desire to understand what is 'special' about people who lead. What is it about certain people that makes them 'good leaders' and makes others want to follow them? This is perhaps unsurprising given our Western cultural fascination with heroic leaders (when I have asked groups of managers who embodies leadership, the likes of Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, Winston Churchill, and Martin Luther King are typical responses). That early leadership scholars were psychologists (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978; Stodgill, 1974) with an interest in the cognition and behaviour of individuals also contributed to this positioning of the leader as the central point of interest. This section begins with a brief chronology of what is commonly acknowledged to be the mainstream approach to studying leadership. The use of a sequential approach should not be taken to imply that each stream of research was superseded by the next in a linear fashion, merely that it provides a way to succinctly outline major developments over nearly a century of research. Having described many of the key themes within this literature, the contributions and shortcomings of the mainstream, leader-centric literature are then considered.

2.1.1 The rise of the heroic leader

"In the bad old days, leadership was taught mainly by means of the biographies of great men", or so claimed Bennis (2007:2). Indeed, the development of leadership studies as a discipline can be traced back to the 'Great Man' theory (Carlyle, 1866) and the view that we have innate and unchangeable characteristics that either make us a leader or not. Reviewing 124 studies in support of the idea that 'leaders are born and not made', Stodgill (1948) surmised that whilst certain traits such as intelligence, self-confidence, and persistence appeared consistent, each study attributed different characteristics to explain an individual's propensity to become a leader. He concluded

that leadership cannot be pinned down to a set of innate traits and instead proposed that a more fruitful line of inquiry was to consider the behaviours of leaders. In his critique, Spector (2016:258) offered an interesting perspective that whilst largely disregarded, trait theories provided a "striking parallel in contemporary leadership theories, especially transformational leadership." He argued that the historical narrative of leadership as a heroic, masculine concept is something that continues to dominate leadership studies.

The developing view that it was possible to learn to be a leader led to a flurry of interest in creating behavioural taxonomies (Stodgill, 1974; Yukl, 1989a). The Ohio State studies (Halpin & Winer, 1957; Stodgill & Coons, 1957) distinguished between two leadership behaviours: *initiating structure* where the focus was on planning work and achieving objectives; and *consideration*, behaviours that encouraged collaboration and focused on group welfare and building supportive networks. The most effective style of leadership, they argued, was a 'high' style when the leader demonstrated high consideration and high levels of initiating structure. In parallel, the Michigan State studies (Katz & Kahn, 1951; Likert, 1961) also differentiated between task-oriented (focused on achieving a goal) and relationship-oriented behaviours (focused on the needs of other people). They argued that there were three different approaches to leadership: authoritarian, democratic and laissez-faire (where the leader ignores problems and refrains from intervening). That there were various 'styles' of leadership drawing on differing behaviours underpinned influential early theories of leadership such as Action Centred Leadership (Adair, 1973) with its focus on the interplay between the task, the team and the individual and the Blake Mouton Managerial Grid with its model of five leadership styles based on level of concern for people and level of concern for results (Blake & Mouton, 1964).

The criticism that behavioural theories failed to consider the impact of the environment in which the leader's behaviour arose led to a new wave of leadership

theories. These theories argued that leadership styles were contingent on context and sought to identify how situational factors moderated the effectiveness of leadership approaches (Parry & Bryman, 2006). In his review of contingency theories of leadership, Yukl (1989b) described nine situational theories including Fiedler's contingency theory (Fiedler, 1967), path-goal theory (House & Mitchell, 1974), situational leadership (Hersey & Blanchard, 1977), normative decision theory (Vroom & Yetton, 1973), multiple linkages theory (Yukl, 1989a), and Leader-Member Exchange (Graen & Cashman, 1975; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). These theories fell into two categories: those such as situational leadership that sought to understand how leaders matched their behaviour to the context; and those such as Fiedler's contingency theory which assumed that a leader could not change their behaviour, therefore, their effectiveness was dependent on the nature of the context in which they were required to lead. Implicit in these early contingency theories was the view that both the leader's behaviour and the context were stable variables that could be measured.

By the early 1980s, there was growing disillusionment with trait, style and contingency approaches (for a detailed critique, see Parry & Bryman, 2006). Wide-ranging criticisms challenged several assumptions: that all behaviours were rational thereby ignoring the emotional and value-driven aspects of being a leader; the reliance on the view that all behaviours could be categorized as relating to a task or a relationship; and the tendency to assume a causal relationship whereby the leader's effectiveness was influenced by contextual factors. The now outdated term 'new leadership' was adopted to describe a new genre of theories that sought to address the perceived shortcomings of behavioural and situational theories (Bryman, 1992). Predominant among these new theories were transformational leadership (Bass, 1985), charismatic leadership (Conger & Kanungo, 1987) and simply 'leadership' (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Kouzes & Posner, 1998). Whilst offering different theorisations, these 'new' approaches shared a desire to shift the emphasis from the leader as exerting influence over other people to depicting leaders as creating meaning for their followers (Parry & Bryman, 2006). These

'new leadership' models emphasized symbolic behaviour, providing vision, emotional feelings and positive moral values (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009).

Many of the ideas of 'new leadership' stemmed from Burns' (1978) distinction between transactional and transformational styles of leadership. Transactional leadership offered followers rewards for compliance with their wishes whereas transformational leadership was a process where leaders and followers engaged in a mutual process of "raising one another to higher levels of motivation and morality" (Burns, 1978:20). Transformational leaders appealed to the higher ideals and values of followers and modelled these values themselves. Burns considered transformational leadership as more effective than transactional leadership as it addressed people's higher-order needs for self-actualisation (Maslow, 1954). He also viewed transformational leadership as an ongoing process rather than the contingent exchanges of the transactional approach. Bass (1985) built on Burns' ideas and developed a model of transformational leadership that encompassed four dimensions: *idealized influence*, how a leader behaves that causes followers to identify with them; *inspirational motivation*, how the leader articulates an inspiring vision and portrays optimism about the followers' ability to attain this goal; *intellectual stimulation*, the degree to which the leader challenges assumptions and encourages followers to contribute ideas; *individualized consideration,* the degree to which the leader listens to and understands the individual needs of their followers and acts as a coach and mentor.

As research in this area grew, a new theoretical framework emerged known as the 'Full Range Leadership model' (Avolio, 1999; Avolio & Bass, 2002) which expanded existing ideas to incorporate transactional, transformational and laissez-faire leadership. This desire for an overarching theory of leadership styles remains ever present among leadership scholars as indicated by a recent article by Anderson and Sun (2017) who reviewed nine identified styles of leadership (charismatic and transformational, transactional, initiating structure and consideration, ideological and pragmatic, servant,

authentic, ethical, spiritual, and integrative public leadership). They proposed that rather than adding new styles to the mix, there was a need for a new 'full range' conceptualisation of leadership that consolidated existing knowledge and encompassed what was distinctive about each style thus bringing "integration to the chaos that characterizes the existing literature on leadership styles" (Anderson & Sun, 2017:77).

The dominance of mainstream approaches to leadership is reflected in several reviews (Dinh et al., 2014; Gardner, Lowe, Moss, Mahoney, & Cogliser, 2010) which highlight the continued prevalence of research into transformational leadership, "the theoretical flagship in the great armada of the blooming area of leadership" (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2015:140). New research streams continue to refresh traditional ideas. For example, examining the role of Emotional Intelligence in leadership (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002) and seeking to understand the neuroscience behind leadership behaviours have further reignited interest in the behaviours of individual leaders whilst the notion of the Great Man theory has been reinvigorated with Spector (2016) who proposed that when considered from a Freudian perspective, this opens up new avenues for understanding the continued psychological allure of the heroic leader. The multiplicity of studies conducted within this mainstream literature has created, developed and extended what Barker (2001) described as a strong body of conventional knowledge about leadership.

2.1.2 A critique of leader-centric approaches

The contribution made by this 'conventional body of knowledge' in leadership studies has been significant. Levels of academic interest in leadership have grown exponentially since the early ideas of trait theorists. The notion of transformational leadership gave a further "shot in the arm" to leadership studies in the 1990s by providing an approach that enjoyed a swathe of support among academics and

practitioners (Parry & Bryman, 2006:453). The popularisation of the ideas of transformational leadership through the book, *In Search of Excellence,* by Peters and Waterman (1982) saw this theory used in organizations to design frameworks to describe the behavioural competencies that could be used to identify effective leaders. This 'competency paradigm' (Bolden & Golding, 2006) also influenced the design of leadership development programmes that focused on developing the skills and capabilities of individual leaders. Therefore, as Barker (2001:477) insightfully commented, "[o]ne hundred years of leadership theory development based upon the assumption that leadership is necessarily a function of the persona of the leader cannot be summarily dismissed." However, he added an important caveat to this by arguing that it was entirely appropriate to question mainstream leadership studies if the "foundation assumptions are contradictory, poorly supported, or simply wrong." The need to challenge assumptions was reiterated more recently by Alvesson (2017:2) who concurred that "[p]roblematizing broadly shared assumptions is important in order to tackle large issues and encourage more than marginal rethinking."

Reviewing seminal writings within the leader-centric literature, it is possible to tease out several assumptions that are open to further examination (see figure 1 for an overview). The first is a tendency to conflate leaders with leadership and to view leadership as the outcome of the behaviour of a leader. Thus, by understanding what leaders think (cognition) and do (behaviour), we can understand leadership. As early as the 1970s, Burns (1978:1) sought to distinguish between the two ideas arguing that, "If we know all too much about our leaders, we know far too little about *leadership*", an idea supported by Grint (2005a) who urged fellow leadership scholars to put the 'ship' back into leadership and to shift attention from leadership as a noun to leadership as a verb.

Figure 1 - Assumptions of leader-centric approaches

- *Leadership is the result of the behaviour of individual leaders*

- *Individual leaders are the appropriate unit of analysis in leadership research*

- *The relationship between leader and follower is vertical with power residing with the leader*

- *Leadership is the preserve of individuals holding formal roles within an organizational hierarchy*

- *The effectiveness of a leader's behaviour is dependent on the context*

- *Leaders, and leadership are predominantly positive forces*

- *Leadership is a 'thing' that can be measured objectively through questionnaires*

Mainstream theories viewed individual leaders as both the source of leadership and the primary subject or unit of analysis for study. This tendency to privilege individual leaders or a "belief in the power of one" (Gronn, 2000:319) leads to an exaggerated sense of agency for leaders to the detriment of other people (and materialities) involved in the process of leadership. Bennis (2007:3) somewhat cynically remarked that "[p]sychologists still tend to see leadership as an individual phenomenon. But, in fact, the only person who practices leadership alone in a room is a psychotic". In their review of competency frameworks, Bolden and Gosling (2006) found that most described individual skills and capabilities, with the leader regarded as a lynchpin in the organization due to their ability to motivate others. They highlighted the failure of such frameworks to consider the relational and social aspects of leadership and observed

that, "the image of leadership conveyed in many competency frameworks could almost lead us to believe that leaders might exist in splendid isolation" (2006:158). Thus, the impact of social dynamics on leadership are under emphasised in mainstream literature.

This is not to say that leader-centric approaches entirely disregard relationships. However, the relationship is seen from the perspective of the leader with scant mention of the 'follower'. It is assumed that the leader and follower are separate entities and that there is a correlation between what the leader does and how the follower reacts. This view implies a static, unequal and unidirectional relationship with the power residing firmly in the leader, with the follower as a passive recipient who is empowered by the leader. Leader-Member Exchange theory marked a shift in focus by placing greater emphasis on the dyadic, reciprocal relationship between leader and follower. Proponents of this approach argued that high-quality exchanges between a leader and other members involved in the leadership relationship were linked to higher performance and greater organizational commitment (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Moreover, Graen and Uhl-Bien (1991) identified three phases in developing high-quality exchanges as the relationships moved from 'strangers' to 'acquaintances' and finally to a mature partnership. Despite criticisms of its focus on vertical dyadic relationships, its lack of consideration of contextual factors on the relationship, and its reliance on questionnaires to study relationships, Leader-Member Exchange theory remains an active area of research (Anand, Hu, Liden, & Vidyarthi, 2011; Yukl, 2010).

A further assumption underpinning mainstream leadership studies is that leadership is a hierarchical relationship, either due to organizational structure, or because the notion of 'follower' equates to 'subordinate'. Moreover, research into ideas such as transformational leadership has been largely limited to a narrow group of people with the empirical studies focused almost exclusively on hierarchically appointed leaders within organizations (Parry & Bryman, 2006). This implies that leadership is the

preserve of seniority, is only exhibited by a small number of people (generally men) who have been appointed into a leader role and perpetuates the idea of leadership as the property of a few 'great men'. Predicated in this assumption is that there is an imbalance of power between leader and follower that is largely unquestioned.

Within mainstream theorising, contextual moderators are viewed as factors that enhance or inhibit elements of a leader's style not as a general context in which leadership develops (Barker, 2001). Whilst contingency theories do consider context, it is only insofar as they identify that different leadership styles were more appropriate for different situations. The possibility that context affects how leadership is accomplished or the recursive nature of context in shaping and being shaped by leadership (Endrissat & von Arx, 2013) are not considered. Furthermore, there is an assumption that leadership occurs within a stable, undynamic environment (Cullen, 2015), an idea that is increasingly at odds with the modern organizational environment.

The new genre of leadership theories embodied by transformational leadership sought to foreground the positive effects of leadership. The emergence of notions such as authentic (Avolio & Gardner, 2005) and servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977) reinforced the importance of morality and integrity in effective leadership. In his assessment of the problems of leadership studies, Alvesson (2017) suggested that such theories fall foul of the 'Disneyland' ideology that good leaders are of high moral standing and that leadership is a force for good. This 'do good-ism' (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2015) disregards the often blatant damage resultant from leadership. In exploring 'the dark side of transformational leadership', Tourish (2013) argued that many of the attributes of mainstream views of leadership were consistent with those of ideologically driven cults and placed too much power in the hands of a few individuals who may not act in the best interest of others. He advocated challenging the tendency of mainstream leadership researchers to place leaders on pedestals and suggested that more

participatory and collective forms of leadership may offer a balance to this concentration of power.

Finally, a distinctive feature of mainstream leadership studies is that both theory and research are grounded in a substantialist worldview. This view holds that the world is made up of discrete things that can be studied and objectively measured and that there is a 'truth' that exists and can be discovered by the researcher. Driven by this worldview, mainstream leadership researchers tend to adopt a positivist approach focusing on establishing causal links between discrete variables and identifying universal laws that can predict the output of different inputs. The reductionist view that leadership can be broken down into component parts (usually behaviours) and measured is reflected in the dominant use of survey designs to study the phenomenon. This design assumes that leadership is a thing, an 'it', that can be abstracted from the context in which it emerges and isolated to a single event.

Indicative of this tendency to reify leadership, or turn it into an 'it' (Alvesson, 2017), is the creation and use of questionnaires to measure leadership. Amongst the most popular are the Least Preferred Co-worker (LPC) to measure Fiedler's (1967) contingency theory, LMX-7 to measure the quality of leader-member exchanges (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995), and the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Bass & Avolio, 1995) and Transformational Leadership Questionnaire (Alimo-Metcalfe & Alban-Metcalfe, 2001) to measure transformational leadership. Moreover, the stance that it is possible to provide a single, comprehensive and full range leadership model (Anderson & Sun, 2017), whilst consistent with the views of 'normal science' (Kuhn, 1962), sits awkwardly with alternative worldviews.

In summary, leader-centric approaches are, and are likely to continue to be, the dominant focus for leadership scholars. Such 'heroic' perspectives constitute most of the conventional knowledge about leadership and continue to exert significant

influence over the beliefs and practices of individuals, organizations, and societies worldwide. The intention with this critique is not to dismiss the contribution made by traditional approaches but to advocate that the underlying assumptions be challenged to develop alternative perspectives that can offer differing insights to inform future research in the complex, contested field of leadership. As Alvesson and Sandberg (2011) argued, to generate influential and interesting theory in organization studies (and, by extension, leadership studies) requires the problematization of the existing assumptions that underpin theory.

2.2 Contemporary approaches to leadership

Disillusionment with the dominant leader-centric theories served as the springboard for disparate groups of scholars, influenced by diverse philosophical and disciplinary backgrounds, to advocate looking at leadership differently. A unifying feature of many of the emergent perspectives is that they considered leadership not as an objective phenomenon but as a social construction thereby shifting attention "from the individual leader to the work of leadership; from leadership qualities, to collective agreements and the actions that embody them" (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2012:217). This section introduces two schools of thought that challenge the underpinning assumptions of mainstream leadership studies. I start by considering 'post-heroic' approaches before discussing the growing critical voice among leadership scholars.

2.2.1 Post-heroic leadership: A collective phenomenon

Railing against the traditional individualistic conceptualisations of leadership has led to growing interest in leadership from "an alternative perspective that emphasizes the importance of recognizing the need for leadership to be viewed as a widely dispersed activity which is not necessarily lodged in formally designated leaders" (Parry & Bryman, 2006:455). These ideas have been captured under the banner of 'post-heroic' leadership:

…postheroic leadership re-envisions the 'who' and 'where' of leadership by focusing on the need to distribute the tasks and responsibilities of leadership up, down, and across the hierarchy. It re-envisions the 'what' of leadership by articulating leadership as a social process that occurs in and through human interactions, and it articulates the 'how' of leadership by focusing on the more mutual, less hierarchical leadership practices and skills needed to engage collaborative, collective learning. It is generally recognized that this shift – from individual to collective, from control to learning, from 'self' to 'self-in-relation', and from power over to power with – is a paradigm shift in what it means to be a positional leader (Fletcher, 2004:650).

In their comprehensive review, Denis, Langley, and Sergi (2012) chose the label *'leadership in the plural'* to encompass the diverse ideas about the collective, post-heroic nature of leadership that had emerged over the previous two decades. Their article identified four streams of research that assumed some form of leadership plurality but drew on distinct theoretical and methodological approaches. The first category, 'sharing leadership for team effectiveness', focused on how sharing leadership can positively impact on organizational performance, a concept most commonly associated with the ideas of *Shared Leadership* as espoused by Pearce and Conger (2003). This stream of research was underpinned by a psychologically informed approach that sought to find ways of motivating individuals to become more involved in the process of leadership. The second category, 'pooling leadership capacities at the top to direct others', differed from shared leadership as instead of leadership being informally shared (often by a single leader), top leadership roles are formally structured so that no individual has the power to lead unilaterally. In this scenario, dyads, triads, and constellations of people share a role as joint organizational leaders.

The research categorized as 'spreading leadership within and across levels over time' sought to understand how leadership is passed between different hierarchical levels

both within and across organizational boundaries. This stream of work is closely linked to the ideas of *Distributed Leadership* (Bolden, 2011; Currie & Lockett, 2011; Gronn, 2002, 2009; Thorpe, Gold, & Lawler, 2011). Whilst the notion of distributed leadership remains widely used in education and healthcare, it is interesting that one of the authors attributed with introducing the concept, Peter Gronn, has himself questioned his original ideas. He now claims that the empirical evidence highlights the continued role of influential individuals within organizations and suggested that it is "not a case of either/or, but that both leadership understandings, individual and collective, count. Indeed, together they make up what I have come to think of as a leadership configuration (i.e. a pattern or an arrangement of practice)" (Gronn, 2009:383). This notion of 'hybrid leadership' endeavoured to bridge the dualism between the individualistic view of mainstream leadership studies and the multiple leader views implicit in much of the collective leadership literature.

The fourth stream, 'producing leadership through interactions', differed from the previous three approaches with its questioning of the centrality of the role of the leader. Instead, the role of the individual is reduced so that "actors are present *in* leadership – enacting it, influencing it, and creating it – but they are not "containers" of leadership" (Denis et al., 2012:254). Whilst this category encompassed the recent contributions to understanding leadership from a processual and practice perspective (Carroll et al., 2008; Crevani et al., 2010; Raelin, 2011; Wood, 2005), Denis and his colleagues did not explore these streams of research in much depth. They captured the essence of this category under the banner of *relational leadership.* Initially mooted by Hosking (1988), this approach has gained momentum in recent years with significant contributions from Uhl-Bien (2006), Cunliffe and Eriksen (2011) and Uhl-Bien and Ospina (2012). However, a challenge with 'relational leadership' is that it is a broad concept that encompasses different understandings of 'relational'. The term has been adopted by both mainstream scholars who focus on Leader-Member Exchange approaches which view leadership as a sequence of relations (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995)

and those who adopt a social constructionist approach that sees leadership as a relational process in which the co-produced relations shape both individuals and realities (Dachler & Hosking, 1995). In both perspectives, the unit of analysis is the relational dynamic that is often found in interactions, therefore, talk and language are foregrounded when studying leadership through a relational lens (Crevani, 2015).

Overall, research under the umbrella of 'collective leadership' (Ospina, Foldy, Fairhurst, & Jackson, 2017) views leadership as a social activity and considers that there is significant merit in studying the plurality of leadership. Whilst concurring with the view that leadership is a collective, social phenomenon, much of the work generated around plural leadership is embedded in a substantialist ontology whereby leadership is considered an entity, it still resides within individuals, and it is shared across small numbers of people. Though developed to an extent in the relational leadership literature, the dynamic, processual and material nature of leadership is not fully explored. Moreover, just as adhering to the notion of heroic leaders and the criticality of leadership in organizational success can give rise to the 'romance of leadership' (Meindl, Ehrlich, & Dukerich, 1985), there is a danger that adopting a collective approach can create its own 'romance' that shifts the idealistic view of the heroic leader to an equally idealistic view of a democratic sharing of leadership (Denis et al., 2012). Mindful of the limitations of an uncritical collective view, this thesis proceeds on the basis that leadership is an emergent social process, found in many places, that involves people but is not embedded within people.

2.2.2 Post-heroic leadership: A social process

One of the limitations of leader-centric approaches that has increasingly prompted new avenues of research is its failure to fully consider the dynamic nature of leadership. An early advocate of changing the focus from leaders as individuals to leadership as a process was Hosking (1988) who argued leadership processes contributed to

structuring relationships and activities, enabling both sensemaking and the negotiation of social order. She argued for a new perspective that "starts with processes and not persons and views persons, leadership and other relational realities as made processes" (Hosking, 2007:247). Further proponents of the process approach include Gemmill and Oakley (1992:124), who defined leadership as "a process of dynamic collaboration, where individuals and organization members authorize themselves and others to interact in ways that experiment with new forms of intellectual and emotional meaning"(1992: 124); Yukl (1999) whose central critique of both transformational and charismatic leadership was their inability to explain the processes by which influence occurred; Gronn (2002) who proposes the study of *concertive actions* rather than individual actions to access the processes by which leadership emerged; and Pye (2005:35) who reframed leadership as a process "imbued with a notion of movement, of progress, of transition from one place to another, literally and metaphorically."

One consequence of considering leadership as a process is a tendency to theorise in terms of inputs and outputs. In their article, Drath et al. (2008) proposed a new conceptualisation whereby leadership is an outcome or product of the practices of actors that create direction, alignment, and commitment. They viewed the phenomenon of leadership as transcending those people (whether individual leaders, dyads or groups) who produce it. This DAC framework as it has become known was positioned as an alternative to the view underpinning mainstream approaches that leadership is created from a tripod of inputs: leader, followers and a common goal (Bennis, 2007). Drawing on Drath et al.'s ideas, Kempster and Gregory (2017) argued in support of concentrating on the outcomes of leadership and suggest the structure of *context-activity-outcome* offered an alternative way to theorise leadership as a process that "overtly seeks to connect the micro flow of activity with the preceding organizational context and the emergent outcome that subsequently impacts on the emergent context and the ongoing flow of activity" (Kempster & Gregory, 2017:510).

This argument has echoes of earlier contingency approaches to leadership with the assumption that there is a linear relationship between context and the activity of leaders.

Other scholars have endeavoured to access the processes that occur between the inputs and outputs of the process of leadership. Foldy, Goldman, and Ospina (2008) proposed that sensemaking is key to the work of leadership and that 'cognitive shifts', internal changes in how people understand important elements of the organization's work, offered a systematic way to analyse leadership processes. In a subsequent article, Ospina and Foldy (2010) extended their ideas to identify a further four components of the work of leadership: naming and shaping identity; engaging dialogue around difference; creating equitable governance mechanisms; and weaving together multiple worlds through interpersonal relationships. Whilst adopting seemingly processual language (such as weaving), the underlying driver for their work was to identify stable cognitive structures within the minds of leaders that could causally account for the outputs of leadership.

There are several drawbacks with adopting an input-output view of leadership. The first is the assumed linearity in the process where several inputs go into the 'black box' of leadership from which emerges a series of outputs. Using the evocative simile of the process of leadership being like a river, Barker (1997:352) argued for a different understanding whereby process "can be said to be flowing in one direction, yet, upon close examination, parts of it flow sideways, in circles, or even backwards relative to the overall direction". The second is the assumption that there can be a stable outcome of leadership, a defined endpoint at which the job of leadership is complete. An alternative perspective is to consider leadership as an ongoing, dynamic, open-ended process so, rather than focusing on 'happy endings', we should perceive leadership as a 'never-ending story' (Crevani et al., 2010). Finally, there is an assumption that the process of leadership entails the movement of individual entities, i.e. leaders taking

specific actions towards a static output such as achieving direction, alignment, and commitment as Drath et al. (2008) advocated.

Therefore, a significant challenge in the process leadership literature is its grounding in a perspective that sees process as "a sequence of individual and collective events, actions and activities unfolding over time in context" (Pettigrew, 1997:338) thereby focusing on linear experiences. Prominent scholars in this area, whilst agreeing that there needed to be a shift from leaders as individuals to leadership as a process, retained their understanding that leaders generally enjoy higher status relative to others in terms of their ability to influence (Hosking, 1988; Knights & Willmott, 1992). This continued focus on the influential role of individual actors even within process theories of leadership suggests an underpinning substantialist ontology that sees concrete forms, or entities, as the basis of reality. Thus, a potential flaw or conceptual mistake (Wood, 2005) has been identified in the extant literature, which is its embeddedness in a view of the world that sees leadership as a 'thing' that can be attributed to the actions of individual entities or as discrete relations between individuals. This is perhaps unsurprising given the dominant worldview within Western scholarship that the nature of reality is "here, now, immediate and discrete" (Whitehead, 1933 [1967]:180). However, it does not fully engage with the emergent and ongoing nature of leadership.

2.2.3 Critical approaches to leadership

In parallel with the development of collective and process views of leadership, scholars began casting a critical eye on both mainstream and post-heroic approaches to leadership. In both cases, there were perceived shortcomings in terms of their engagement with issues of power and gender – with the unquestioning acceptance of the power imbalance by mainstream theorists contrasting with the gender and power neutral positions adopted by post-heroic theorists (Fletcher, 2004). Whilst an

increasingly influential school of thought, critical leadership studies cannot be considered as a unified discipline. It constitutes a diverse group of scholars with differing philosophical and theoretical views who "share a concern to critique the power relations and identity constructions through which leadership dynamics are often produced, frequently rationalized, sometimes resisted and occasionally transformed" (D. Collinson, 2011:181). Where there is commonality is in their adoption of alternative, though differing, perspectives (such as social constructionism, critical realism, post-structuralism, and feminism) that challenge the assumptions that underpin objective, positivist mainstream approaches.

In challenging the dominant dichotomies within leadership research, Collinson (2014:47) proposed that researchers need to explore the "shifting, multiple, paradoxical, embodied, and situated dynamics" that exist within leadership and adopt dialectical approaches to understand the tensions and contradictions that exist within leadership. He suggested three dialectics worthy of consideration: men/women; control/dissent; and power/resistance thus reiterating the centrality of power and gender in critical understandings of leadership. Fletcher (2004) challenged the assumption in much post-heroic literature that leadership is gender and power neutral and instead proposed that 'doing gender' and 'doing power' are central to the social dynamics of leadership and that their exclusion from theory has resulted in an incomplete understanding. The complex role of power and the gender discourses of masculinity and femininity were central to Ford's (2010) study of how individual leader identities were constructed in specific contexts.

The importance of followers is also considered to have been neglected in the traditional leader-centric theories. Whilst the presence of followers is implicit in many theories of leadership, there is an assumption that they are largely passive recipients of leadership, an assumption that results in researchers being seduced by the 'romance of leadership' and failing to engage with half of the leader-follower dyad (Meindl, 1995).

In response to this perceived gap in the literature, a stream of follower-centric work emerged that developed taxonomies of follower attributes that were pertinent to the process of leadership, that sought to explain leader-follower relations, and that considered follower outcomes of the behaviour of leaders (see Bligh, Kohles, & Pillai, 2011 for a summary). However, critical scholars (Ford & Harding, 2018) have challenged these earlier studies for their failure to consider the subordinated role of followers and the relational imbalance of power and have questioned whether the study of followership serves to constitute the phenomenon being researched i.e. by studying followers, it constructs the identity of 'follower'. Ford and Harding (2018:21) concluded that the absence of studies in followership is a "blessing in disguise" and that there is considerable wisdom in leaving well alone.

A more radical debate emanating from challenges to mainstream leadership studies is whether there is any 'essence' to leadership and whether it exists at all. Alvesson and Sveningsson (2003) observed that much of the leadership literature assumes there is leadership and that it can be studied. Their empirical study of managers who were expected to lead suggests that the individuals held vague and contradictory notions of leadership and concluded that the more they studied leadership, the more it disappeared and that "the possible existence of leadership – as behavior, meanings, identity, and discourse – should be critically studied, not be taken for granted" (2003:380). Furthermore, Alvesson and Sveningsson advocated that if it does exist leadership consists of mundane acts such as listening, talking informally and being cheerful rather than grand, heroic gestures, yet this does not reduce the perceived significance of leadership among those interviewed. This, they suggested, reflects the importance of leadership as a discourse within organizations.

That leadership is a discourse underpins the ideas of discursive leadership, a theoretical perspective steeped in the ideas of organizational communication. Whilst usually attributed to Fairhurst (2007, 2008), discursive leadership is not a singular theory but

an umbrella term for a body of work focusing on the social, linguistic and cultural aspects of leadership communication that offers a contrasting approach to that of leadership psychology. Taking her lead from Alvesson and Kärreman (2000b), Fairhurst advocated the value of studying both little 'd' *discourse* (the study of language and social talk within interactions) and big 'D' *Discourse* (the study of how social reality is constructed through language) in deepening our understanding of leadership. Within the critical leadership arena, the focus has primarily been on the constructing of leadership as a Discourse (cf. Alvesson & Kärreman, 2015; Crevani et al., 2010; Ford, 2006) or how the power dynamics involved in leadership are communicatively constructed between leaders and non-leaders (Tourish, 2014), whereas scholars studying relational leadership have given primacy to the study of everyday interactions. Given the implicit acknowledgement among scholars regardless of their philosophical and theoretical background, that leadership is 'done' through communication, the invitation to consider leadership through a communicative lens has considerable merit.

To conclude this section, there is much to be gained from contemporary perspectives that view leadership as a collective, relational process and which take a more critical stance. These alternative conceptions begin to offer 'post-normal' understandings of leadership (Kuhn, 1962) that have the potential to radically alter the conventional knowledge within leadership studies. However, underpinning much of the theorising discussed in this section is an ontology of *being,* "which privileges thinking in terms of discrete phenomenal 'states', static 'attributes' and sequential 'events'" (Chia, 1995:579). Relatively few leadership scholars have gone further to consider the potential offered by an ontology of *becoming*, "which emphasizes a transient, ephemeral and emergent reality. From this thought style, reality is deemed to be continuously in flux and transformation and hence unrepresentable in any static sense" (ibid:579). The next section will review the body of work that has sought to bring the perspective of process ontology to bear on leadership.

2.3 Developing an ontologically processual view of leadership

In his seminal article, Barker (1997) critiqued what he described as the 'industrial paradigm' within leadership studies and pointed out two fundamental errors: that the analysis of discrete events is equivalent to the analysis of continuous leadership; and the assumption that the actions of one person are equivalent to many individual wills and the cause of outcomes. In contrast, he advocated a more appropriate paradigm where "process and not structure is the vessel of leadership; chaos and complexity are not problems to be solved, they are the engines of evolution, adaption and renewal" (Barker, 2001:489) and leadership is understood to be a process of unfolding. Building on these ideas, Wood (2005:1105) sought to make a 'plausible case' for greater process thinking arguing that "leadership cannot be reduced to an individual social actor or to discrete relations among social actors. Rather it is the unlocalizable 'in' of the 'between' of each, a freely interpenetrating process, whose 'identity' is consistently self-differing", a process that has neither beginning nor end. This ontologically processual view stands in marked contrast with the substantialist, process perspective outlined previously. Rather than an outcome, or a 'thing' that achieves an outcome, it is more useful to consider leadership as an effect of an ongoing process or as a second-order construct, "something that we use to crudely describe the indescribable processes that make up our experience of everyday life" (Kelly, 2015:177). Wood's consideration of leadership through the lens of a process ontology has been acknowledged to be "probably one of the most radical reconceptualisations of leadership" in recent years (Denis et al., 2012:262).

Underpinning ontologically processual views of leadership such as that advocated by Wood (2005) is the significant body of work of Process Philosophers such as Alfred North Whitehead, Henri Bergson and the American Pragmatists (most notably Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, John Dewey, and George Herbert Mead). These philosophers, whilst having distinctive differences in their ideas, shared certain views:

that the world is in a constant state of flux; that processes rather than things best reflect our world; the importance of temporality (existing within the flow of time) and context; and that activity, movement, and change rather than stability and continuity are the key features of the world. Whilst not denying the existence of states or entities, these are understood to be the temporary manifestations of the complex processes which constitute them or, as the philosopher Rescher (1996:29) explained, "the idea of discrete 'events' dissolves into a manifold of processes which themselves dissolve into further processes".

Within leadership studies, only a small number of scholars have explicitly adopted a *becoming* ontology to explore leadership as a process. Many of the contributions focus on developing the theoretical argument for this approach (Barker, 2001; Simpson, 2016; Wood, 2005). Crevani, Lindgren, & Packendorff (2010) began to move beyond theory to identify what should be studied to empirically access the processual nature of leadership. Influenced by Drath et al.'s (2008) ideas of direction, alignment and commitment, they proposed that *producing direction* offered a way to discern leadership from other forms of organizing. The concepts of *action-spacing* (the construction of possibilities, potentials, opportunities and limitations for individual and collective action within the local-cultural context) and *co-orientation* (the enhanced understandings of possibly divergent arguments, interpretations and decisions of all involved parties) were offered by Crevani et al. (2010) as two ways in which producing direction could be studied that are consistent with a process ontology.

As much conventional knowledge has been generated through a substantialist ontology, adopting an ontologically processual worldview has allowed for a more radical problematization of existing understandings of leadership. However, despite the recognized opportunity offered by a process ontology, it remains a marginal viewpoint within leadership studies (Sergi, 2016). Thus, there is scope to extend and complement the existing literature in this area. As Crevani et al. (2010:84) observed, "[l]eadership

research needs new paradigms and perspectives in order to escape the problematic individualism in which it seems to be stuck", and adopting an ontologically processual view offers one such a perspective.

2.4 The turn to practice in leadership

An approach to studying leadership that engages directly with both the plurality and process of leadership is the emergent body of work under the banner of 'leadership-as-practice' (Carroll et al., 2008; Crevani et al., 2010; Raelin, 2011). This 'turn to practice' within leadership studies mirrored the trajectory of research in other fields of organization studies such as strategy (Whittington, 2006), organizational learning (Nicolini, Gherardi, & Yanow, 2003; Orlikowski, 2002) and technology (Orlikowski, 2000) where practice perspectives were increasingly being used to overcome concerns about the abstract, theoretical nature of knowledge and its lack of relevance to practitioners. Introducing a recent collection of essays on the topic, Raelin (2016b:3) characterized LAP as "concerned with how leadership emerges and unfolds through … social and material-discursive contingencies … [that] do not reside outside of leadership but are very much embedded within it". By shifting our gaze as researchers from individual actors to the day-to-day activities that constitute leadership, LAP seeks to address the limitations of leader-centric approaches and to contribute to the stream of research that focuses on 'producing leadership' (Denis et al., 2012).

2.4.1 Unpacking LAP

The expression 'leadership-as-practice' first entered the academic lexicon when Carroll, Levy, and Richmond (2008) argued that greater emphasis should be placed on understanding the actual doing of leadership. Their thinking was heavily influenced by existing work on 'strategy-as-practice' (Chia, 2004; Chia & Holt, 2006; Jarzabkowski, 2003; Samra-Fredericks, 2003; Whittington, 1996, 2003) and sought to introduce into leadership studies the alternative philosophical and methodological ideas that were

already gaining momentum elsewhere. By differentiating between the traditional competency paradigm and a practice approach, Carroll, Levy & Richmond (2008) made the case that practice offered a new, insightful way to study leadership that addressed the limitations of the leader-centric approach by privileging the relational, collective and social aspects of leadership (see table 1).

Table 1 - The competency/practice distinction (derived from Carroll et al. 2008:366)

Competency	*Practice*
Rooted in objectivism	Explicitly constructionist
Individual level of analysis	Relational and collective
Quantifiable and measurable	Discourse, narrative, and rhetoric
Unanchored in relationship and context	Situated and socially defined
Privileges reason	Privileges lived or day-to-day experience
Assumes intellect predominantly	Incorporates embodiment and emotion

The centrality of context when studying leadership was foregrounded in several definitions proposed by LAP scholars who saw leadership as "socially constructed, emergent organizing embedded in sociocultural contexts" (Crevani et al., 2010:80) and as "dynamic, collective, situated and dialectical" (Denis, Langley, & Rouleau, 2010:72). Whilst the importance of context is uncontested among LAP scholars, there are different interpretations of how context impacts on the doing of leadership. For example, Kempster and Gregory (2017) propose a linear interrelationship whereby the context influences the activities undertaken by leaders (similar to the mainstream contingency theorists) whereas Denis et al. (2010) studied the 'situated' nature of leadership by identifying the micro level practices enacted by leaders and then reflecting on the macro level context in which these practices emerged. An alternative approach taken by Endrissat and von Arx (2013) argued that context is not just a given

but is socially constructed therefore both leadership and context are interdependent. Their theoretical framework proposed that practices are acquired by individuals in a context and, as they become generally accepted, these practices become the context for members of this community. Thus, the relationship between context and practices is recursive, or 'two sides of the same coin'. A limitation with these interpretations, however, is that they assume that both 'context' and 'practices' can be distinguished as discrete 'things' and that the research focus should be on understanding the relationship between these things. Moreover, the notion of micro and macro 'levels' is itself an entitative concept and is incommensurable with an ontologically processual view that seeks to understand the holistic nature of leadership.

Another concept that has been subject to renewed interest as part of understanding leadership from a practice perspective is that of agency. Carroll et al. (2008) proposed a rethinking of agency based on Heidegger (1926 [1962]) to differentiate between a competency view of agency, *building,* where an individual intentionally acts on a world which they stand separate from, and a practice view of agency, *dwelling*, where agency emerges as a response to day-to-day experiences based on internalized predispositions. However, they did not subsequently develop this line of argument. It was Raelin (2011, 2016a) who sought to theorise the inseparability of leadership and agency by proposing that leadership is "a process of agentic collaboration in which one harnesses the agentic capabilities of others to serve goals that lie beyond any one individual" (Raelin, 2011:199). He argued that agency is collaborative as it is dialogical in that it allows people to engage with and listen to the views of others and to reflect on, and be changed by, these views. Therefore, the agentic action that emerges from the leadership practice arises from human interactions and cannot be attributed to any single individual.

A significant contribution to the debate around agency in LAP came from Simpson (2016) who used the work of the American Pragmatist, John Dewey and his colleague

Arthur Bentley (1949 [1960]) to identify three different ways of considering agency in LAP: self-action, inter-action, and trans-action[3]. Self-action assumes that things, or entities, act independently and are constrained neither by each other nor by structures and social norms. This form of action is evident in those studies that focus on the individual leader who has agentic capacity to exercise free will. Inter-action, on the other hand, assumes a dyadic world where entities have a direct mechanistic impact on each other, impose forces on each other, and yet remain largely unchanged in themselves through their inter-action. This contingency form of thinking underpins much of the recent literature on plural forms of leadership including much of the extant LAP literature (Carroll et al., 2008; Raelin, 2011). Both self-action and inter-action are philosophically grounded in an ontology of being, which privileges stable entities before flux and flow.

The final form of agency proposed by Simpson, trans-action, differed fundamentally from the previous two in its rejection of an ontology of being with its primary interest in entities, giving primacy instead to an ontological stance that privileges becoming. Trans-action can be understood as "unfractured observation – just as it stands, at this era of the world's history, with respect to the observer, the observing and the observed" (Dewey & Bentley, 1949 [1960]:104). Viewed through this lens, leadership emerges in the unfolding of practice and the constituent parts of the trans-action can never be extracted from the whole. There is no linear relationship between context and people; no causality between inputs and outputs. Instead, trans-actors (whether human or non-human) and the context are all mutually co-emergent within the process of becoming. As Bernstein (1960: xi) succinctly explained, "transaction is a refinement of interaction. In a transaction, the components themselves are subject to change. Their character affects and is affected by the transaction. Properly speaking, they are

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[3] I use the hyphenated word *trans-action* to distinguish the concept outlined by Dewey and Bentley (1949 [1960]) from the commonplace use of the word *transaction* to mean the conclusion of a bargain or commercial agreement.

not independent: they are phases in a unified transaction". Therefore, we construct meaning about the world through trans-actions whereby people, materialities and context are inseparable.

Having outlined these modes of action, Simpson (2016) provided a heuristic, or rule of thumb, for considering three different approaches to studying LAP that reflected differing understandings of agency (see table 2): the leader-practitioner who manifests agency through their expression of free will; leadership as a set of practices where agency is embedded in a dyadic relationship of influence between entities; and leadership in the flow of practice where agency "is manifest in the movements and changing directions that emerge as trans-actors seek to coordinate their work together" (2016:172).

LAP foregrounds action (whether inter- or trans-action) and, as much activity within organizations is achieved through communication (Boden, 1994), this is another key tenet of LAP thinking. Laying out an early agenda for LAP, Carroll et al. (2008) observed that there was a need for a more theoretical understanding of the importance of talk in constituting action and shaping leadership whilst Raelin (2011) argued that dialogic activity offered a way to engage empirically with LAP. Subsequent empirical studies have proposed several discursive practices that contribute to accomplishing leadership (Crevani et al., 2010; Raelin, 2016a; Simpson, Buchan, & Sillince, 2018).

Table 2 - Comparison of three approaches to agency in leadership studies (derived from Simpson, 2016:173)

	The Leader-Practitioner	*Leadership as a set of Practices*	*Leadership in the flow of Practice*
Category of action	Self-action	Inter-action	Trans-action
Agency	Exercise of free will	Influencing others	Ongoing co-ordinated accomplishment of work
Context	Irrelevant	Structure as a fixed container within which action takes place	Context and trans-actors are mutually engaged in an emergent whole
Relationality	Irrelevant	Dyadic and network inter-linkages	Mutually constituting temporally unfolding relationships
Ontological assumptions	Substantialist Representational	Substantialist Representational	Processual Performative

Whilst the importance of discursive practices is well-recognised, some LAP scholars have argued that what differentiates LAP from its close relative, relational leadership, is the foregrounding of the role of non-human actors in the process of leadership (Crevani & Endrissat, 2016). The contribution of materiality was first highlighted in the LAP literature by Denis, Langley, and Rouleau (2010) who drew on their empirical work in healthcare to identify a number of 'managerial tools' that contributed to the doing of leadership. They argued that these tools, which included rules, procedures, models and other documents, not only prompted action but also served to embed and transmit organizational knowledge and that following such tools enabled a greater

understanding of the collective and situated nature of leadership. The importance of considering materiality was echoed by Raelin (2011, 2016a) who argued that leadership is a "dynamic interplay between individuals, social structures and different forms of materiality such as protocols, reports, technologies, and other artifacts" (Raelin, 2016a:142).

To gain traction for this line of research, Sergi (2016) devoted an entire book chapter to making the case for the greater inclusion of materiality in the theory and study of LAP. She highlighted that materiality was at the heart of both commonly used definitions of practice (Reckwitz, 2002; Schatzki, 2001) and formed a key element of conceptualisations of practice (Nicolini, 2013). However, she was quick to draw attention to the fact that materiality was more than simply considering the role of 'objects' (a view embedded in a substantialist ontology), it required an alternative theoretical framing which captured how materiality was embedded, and had agency, within LAP. Thus, she grounded her own position within a process ontology and focused on the holistic trans-action that sees materiality as "already and irremediably part of the scene" (Sergi, 2016:115). This contrasted with other inter-actional studies of materiality in leadership (Mailhot, Gagnon, Langley, & Binette, 2016; Oborn, Barrett, & Dawson, 2013) that considered human actors and objects as separate entities and focused on how objects could be used to assist leaders thus limiting the notion of agency to the human actors.

Thus, with its concern for the discursive, relational and material movements of leadership work as it is accomplished, LAP engages with the processes that constitute leadership. It is in the continuity of day-to-day experience, rather than the traits, skills or behaviours of individuals, or for that matter of collections of individuals, that LAP finds traction (Carroll et al., 2008; Raelin, 2016b). This brief review of LAP identifies several themes running through the literature (context, agency, communication, and materiality). Whilst several discursive practices have been suggested, these have

focused on the inter-actional relationships between people and do not consider the contribution of non-human actors. Therefore, I am left with a question as to the broader role of trans-actional communication in the ongoing accomplishment of leadership work. Adopting terminology proposed by Alvesson and Kärreman (2007), this opens up a potentially interesting 'mystery' that can be usefully explored both theoretically and empirically to offer new insights into LAP.

2.4.2 The philosophical basis of LAP

Exploring current thinking around context, agency, communication, and materiality brings to the fore one of the challenges of LAP, that of the disparate community of scholars whose work has been combined to 'create' the current LAP theorising. Whilst there is a commonality in seeking to decentre the leader and to understand how leadership happens in practice, researchers working under the banner of LAP draw on a profusion of philosophical and theoretical perspectives. There are those scholars who adopt a primarily entitative view and seek to understand what collectives of individuals 'do' to accomplish leadership, the practices of leadership (Endrissat & von Arx, 2013; Raelin, 2011, 2016a). This contrasts with a small group of academics (Crevani, 2018; Sergi, 2016; Simpson, 2016; Simpson et al., 2018) who challenge this still largely individualistic view and are more explicit in their stance that the empirical study of LAP should be philosophically grounded in process and should be guided by an ontology of becoming where leadership emerges in the continuous social flow of practice.

To explicate these ontological differences, Crevani and Endrissat (2016) compared what they describe as 'entitative-soft' and 'relational' approaches to LAP (see table 3). They used the terms 'entitative-soft' and 'weak process' to describe the work of those scholars who sought to understand the process of leadership from a substantialist worldview by identifying the patterns of actions taken by groups of individuals. This differed from the traditional leader-centric approach that focused purely on the action

of a single individual leader. They then adopted the term 'relational ontology' to describe those scholars who adopted an ontologically processual view of LAP or a 'strong process' approach that focused on the interactions that emerge between people.

Table 3 - Ontological approaches to LAP (based on Crevani & Endrissat, 2016:37)

Leadership-as-Practice		
Ontology	Practices (as a noun) *Entitative-soft (weak process)* Substantialist	Practice (as a verb) *Relational (strong process)* Processual
Characteristics	Decentres the leader Practices as the building blocks of organizing Practices as sources of meaning and identity	Decentres the leader The logic of practice influences processes of becoming Practice is a recursive encounter

Whilst the distinction made here is central to this thesis, the terminology chosen is confusing. The use of 'relational' in this context describes an ontological position yet within leadership studies, there is a recognized stream of work referred to as 'relational leadership' that Crevani and Endrissat also argued could be studied from either an entitative-soft (cf. the work of Uhl-Bien, 2006) or a relational ontology (cf. the work of Hosking, 1988). This confusion was further compounded by the fact that Crevani and Endrissat use 'strong process' to describe a processual ontology whereas the original use of the terms weak and strong process by Chia (1995) used 'weak process' to describe an ontology of becoming. To overcome this confusion, and to avoid the potentially pejorative nature of the terms weak and strong, this thesis will use the

terms substantialist and processual to describe the different ontological approaches to the study of LAP.

An additional challenge with the current language of LAP is how scholars use the terms 'practice' and 'practices'. Science and Technology Studies scholar Pickering (1995) made a critical distinction by describing 'practices' as specific sequences of activities that are learned and sustained through social interactions. He contrasted this with 'practice' which he saw as the ongoing, holistic nature of collective action that transforms the meanings of situations. Whereas practice is continuously emergent, practices are valued for their routineness. In her heuristic, Simpson (2016) used Pickering's distinction to propose two ontological approaches to studying LAP: *leadership as a set of practices*, embedded in a substantialist ontology and which gives primacy to understanding the inter-actional, routine practices that accomplish leadership; and *leadership in the flow of practice*, embedded in a process ontology and with a focus on the trans-actional ongoing accomplishment of the work of leadership. The former distinction uses the term practices as a noun, to name specific activities whereas the latter use of practice (as a verb) relates to an ontologically different worldview that attends to continuously flowing and entangled agencies. Within the extant LAP literature, the focus has primarily been on teasing out the individual practices that are used to enact leadership rather than considering the ongoing, collective and temporal unfolding of LAP.

To further 'muddy the water', in addition to adopting differing ontological positions, scholars also draw on a disparate range of perspectives on how we produce knowledge about leadership. Raelin's (2016d) recent collection of essays on LAP highlighted the breadth of theoretical approaches with ideas drawn from Pragmatism (Simpson, 2016), phenomenology and hermeneutics (Cunliffe & Hibbert, 2016; Shotter, 2016), social constructionism (Carroll, 2016; Crevani & Endrissat, 2016), relational constructionism (Gergen & Hersted, 2016; Ramsey, 2016), critical realism (Kempster, Parry, & Jackson,

2016; Woods, 2016) and critical leadership studies (Ford, 2016). In his 2011 article, Raelin suggested that a movement had begun to emerge that sought to challenge the predominance of the leader-centric approach. In 2016, he went further and explicitly referred to LAP as a 'movement' that could be observed as demonstrating several attributes of social mobilization in terms of the formation of "a collective identity that has assumed a normative orientation for changing the conventional view of leadership" (Raelin, 2016b:1).

In a strident critique, Collinson (2017, 2018) argued that LAP offered nothing new, was not a movement, and challenged the view that LAP was more critical than critical leadership studies. Taking each point in turn, I would agree that Raelin's claim that LAP is a movement is an overstatement for a stream of research in its infancy and that many theorists working within this space (myself included) would not consider themselves critical scholars. Where I strongly disagree with Collinson is that LAP adds nothing new as it comes from a very different theoretical and philosophical foundation than other post-heroic thinking, one that emphasises the dynamics of emergent processes rather than those social structures that critical scholars see as definitive of leadership. Specifically, considering LAP through an ontologically processual lens with its commitment to the continuous flow of process as leadership emerges from engaged action, offers an alternative way of thinking that has the potential to radically influence contemporary leadership debates.

To summarise, the nascent body of LAP literature has contributed to our broader understanding of leadership by challenging the dominant individual-centric approach and focusing instead on the situated, material, discursive and relational aspects of leadership practice. However, as has been highlighted, there is a multiplicity of lenses brought to bear when considering how best to theorise and study LAP. This divergence of views becomes more pronounced when considering the specific issues around agency, communication, materiality, and context where the adoption of a substantialist

ontology leads to a focus on leadership as a set of practices as opposed to the more processual view which privileges leadership in the ongoing flow of practice. Whilst LAP has the potential to further elucidate our understanding of the collective, processual nature of 'doing' leadership, much of the extant literature is philosophical and poses a multitude of questions that other scholars have been invited to address. Therefore, to build its momentum as a distinct area of research, LAP now needs to progress and, in the words of Kempster, Parry, & Jackson (2016:258):

> *…we need to get over the expansive "critique, potential and promise" phase of a new research approach and settle down to the "real" and considerably less exciting but critical task of working out how we are actually going to conduct empirical research that will be robust, insightful, compelling, and influential beyond our own immediate community of research practice.*

2.5 Chapter summary

When studying leadership, we cannot ignore the influence of leadership psychology nor dismiss out of hand the role of individuals in 'doing' leadership. It is self-evident that people are integral to the accomplishment of leadership. The mainstream literature holds that an individual leader is the source of leadership, a view challenged by scholars who consider leadership as a collective, shared or distributed phenomenon. Rather than engaging in this either individual or plural debate, this thesis adopts the position that any configuration is "simply one of 'leadership', unqualified and unembellished, the practice of which happens to be shaped in contextual ways." (Gronn, 2009:390) and, therefore, suggests that we shift our gaze from the centrality of individuals and what they do, to explore how the process of leadership emerges in practice.

The ongoing debate among scholars about the 'relational' nature of leadership is another potential red herring. All the theories discussed in this chapter assume that

leadership is relational. Where they differ is the nature of this relationship: whether it is between an all-powerful individual and their passive subjects; a meaning-making relationship whereby leaders engage with agentic followers; or a socially constructed relationship between groups of people affected by power and gender dynamics and societal Discourses. What is common to all these perspectives is that they are inter-actional, they assume that there are two parties to the relationship – leaders and followers – and that both parties remain unchanged by their interactions. The notion of trans-action (Dewey & Bentley, 1949 [1960]) offers an exciting alternative that enables us to explore the becoming nature of leadership through the dynamic relationship between actors (human and non-human) and the unique situation in which leadership is performed.

A trans-actional approach to leadership is underpinned by an ontologically processual view that stands in marked contrast to most existing leadership studies. The idea that leadership is a 'thing' that can be discovered or constructed remains the dominant philosophical view. Stepping outside this norm and exploring how leadership emerges as a process in a world made up of processes offers complementary insights to develop our current understanding of leadership. Thus, this thesis is predicated on the view that the adoption of a processual ontology "may help us bring the notion of leadership into the core of organizational process studies, thereby opening up for empirical fieldwork and theoretical analysis focusing on the everyday practicing of leadership among people in organizations" (Crevani et al., 2010:84). Whilst still very much at a formative stage of development, LAP and specifically the idea of 'leadership in the flow of practice' (Simpson, 2016) offers a way to delve deeper into the ongoing producing of direction that constitutes the work of leadership. The next chapter begins to elaborate and extend this theory in the hope that this will go some way to addressing Collinson's (2017:6) critique that LAP "lacks theoretical significance and clarity".

3.0 Leadership-as-practice: A processual, communicative perspective

A brief review of the vast leadership literature highlighted that, traditionally, research has focused on what individuals do in their role as leaders to influence followers towards the achievement of a common goal (Bennis, 2007). This leader-centric approach has generated considerable insights into the prerequisite attributes of effective leaders yet has been increasingly criticized for its failure to engage with social and material features of leadership. Contemporary scholars have attempted to rectify the perceived shortcomings of leader-centric research by studying leadership through alternative lenses of which LAP, with its emphasis on the situated and discursive aspects of leadership practice, is a recent addition. Among LAP scholars, there are different philosophical approaches with Simpson (2016) offering the clearest distinction of processual theorising of LAP in her explication of *leadership in the flow of practice*.

This thesis is underpinned by two central premises. The first is that there is scope to further theorise how leadership, viewed through the lens of a process ontology, unfolds in everyday practice. This provides a challenge in terms of "how one may remain true to the processual ontology whereby leadership is seen as a continuous social flow, and at the same time delimit the notion of leadership to discernible practices and interactions in order to make it possible to study" (Crevani et al., 2010:79). Crevani et al.'s response was to focus on the latter while remaining mindful of the insights offered by the former. However, by privileging 'practices', there is a risk that LAP scholars attend only to the learned habits and routines that effectively guide decisions and actions when faced with contexts that are familiar or recognisable. Viewing leadership as a process that engages with change rather than stability requires a different lens through which to extend our understanding of LAP. Therefore, rather than 'practices' (as a noun), I foreground 'practice' (as a verb) as the ongoing, collaborative action that transforms the meaning of situations (Pickering, 1995).

The second premise is that the role of communication in the work of leadership is under-theorised in the LAP literature. Whilst expressions such as 'material-discursive' appear frequently in definitions of LAP (Raelin, 2016b), there are diverging views as to whether to give primacy to the role of Discourses in leadership practice (Carroll, 2016; Ford, 2016), to studying how LAP is enacted through discursive practices (Crevani et al., 2010; Raelin, 2016a) or to theorising the role of conversation and dialogue in the doing of LAP (Gergen & Hersted, 2016; Ramsey, 2016). There is also limited consideration as to the role of non-human actors in the doing of LAP with Sergi (2016) being the primary advocate. Given the relative infancy of LAP as a school of thought, it is perhaps unsurprising that there is little cohesion in theorising the leadership-communication relationship. In the light of this potential 'gap' in current thinking, a deeper engagement with the relationship between leadership and communication (encompassing both human and non-human actors) offers a productive launchpad for further extending and elaborating LAP theory.

The chapter begins by briefly reviewing the trajectory of research interested in leadership communication and exploring the notion that leadership is communicatively constituted. The Pragmatist informed ideas of the Montreal School of CCO are then introduced to explain how organizing (and hence leadership) are communicatively constituted and attention is drawn to two key concepts that contribute to the framing of this study, namely co-orientation and hybrid agency. I then turn to the work of John Dewey to further develop a Pragmatist understanding of practice derived from his notion of Inquiry as a transformative process of change. The chapter concludes by advancing a processual perspective of LAP by proposing *leadership-as-communicative-practice,* a performative theorising that seeks to explain how the ongoing producing of direction is accomplished.

3.1 Leadership as communicatively constituted

To the extent that the actions of organizing emerge in the unfolding of everyday talk (Boden, 1994), the communication literature offers interesting insights into *how* leadership produces direction. That communication is at the heart of the leadership process is well documented. Tourish and Jackson (2008:219), in their introduction to a Special Issue of *Leadership* dedicated to leadership and communication, observed that "[c]ommunication, in all its multifaceted forms, is therefore at the heart of the leadership process". However, the nature of the interplay between leadership and communication is more contentious. Much of the mainstream, leader-centric research draws on a transmissional, monologic Sender→Message→Receiver model of communication (Shannon & Weaver, 1949). This theorises communication as a conduit for transporting the thoughts of one person to the mind of another and considers language as representational in that it can accurately transport meaning and intention between people across time and space. The focus on the cognitive skills of individual leaders that underpins leadership psychology means that communication is seen as incidental to leadership, or at best an intervening variable in the leader-follower relationship (Fairhurst, 2001).

The growing challenge to mainstream, individualistic leadership thinking occurred in parallel with the 'linguistic turn' in organization studies whereby communication was increasingly viewed as a way of negotiating meaning with others and, as a result, enabling action (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000a; Jian, Schmisseur, & Fairhurst, 2008). Influenced by this 'turn', the focus of leadership communication research shifted from viewing communication as a peripheral consideration to recognizing that communication also acts on the world to produce and alter current realities (Ashcraft, Kuhn, & Cooren, 2009; Fairhurst, 2007). This constitutive view of communication has connotations for understanding the ongoing accomplishment of leadership work. In their 'primer' on discursive approaches, Fairhurst and Uhl-Bien (2012) identified

differing ways in which leadership scholars have sought to progress this line of thinking: by exploring how discursive practices accomplish leadership; by studying power struggles and 'language games' played in the name of leadership; or by seeking to understand the socio-historical Discourses that shape the concept of leadership.

The growing interest in discursive leadership was reflected in Fairhurst and Connaughton's 2014 review. They identified a large body of literature, drawn from multiple paradigms and disciplines, that adopted a communication-centred view of leadership. They advanced a perspective that leadership communication is both transmissional and meaning-centred, relational and co-constructive of reality before concluding that "there is indeed a communicative lens or, more accurately, series of lenses that, taken collectively, shows communication to be central, defining and constitutive of leadership" (Fairhurst & Connaughton, 2014:8). However, they concluded that there was still much we do not know about communicative aspects of leadership. Of relevance to this study is their call for greater 'cross-paradigm' studies of leadership communication and their question of whether materiality has been overlooked in favour of the linguistic features of leadership.

Of the limited empirical studies undertaken under the banner of LAP, the focus has tended towards analysing the speech acts of individual leaders (Denis et al., 2010; Endrissat & von Arx, 2013; Zerjav, Hartmann, & Van Amstel, 2014) or seeking to discern leadership practices from interviews (Chreim, 2015; Fisher & Robbins, 2014; Meier, 2015). A small number of studies have engaged with the specific linguistic practices involved in accomplishing LAP. For example, Carroll and Simpson (2012) adopted the Goffman's (1974) concept of 'framing' and demonstrated how three linguistic movements (kindling, stretching and spanning) were used to create movement between different frames of reference in discussions on an online leadership development forum. Raelin (2016a) proposed specific discursive practices (scanning, signalling, weaving, stabilizing, inviting, unleashing and reflecting) that people engage

in as part of a process of collaborative agency. An alternative approach was adopted by Simpson, Buchan and Sillince (2018) who analysed speech during management meetings to propose five performative actions (problematizing, recalling, imagining, committing and justifying) that arose when a remembered past and an imagined future were brought together into the same speech act to create a 'turning point'. Taken together, these studies offer insights into a range of discursive practices that can be used by individuals to enact leadership.

The centrality of conversation to doing leadership is more explicit her the work of Crevani and her colleagues (Crevani et al., 2010). Influenced by the ideas of relational leadership, they analysed the social processes of relating that occurred within conversations and proposed three practices by which people discursively create a space for action. The first, *constructing positions* suggests that people continually develop what they are supposed to do and how they are supposed to be in relation to others and this leads to the re-shaping of possible relational configurations within the group. The second entails *constructing boundaries* between what actions one person should take and what others should do whilst the third, *constructing issues,* is the process of creating issues which change the trajectory of conversations thus producing direction.

One of the distinctive features of LAP is that leadership is both social and material, "the social and material-discursive contingencies impacting the leadership constellation…do not reside outside of leadership but are very much embedded within it" (Raelin, 2016b:3). However, incursions into the role of materiality in leadership communication have been limited to date. An important contribution came from Sergi (2016) who conducted an empirical study to follow the unfolding of a software development project. She distinguished between the purpose of documents (to record minutes of meetings, to present information) and the actions performed by documents in the unfolding of the situation, actions that can be captured in verbs. Her analysis led her to

assert that documents perform five types of actions: making visible information that provided greater detail than could have been achieved through talk alone; structuring work to give it shape and direction; articulating relationships between previously separate or disconnected elements; stimulating sense-making; and signalling key messages, affirming decisions made and announcing future actions. Reflecting on how leadership emerged throughout this project, Sergi (2016) argued that documents shaped discussions by laying the foundations for the initial conversations; provided direction in terms of what was in the scope of the project and what actions were required; and ordered the unfolding of the project by sequencing tasks and estimating timeframes. Therefore, focusing on materiality and documents specifically, Sergi asserted, leads to a "finer understanding of how leadership is produced" (2016:127).

Reviewing the body of work adopting a communication-centred perspective to LAP highlights several points that are relevant for my argument. The first observation is that whilst there are attempts to theorise the role of conversation (Ramsey, 2016) and dialogue (Gergen & Hersted, 2016) in LAP, these have not been empirically examined. Moreover, the underpinning theoretical positions of these ideas are incompatible with the processual, Pragmatist position I am choosing to adopt. Also, the focus of the empirical work to date has been to identify discursive 'practices' that can be adopted by individual leaders within conversations to enact leadership. There has been limited empirical engagement with how communication, both human and non-human, constitutes leadership. Therefore, there is an opportunity to extend processual LAP theorising by exploring how communication in all its forms produces direction and brings about transformative change.

The leadership communication literature also foregrounded an important theoretical resource, the communicative constitution of organization (CCO), a group of scholars who argue that organizations are brought into being through communication. In their review, Fairhurst and Connaughton (2014) recognised that whilst not about leadership

per se, the arguments put forward by CCO scholars offer an approach to understanding how acts of organizing are the both the medium and outcome of leadership communication. The ideas of CCO ideas are beginning to influence LAP scholars with Crevani (2018) drawing on the work of two founder members of the school, James Taylor and Francois Cooren; and Sergi (2016:116) providing further advocacy, "the CCO perspective invites us to view leadership as an ongoing process, discursively and materially constituted in interactions involving a wide range of human and non-human actors". However, engagement with CCO thinking by LAP scholars is, to date, limited and there is much more to be mined from this expansive body of work.

3.2 The Communicative Constitution of Organization (CCO)

A CCO perspective considers human practice as a dynamic, ongoing communicative process and endeavours to understand "how organizations as discursive-material configurations are reproduced and coproduced through ongoing interactions" (Brummans, Cooren, Robichaud, & Taylor, 2014:173). Whilst initially developed in North America by organizational communication scholars, CCO thinking has become increasingly influential in the field of organization studies over the past decade and has extended its reach into European thinking. A recent review proposed three theoretical orientations within the CCO literature: works that focus on the communicative constitution of *organizations* (as entities); of *organizing* (as process); or of *organizationality,* the study of other forms of social phenomena such as networks, social movements and communities (Schoeneborn, Kuhn, & Kärreman, 2018). Consistent with the process and practice views informing this thesis, it is the *communicative constitution of organizing* that is considered here.

Informing all three CCO orientations is the seminal work of British philosopher, John Austin. In his book 'How to Do Things with Words', Austin (1962:6) made the claim, considered audacious at the time, that speech not only represents ideas but also performs actions. He introduced the expression 'performative utterances' into the

academic lexicon and argued that "to utter a sentence…is not to describe my doing of what I should be said in so uttering to be doing or to state that I am going to do it: it is to do it". Talk, Austin explained, is not merely a medium for transmitting information or expressing a state of affairs, it is how the state of affairs is enacted, changed or transformed. The situation in which these speech acts occur is also integral to their having a performative effect, and "once we realize that what we have to study is not the sentence but the issuing of an utterance in a speech situation, there can hardly be any longer the possibility of not seeing that stating as performing an act" (Austin, 1962:138).

As a slight digression, Austin's work is often attributed as the basis for the concept of *performativity*, which has become increasingly influential within organization studies in recent decades (Gond, Cabantous, Harding, & Learmonth, 2016). Whilst this concept has been developed in diverse ways by scholars such as Latour, Callon, Pickering, and Barad, there are shared assumptions that underpin performative research. Cabantous and Sergi (2018) argue that performativity is a mindset, a take on reality, rather than a unified theory and articulated key features of a performative mindset (see figure 2). What is most relevant for this thesis is their contention that performativity is inherently processual. Any scholar adopting a performative idiom views reality as processual and foregrounds *effectuation* or exploring how phenomena are realized, "it is the process – more than its effects – that deserves to be at the forefront of the empirical story and theorisation's effort" (Cabantous & Sergi, 2018:1239).

Figure 2 - Features of a Performative Mindset

- *Viewing reality as processual*

- *Interested in both change and continuity*

- *Adopting a non-representational view of language*

- *Interested in effectuation, how the phenomenon is brought into being*

- *Viewing the act of describing as adding to reality and provoking a change in the situation*

- *A commitment to follow the action and to be firmly rooted in unfolding situations*

- *Placing sociality and materiality at the centre of understanding phenomena*

- *Adopting a post-humanistic approach to agency (human and non-human actors)*

In addition to a performative mindset, there are several premises that underpin CCO thinking (Cooren, Kuhn, Cornelissen, & Clark, 2011). The first is that the focus of research is on studying *communication events*, going beyond language to understand the relational aspects of communication. An event is not an isolated episode of action but rather a segment of an ongoing and situated stream of social communicative practice. This definition has been extended to explain how a communication event is "a sequence of instances of communication (i.e. texts and conversations) that are performed in a distinct space-time" (Vasquez, Schoeneborn, & Sergi, 2016:634). Thus, the term is used to describe observable conversational flows bounded by time, whether a five-minute informal chat in the corridor, a meeting or a focus group. The second premise is that CCO scholars should be as inclusive as possible about what is meant by organizational communication and recognise that communication takes broader forms than simply human talk. Developing this idea, Cooren, Bencherki, Chaput, & Vasquez (2015:367) defined communication as "the establishment of a link,

connection or relationship through something", a something that could be human or non-human.

CCO scholars acknowledge the co-constructed nature of organizational communication. Any performance is the product of all actors involved in the communication events, those speaking, those interpreting the speech and the situation in which communication occurs. All meanings that emerge are likely to be ambiguous and heterogeneous across all actors involved (Cooren et al., 2011). This links to a further premise of CCO, that who or what is acting is always an open question. This necessitates scholars broadening their focus beyond just human agency to consider other forms of agency (textual, architectural, and technological) and being as inclusive as possible regarding what or who is involved in the constitution of organizing. Finally, CCO scholars give primacy to neither organizing, organization nor organizationality. For the purposes of my argument, however, it is the process of organizing that interests me here and specifically, how leadership, as an organizing process of producing direction is communicatively constituted.

Whilst united in their quest to develop a performative theory of communication, CCO scholars adopt differing approaches to explaining how communication constitutes organization. McPhee and colleagues proposed a structuration influenced theory (McPhee, 2004; McPhee & Zaug, 2000) whereby an organization is co-produced through the creation of rules and structures. The *Four Flows Model* postulates that four interdependent communication processes (membership negotiation, reflexive self-structuring, activity coordination, and institutional positioning) constitute an organization and consider texts to be important, yet distinct from, verbal interactions. For McPhee, human agency is at the core of communication and his focus is on understanding the cognitive processes and structures through which communication accomplishes action. A lesser-known CCO theory is inspired by Luhmann's (1995) theory of social systems and postulates that organizations are systems that produce

themselves primarily through communication processes. This radical interpretation of CCO assumes that the system of communication authors an organization and downplays the role of human agency. Whilst these two approaches remain influential, it is the third stream of research conducted by the Montreal School that has generated the most interest both theoretically and empirically.

The Montreal School emerged in the 1990s at the Université de Montreal and was heavily influenced by the thinking of the American Pragmatists (Dewey, Mead, and Peirce). From its inception, the Montreal School has focused on developing an action-oriented theory of communication that argued that organizations exist in communication, not by it. There are clear parallels with the view offered by Dewey many decades earlier:

> *Society not only continues to exist by transmission, by communication, but it may fairly be said to exist in transmission, in communication. There is more than a verbal tie between the words common, community and communication. Men live in a community in virtue of the things which they have in common; and communication is the way in which they come to possess things in common* (Dewey, 1916 [1944]:4).

Thus, there is a shared presupposition that it is through the act of communicating that we co-construct commonly held meaning and take action. Further resemblances exist between Dewey and the Montreal School with respect to the blurring of the subject-object and discursive-material distinctions, and the trans-actional nature of the unfolding of everyday life (Brummans, 2006). It is the echoes of Deweyan thinking and the challenging of the bifurcation between a social and material world that drew me to the ideas of the Montreal School as a productive resource to further inform my understanding of the communicative constitution of LAP.

Within the vast body of work under the banner of the Montreal School, there are two concepts relating to the process of organizing (rather than the constitution of organization) that are valuable in elaborating a communicative understanding of LAP. These will now be discussed in turn.

3.2.1 Co-orientation

Scholars from the Montreal School (cf. Taylor, 1999; Taylor, Cooren, Giroux, & Robichaud, 1996; Taylor & Van Every, 2000) offered a new perspective on performativity based on Austin's work. They argued that whilst the involvement of a hearer in addition to a speaker in speech acts was implicit in Austin's work, the relational nature of speech was underdeveloped. Instead, Taylor and his colleagues proposed that communication is an ongoing process of making sense of the circumstances in which people collectively find themselves. Sensemaking occurs in everyday conversation as language is materialised through speech (a text) and action emerges when 'talked out' in conversation between two or more people. Text is what is said and conversation is the process through which other people talk a situation into being and co-construct a response to it; "organization is therefore *accomplished* (or 'real-ized') and experienced in conversation, *identified* and *described* through text" (Ashcraft et al., 2009:20).

Each conversation is unique in that it takes place within a particular time, place and context. Moreover, each person involved in the conversation brings their own identity, history, experiences, and attitudes to bear on how they orient to the content of the conversation (text). It is in the dynamic translation between text and conversation that action emerges and is captured in a revised text. Texts form both the content and product of conversational processes, the output of one conversation becoming the raw material for subsequent dialogue. Whilst conversation is ephemeral as it happens in the moment, in a place and time, written texts have greater durability. Taylor, Cooren, Giroux, & Robichaud (1996) borrowed the concept of *distanciation* from Ricoeur (1981)

to describe how texts (documents, photographs, audio-recordings) play a crucial role in carrying the organizing accomplished in 'here and now' conversations, through time and space. It is this ability of written texts, and especially documents, to dis-locate and to stabilize local acts of organizing (Cooren & Fairhurst, 2009) that interests me in the context of developing a communicative understanding of the processes of LAP.

The text-conversation dialectic is at the heart of *co-orientation*, the process by which action is generated. Newcomb (1953) first introduced the idea that the foundation of communication is co-orientation as an interaction involving two people orienting towards a topic or object of common concern. The two communicators (A and B) have attitudes towards the topic (X) and towards each other therefore creating an ABX triad. A central feature of this triplet is its irreducibility; it is impossible to separate the subject-subject relationship from the subject-object, "communication among humans performs the essential function of enabling two or more individuals to maintain simultaneous orientation toward one another as communicators and toward objects of communication" (Newcomb, 1953 as cited in Taylor, 2001). As a result of this co-orientation, change occurs even if it is simply a reinforcement of the pre-existing state. Organizations, according to Newcomb, are complex systems involving many sets of co-orientation (Taylor, 2009).

Taylor and his colleagues (Taylor & Robichaud, 2004; Taylor & Van Every, 2000) elaborated on Newcomb's early ideas and proposed that organizing starts when two or more people (A, B, C etc.) orient themselves to an object of mutual interest or concern (a conversational object, X) and also to each other through conversation (see figure 3). This 'conversational object', whether a concrete object, a commitment, a request or a viewpoint, is negotiated and accomplished through conversation. The co-orienting of A and B to each other and respectively to X is described as the "essential unit of organizing" (Taylor, 2006:147). Through 'talking out' either agreements or disagreements, each person acts upon the other and, consequently, their thinking or

actions are changed; "it is through co-orientation that the language-based establishing, person to person, and group to group, of compatible beliefs and coordinated responses to events as they occur, is accomplished: how the events are, in fact, enacted" (Taylor, 2006:147). It is not about arriving at common beliefs or shared cognitions, but rather it clarifies how to move forward together in the current situation. The practical effect of co-orienting activity is "to establish a basis for action and to maintain the coordination of members of the organization in responding to a mixed social and material environment" (Taylor & Robichaud, 2004:397).

Figure 3 - Co-orientation theory (Taylor and Robichaud, 2004:402)
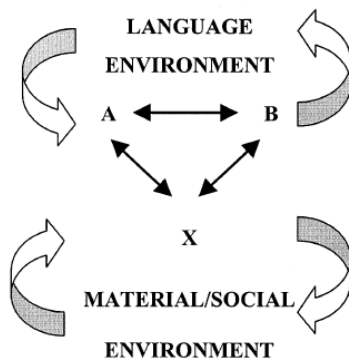
Co-orientation "occurs as people 'tune in' to one another as they engage in coordinated activity" and draw on a multiplicity of agents that participate in the process of organizing (Cooren et al., 2011:1155). The text-conversation-text relationship is key to understanding the process of co-orientation. Texts as "discursively based interpretations of situation, past and present" (Groleau, 2006:165) are used to bring recollections of past conversations into the present as a resource for co-orientation. They are also constructed in the co-orienting process and are then used to generate further conversations. Taylor and his colleagues argued that co-orientation is performative in that by seeking to co-orient around an issue, people are collectively learning about, and changing their context. To summarise, "the co-orientational process is aligned through conversation and text to produce coordination of action

around a commonly determined object" (Groleau, 2006:165). This perspective on organizing, I suggest, is equally applicable to the emergent dynamics of LAP.

Whilst co-orientation explains the coalescence of people around objects in individual conversations, Taylor argues that larger action occurs from the interplay of numerous conversations. He proposed that each 'unit of co-orientation' links horizontally and vertically to other conversations. He described the process of 'layering up' of co-orienting activity as *imbrication,* "to be imbricated means to be tiled, like the shingles on a roof, the foliage on a tree, or the scales on a fish: arranged in a regular way, each tile partly overlapping another, and simultaneously overlapped by one, to form a single articulated roof, or skin or foliage" (Taylor, 2001:280). Through the imbrication of individual conversations, it becomes possible for groups to co-orient with other groups (as the A and B of the triad), and organizations to co-orient with other organizations.

3.2.2 Hybrid agency

Integral to the theory of co-orientation is that both people and material objects contribute to constituting agency i.e. to making a difference. Taylor argued that agency emerges within the process rather than residing within an individual or object, "agency, from a co-orientational point of view, is a concept that takes on meaning only in the context of a communication event" (Taylor, 2006:150). This position is congruent with Dewey and Bentley's notion of trans-action whereby agency cannot be viewed as residing within an individual, or as a relation between entities, but as emerging as trans-actors come together to coordinate and accomplish action. The role of non-human actors in the performativity of communication, whilst alluded to, is not developed to any extent in the work of Taylor and his colleagues (Taylor, 1999; Taylor et al., 1996; Taylor & Van Every, 2000). Indeed, this opportunity to develop the co-orientation view was highlighted by Groleau (2006: 175) who commented that "this promising incursion into the world of materiality appears not to have been pursued".

François Cooren, another Montreal School scholar, has been influential in studying the role of non-human actors in organizational communication. In an early article, Cooren (2004) built on the notion of hybrid agency (Latour, 1993, 1996) to argue that texts participate alongside human actors in performing actions within organizations. Using the example of a manager who used Post-Its to make notes of actions he needed to complete (such as checking a price or making a phone call), Cooren explained that the Post-It notes played a role in reminding the manager what s/he needed to do. By doing something that the manager, as a human with limited memory capacity, could not do i.e. carrying the required actions through time and space, the Post-It notes supplemented the manager's recall ability and were appropriated by the manager as a reminder. Therefore, the process of organizing (and, for my purposes, leadership) cannot be reduced to what humans alone do, "but rather should be expanded to include the hybrid and ghostly effects of nonhuman actions" (Cooren, 2004:388). Moreover, he argued that humans both act through textual objects and are acted upon by them and any communicative action should be considered as a *hybrid phenomenon* in that it mobilises a plenum of agencies, human and non-human, material and discursive actors, who all contribute to making a difference (Cooren, 2006).

In his more recent thinking, Cooren (2015, 2018) has become increasingly critical of what he perceives as the bifurcation of the social and material worlds, the view that both worlds exist independently of each other. He argues that materiality and sociality are essential features of everything that exists and that it is impossible to separate them. What relates us to each other and to other things has by definition to materialise itself and, conversely, materialisation is always a matter of relations, for example, a situation is materialised through its representation in a PowerPoint presentation. Communication, he proposes is never just two people talking. Communication refers to the way two beings are held in common or held together through a third thing and thus "has to be understood as the materialization of relations *through* something or someone (an utterance, a force, a gaze, a spokesperson, a doorway, a website etc."

(Cooren, 2018:279). Hence, we talk about situations dictating courses of action, facts speaking for themselves etc. Therefore, when studying communication, we must focus on the multiple ways in which communication constitutes our world.

The perspective on agency articulated by the Montreal School allows me to further extend Simpson's (2016) articulation of agency in an ontologically processual understanding of LAP. Drawing on Dewey and Bentley's (1949 [1960]) definition of forms of action, Simpson observed that agency was 'trans-actional' and entailed the ongoing co-ordinated accomplishment of work by trans-actors. However, she did not explicate whether these trans-actors were human or non-human. In line with Cooren's ideas, I propose that LAP is irreducibly social and material, and that agency emerges within conversations from the relations of hybrid multiple actors (human and non-human). Whilst recognising the myriad of non-human actors at play in LAP, I have chosen to foreground one such actor in this study and explore how written documents make a difference in the communicative activities that perform leadership. As discussed previously, this is an under-theorised and researched feature within current LAP thinking.

To summarise this section, I have drawn out two key concepts (co-orientation and hybrid agency) from the body of work under the banner of the Montreal School and explained how these have informed my thinking about the communicative constitution of LAP. Viewing leadership as an organizing process that produces direction, co-orientation and the underpinning text-conversation dialectic offers one explanation for how this organizing occurs. Moreover, attending to the inextricably social and material nature of LAP enables consideration of the role of non-human agents (and specifically documents) in performing leadership. To further develop my ideas, I now return to the concept of 'practice' and outline how a Pragmatist perspective on practice can further elaborate a processual, communicative understanding of LAP.

3.3 A Pragmatist theory of practice

Practice theory, with its notion that social life is an ongoing production that emerges through actions, has the potential to further deepen our understanding of the performative and relational dimensions of leadership. However, one of the challenges of engaging with 'practice' is the lack of consistency in how the concept is used within the extant literature. Reviews exploring the impact of practice in organization studies (Corradi, Gherardi, & Verzelloni, 2010; Gherardi, 2009; Miettinen, Samra-Fredericks, & Yanow, 2009; Nicolini, 2013; Postill, 2010), highlight a multiplicity of ways of engaging with the concept. Practice can be synonymous with 'what people do', an empirical (often ethnographic) programme that seeks to understand social and organizational life through the identification of routine practices. From such research, theories can be developed that explain how human action achieves organizing. Alternatively, the concept of practice can be used to address philosophical concerns about agency, structure, and the creation of social order. A similar distinction was made by Feldman and Orlikowski (2011) who argued that scholars engaged with practice in three differing ways: as a phenomenon; as a perspective or theory; or as a philosophy. Therefore, my reading of the practice literature in organization studies corroborates the view that "the aggregate of voices under the label 'practice-based-studies' is rather polyphonic" (Gherardi, 2009:116).

Drawing on Practice-Based Studies (PBS) as a resource is further complicated by the lack of a shared understanding or unifying theory of practice. Miettinen (2006) makes the point that most articles adopting a practice approach include a list of the various scholars (including Heidegger, Wittgenstein, Bourdieu, Foucault, Pickering, and Schatzki) who are perceived to have contributed differing theories of practice. Whilst LAP scholars have adopted an ecumenical approach to theorising practice (cf. Raelin, 2016d for a collection of essays highlighting the diversity of perspectives), all converge towards a common understanding that situated actions are consequential in the

accomplishing of leadership, and that the relations that give rise to these actions are mutually constitutive. Amongst these multiple voices, Simpson and her colleagues (Simpson, 2016; Simpson et al., 2018) have highlighted how American Pragmatism, with its foregrounding of engaged action and its understanding of practice as a recursive relational encounter, offers fresh thinking about leadership dynamics and the processes of emergence that bring about change.

Practice, from a Pragmatist perspective, is a "social process involving experience and action as mutually informing aspects of human conduct" (Simpson, 2009:1329). According to Dewey (1929:iii), "experience is not a veil that shuts man off from nature; it is a means of penetrating continually further into the heart of nature". Specifically, Dewey viewed practice as the ongoing experience of an evolving series of situations through which humans make sense of, shape and act in their local contexts. In commonplace usage, 'situation' is generally taken to mean a single moment in time, a meeting or an event that is restricted in time and space (Alvesson, 1996). However, Dewey offers a more dynamic understanding of 'situation' as an element of the natural world that is experienced by human actors as a temporal unfolding, a unified whole in relation to a specific issue (Brown, 2012). In other words, rather than considering a situation as an isolated event that is static and unchanging, a 'practice' view considers a situation as an emergent whole where the environment, people and objects are all integral and mutually dependent, so they cannot be sensibly isolated as discrete constructs. Ultimately, therefore, practice is continuously constituted by the interweaving of multiple, dynamic situations.

Much of how we respond to situations is driven by habits that allow us to anticipate what will happen in the future. Unlike the commonly held view of habits as unconscious, automatic responses that once learned become difficult to change, Dewey sought to retheorise habits not as a mechanistic response to stimuli but as an acquired predisposition to act in response to certain situations. He proposed that habit

should be understood as "a readiness to act overtly in a specific fashion whenever the opportunity is presented" (1922 [1957]:32). Habits, rather than being immutable, are continually acquired, developed and changed in response to social engagement and experience. When a situation appears to be relatively stable, our existing habits guide our decisions and actions. However, when existing habits are no longer useful in informing our response, this creates doubt about the future which gives rise to what Dewey referred to as an 'indeterminate situation'. The need to transform this indeterminate situation into one that is sufficiently settled to enable future action triggers a process of Inquiry.

Dewey (1938:104) described Inquiry as "the controlled or directed transformation of an indeterminate situation into one that is so determinate in its constituent distinctions and relations as to convert the elements of the original situation into a unified whole". It is through Inquiry that uncertainty is explored communicatively amongst groups of people seeking to create a shared understanding of the problem and to develop and test potential solutions with a view to transformation. An Inquiry is triggered not by an individual but by a situation, or specifically, "when there is something seriously the matter, some trouble, due to active dissonance, dissentiency, conflict among the factors of *a priori* non-intellectual experience; when...a situation becomes tensional" (Dewey, 1916a:11). The process of Inquiry (see figure 4) flows iteratively back and forth between an initial sense of doubt as to the usefulness of existing habits for anticipating the future, through to the formulation of this doubt into a problem, the garnering of information and facts pertinent to addressing this problem, and eventually to the creation of propositions that are then tested and revised through experimentation and imagination. Despite describing the phases in sequential order, Dewey was clear that the phases were interdependent and dynamic and that progress through the pattern was weaving and non-linear. Importantly, Inquiry does not arise purely out of cognitivist considerations but out of practical, experienced difficulties in responding to situations thereby constituting the progressive process of resolving those uncertainties.

Figure 4 - Dewey's Pattern of Inquiry
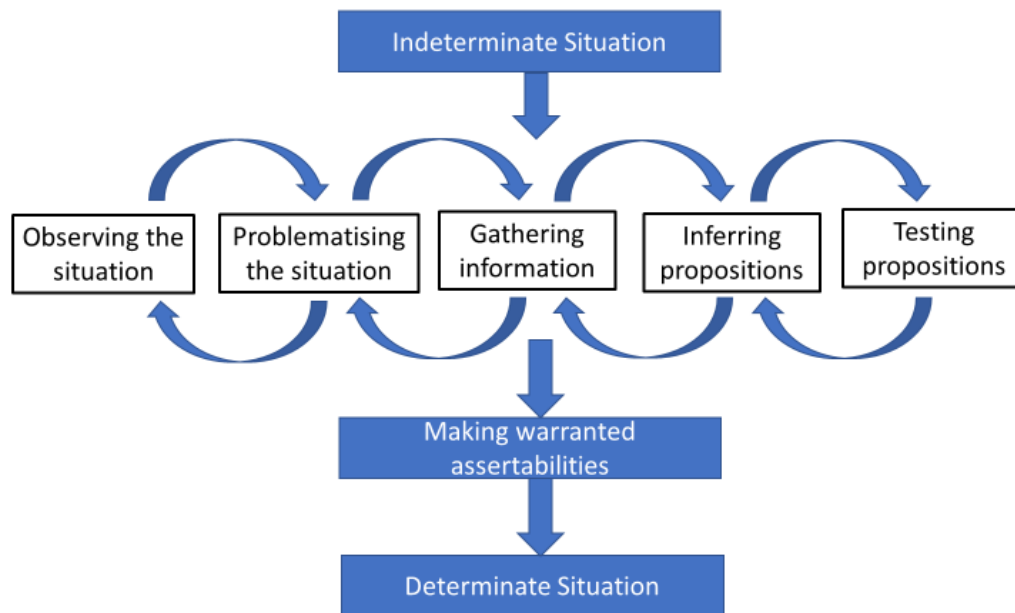
The outcomes of Inquiry are 'warranted assertabilities' (Dewey, 1938), judgements that the process of Inquiry has run its course, the ideas have been tested and appear to be of use in anticipating alternative futures. The term 'warranted assertabilities' reflects the temporal nature of human action in that "what is warranted is the result of reflection that has been effective in the sense that some specific doubt or difficulty has been resolved. 'Assertability' points forward in time towards something yet to be done" (Hickman, 2007:207). Central to Dewey's position, however, was that there is no absolute 'truth' to be discovered through Inquiry and that any assertions are acknowledged to be both temporary and fallible, they themselves introducing new doubts that may become triggers for future Inquiries.

To summarise, viewed through a Pragmatist lens practice is conceived as the interweaving of evolving situations within which human actors seek to make sense of, and act in response to, their experiences. Whilst a Pragmatist theory of practice sees stability and change not as competing forces but as complementary features of our experience that generate and sustain action in their interplay (Elkjaer & Simpson,

2011), it is the need for change that necessitates leadership. Our established repertoire of habits provides a heuristic that enables us to construct our response to a largely predictable future. However, when we encounter a practical difficulty, a concrete problem that cannot be satisfactorily addressed using our current habits, then leadership is required to creatively shape action and change habits. Drawing on Dewey's ideas, I propose that LAP performs the ongoing producing of direction and the transforming of situations through Inquiry, which Dewey saw as an observable social process, enacted in and through communication.

3.4 Developing a performative understanding of LAP

One of the objectives of this thesis is to elaborate a processual understanding of LAP and to extend the ideas of Simpson (2016). This involves explicitly acknowledging the performative nature of language and considering the constitutive role of communication (in human and non-human form) in the ongoing accomplishment of leadership work. Key theoretical resources that have informed my thinking are process philosophy and specifically the ideas of the American Pragmatist, John Dewey, and the work of the Montreal School of CCO who theorise the communicative constitution of organizing. Drawing these ideas together, I have developed the performative concept of *leadership-as-communicative-practice* (LACP) to suggest how leadership is realized in the flow of practice (see table 4 for an overview of the key ideas).

Leadership-as-communicative-practice is embedded in an ontology that privileges emergence and temporality and views processes rather than things as the basis of reality. Being a Pragmatist and adopting a performative mindset means that change and stability are viewed as cohabiting ideas (Cabantous & Sergi, 2018). Thus, I equate 'practices' to Dewey's notion of habits i.e. those processes for enacting leadership that have become temporarily stabilized whilst 'practice' refers to the ongoing, holistic nature of collective leadership action that transforms the meanings of situations. A

processual view of LAP attends primarily to the latter and views leadership as a process of organizing; a performance that brings about transformative change.

Table 4 - Leadership-as-communicative-practice: Key ideas

Key elements	Definition	Main ideas
Leadership	An organizing process of producing direction and shaping movement	Leadership is an irreducibly social and material process that brings about transformative change Leadership is a performance that is realized through communication (human and non-human)
Communication	The establishment of a link, connection or relationship	Communication comprises both text and conversation
Text	The materialising of language into utterances	Texts (verbal or written) are generated and regenerated through conversation
Conversation	An exchange process involving two or more people in relation to each other and the situation	The process by which people 'talk out' and make sense of texts Each conversation is unique in terms of the situation and the actors involved (human and non-human)
Co-orientation	An ongoing process of organizing involving two or more people orienting themselves to each other and to a common issue or object of concern (X)	Co-orientation is at the heart of any action-oriented conversations Through conversation, people generate a coordinated response to X All actors involved in co-orienting activity are changed as a result
Transforming situations	The progressive resolution of an uncertain situation	Producing direction is accomplished through transforming situations The situation is transformed through a process of Inquiry The transformation encompasses all trans-actors (human and non-human)

Core to performativity is *effectuation* or seeking to understand how a phenomenon is brought into being. LACP proposes that leadership is constituted in and through communication, the establishing of a link, connection or relationship through human or non-human actors (Cooren, 2015). Specifically, I argue that leadership transforms a holistic situation from indeterminacy to an alternative, more settled situation through the communicative process of Inquiry. Taking this line of thinking further, I contend that the basic organizing process underpinning Inquiry is co-orientation, the orienting of two or more people or groups with each other and to a shared conversational object. Co-orientation theory recognises that language cannot be understood separately from the situation in which it is uttered and from the human and non-human actors who act and are materialized through it. Specifically, I have chosen to foreground written documents as a form of material agent that makes a difference in the communicative constitution of leadership and argue that documents are of consequence in both Inquiry and co-orientation.

To summarise my argument, I propose a Pragmatist theorisation of *leadership-as-communicative-practice* that sees 'transforming situations' as both a performative process through which leadership is enacted and as an outcome of the work of leadership. Practice unfolds as evolving situations are transformed through the process of Inquiry, with myriad co-orienting activities create action within everyday conversations.

3.5 Chapter summary

The ideas outlined in this chapter are rooted in a process ontology and a position that leadership is an ongoing, irreducibly social and material process of change that is accomplished through communication. Within the extant literature, Simpson (2016) has offered a processual understanding of LAP and the conceptualisation of *leadership-as-communicative-practice* seeks to extend her ideas to explicitly consider the constitutive role of communication in the ongoing, co-ordinated accomplishment of the

work of leadership. Drawing on the work of John Dewey, I argue that adopting a Pragmatist perspective provides a theoretical basis for understanding the complex, recursive relationship between human and non-human actors and the situation, as they constitute and are constituted by practice. The importance placed by Dewey on communication within practice informs my argument that it is through communication (in all its forms) that LAP is performed. The ideas of the communicative constitution of organization (CCO) advocated by the Montreal School offers a more detailed understanding of the process of co-orientation as the basis of organizing that can aid our understanding of how leadership is enacted. Therefore, this thesis aims to contribute theoretically by bringing together a processual worldview, a Deweyan theory of practice and a performative view of communication to increase our understanding of LAP.

A challenge with inquiring into ideas that have yet to achieve any real traction within leadership research is how to study them empirically. There is a degree of sophistication required to design research that engages with a world on the move. Therefore, the motivation for my fieldwork was to explore the notion of leadership-as-communicative-practice empirically. One way to engage with the performativity of leadership is by studying the transformation of situations: how leadership both emerges and is made visible within the situation through the dynamic translation between text and conversation, and how the situation and other trans-actors (human and non-human) participate and are changed in the unfolding process. Developing these ideas into a methodological approach forms the subject of the next chapter.

4.0 Methodological considerations

Conceptualising LAP as a transformative process of change opens a methodological Pandora's box. How do we study leadership as a phenomenon of "almost imperceptible directions, movement, and orientations, having neither beginning nor end" (Wood, 2005:1115) that unfolds through the evolving situations constituting practice? Turning to the vast oeuvre of empirical leadership research provides few insights to answer this question. The continued reliance on relatively static methods of studying leadership that seek to abstract the phenomenon from the context are ill-suited for engaging with the dynamism of LAP. Even the ever popular interview is poorly equipped to study processes with its reliance on 'post-hoc reconstructions' that fail to do justice to a world in the making (Cooren, Vaara, Langley, & Tsoukas, 2014:14). Instead, we need another perspective on designing, conducting and evaluating research that is commensurable with a process ontology.

There is growing interest in the 'doing' of process research (Fachin & Langley, 2018; Langley, Smallman, Tsoukas, & Van de Ven, 2013). However, the way in which researchers empirically study process is informed by whether they adopt a substantialist worldview that focuses on how things change or a process ontology in which the world is seen as composed of processes. Underpinning the methodological argument made in this chapter is a view that research is a performance that unfolds as we, as researchers, are doing it and is continually in the process of becoming. Sergi and Hallin (2011) argue that viewing the world through a process ontology that focuses on activity and movement, phenomena should be considered as performances. Therefore, doing research entails engaging with two differing performances: the performing of the research process; and the performance of the phenomenon being researched, namely, leadership-as-communicative-practice. This chapter offers insights into the former, the performing of the research and my experience as the performer.

The chapter begins by considering how to conduct processual research informed by Pragmatism before turning to the LAP literature to review how other scholars have empirically studied a practice-based theorisation of leadership. Having argued that engaging with movement and change is central to researching processual LAP, organizational shadowing is then highlighted as an approach well suited to addressing one of the objectives of this study, namely, to empirically explore the concept of leadership-as-communicative-practice. Having developed this methodological approach to encompass the notion of 'shadowing situations', more detail is then provided on how the empirical material used for this study was constructed and analysed. The chapter concludes by reflexively considering the challenges of producing insights, doing fieldwork and evaluating the quality of LAP research when adopting a processual worldview.

4.1 Performing process research

Researching process assumes that the phenomenon being explored is in motion, is unfolding over time, and is continually becoming. However, recent reviews of the organization studies literature have argued that there are different ways to operationalize the notion of process in empirical research (Abdallah, Lusiani, & Langley, forthcoming; Fachin & Langley, 2018). Drawing on these two reviews I consider there to be three main approaches to undertaking process research that have different methodological connotations: *evolutionary process; performative process; and narrative process* (see table 5). Within the distinctions offered by Fachin and Langley and Abdullah, Lusiani, & Langley, the *performative process* is the most closely aligned to the ontological and theoretical position adopted in this thesis with its focus on real-time observation and deep dive into conversations.

Table 5 - Three approaches to process research

	Evolutionary process	Performative process	Narrative process
Ontology	Substantialist	Process	Substantialist or process
Focus	How an entity changes or develops over time	How people negotiate understandings in situated interactions	How people make sense within narrative accounts
Research design	Longitudinal case studies with data from multiple sources	Short time frame cases (mainly real-time observation)	Multiple interviews that usually form individual narratives
Analysis	Chronology and phases as main analytical features Findings presented by phases	Conversation analysis or study of interactions in deep dive vignettes Findings mainly presented by practices	Thematic or narrative analysis Findings structured around discursive sensemaking of an organizational phenomenon

However, there are significant limitations with the characterisation of *performative process*. Firstly, the focus of this style of process research gives primacy to individuals in interaction with each other. In chapters two and three I made the case that a processual view of LAP requires us to adopt a trans-actional rather than inter-actional approach that recognises the inseparability of human and non-human actors from the experienced situation. Therefore, studying LAP trans-actionally requires a broader focus than simply individuals. Secondly, the privileging of 'practices' sits uncomfortably with the stated aim of my research to explore the unfolding of 'practice'.

Rather than trying to 'shoe-horn' my research design into the *performative process* categorisation, I created a series of guiding principles to guide the design of LAP research underpinned by a processual, Pragmatist philosophy. The starting point for this was Wood's (2005:1116) observation that as leadership researchers, "our

methodological concern should be with the identification of an essential movement, a movement that has a certain temporal dimension, a process in time. A process methodology, accordingly, is something for which temporality, activity, and change are basic propositions". The five-point 'heuristic' outlined below recognises that studying processual LAP requires us to access a place where the process emerges, to identify a situation (in Deweyan terms) where the need for change necessitates leadership, and to design methods that allow researchers to be immersed in the unfolding dynamic of movement and change.

The research question seeks to address a practical concern or problem and aims to provide warranted assertabilities to guide future actions

The starting point for undertaking Pragmatist research is that the research question should be a proactive search for a resolution to a concrete problem, a desire to make an improvement in practice and not a purely intellectual or abstract exercise (Martela, 2015). Dewey described this as an 'ends-in-view', or the "foreseen consequences which influence present deliberations" (Dewey, 1930:223). Moreover, the empirical driver is to explore and evaluate potential options for addressing the problem before making judgements about what is most useful to guide future actions. In the face of an unanswered question, a mystery (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2007) or doubt (Locke, Golden-Biddle, & Feldman, 2008), we seek to find a plausible account offering an explanatory hypothesis that could subsequently be tested and judged to be of value. Thus, conducting processual research equates to Dewey's social process of Inquiry as outlined in chapter three.

The research design enables the researcher to experience the temporal and spatial unfolding of movement

To study the social and material process of leadership requires the researcher to participate in the trans-action of humans, non-humans and the evolving situation. This

contrasts with more traditional approaches that focus on the actions of individual actors. Accessing a research 'space' may involve an initial ethnographic style immersion in an organization to locate a situation where leadership is likely to emerge. Once identified, the researcher then needs a research design that allows them to personally experience the unfolding process. This brings to the fore the requirement for methods of conducting fieldwork that focus on movement and the mobility of all those involved in the trans-action.

More fluid analytical techniques are required when conducting research from a process ontology

Traditional leadership research assumes linearity in moving from the data collection stage to data analysis. In contrast, considering research as an unfolding process necessitates a fluid approach whereby analysis begins on entering the field and continues throughout the writing process and beyond (Sergi & Hallin, 2011). This dynamic can make providing a clean, abstract description of the analytical process difficult, "the detailed study of processes always implies, by definition, that we follow them through time and space, a methodological requirement that often seems hard to reconcile with the thoroughness of detailed analysis. It is in this uncomfortable tension that the future of process studies might lie" (Cooren et al., 2014:13). Methodologically, this means that more traditional analytical techniques such as thematic or content analysis, which occur separately from the gathering of empirical material, and which seek to abstract knowledge from the situation, are not appropriate for studying processual LAP.

Evaluating the quality of the research should consider the practical usefulness of the insights and engage others in debating the value of the outcomes

The criteria for evaluating conventional positivist research are well established in terms of validity, generalizability, reliability, objectivity and the commitment to removing or

at least reducing bias. Adopting a Pragmatist informed approach holds certain views that are counter to these traditional perspectives: that knowing is derived from our experience of the world and therefore is always situationally specific and not generalisable; that the researcher is an irreducible part of the engagement and therefore cannot assert objectivity; that there is no 'truth' to be found and anything that appears as a 'known' is both temporary and fallible (Dewey & Bentley, 1949 [1960]). Nevertheless, people act based on the warranted assertabilities generated by their Inquiries, therefore, any evaluative framework needs to consider whether the methodological principles adopted are consistent with *a priori* philosophical commitments and theoretical influences (P. Johnson, 2015; P. Johnson, Buehring, Cassell, & Symon, 2006). Therefore, I propose that three broad questions are pertinent to evaluating process research:

- Is the research connected to practice and driven by the search for resolution of a real-life problem?
- Does the research design enable the researchers to experience the unfolding spatial, temporal, social and material aspects of the situation?
- Is the understanding produced useful to practitioners and can we convince fellow researchers of the plausibility of our insights?

A reflexive lens is valuable to provide insight into those factors that influence, and are influenced by the process of designing, conducting and evaluating research

A final consideration when undertaking processual research is the need for reflexivity as we, as researchers, question the basic assumptions that underpin our research. "Reflexivity is rapidly emerging as the new gold standard for researchers" argued Gabriel (2015:333) in his reflection on the topic. Whilst the increasing number of books and articles on the subject appears to support this (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009; Corlett & Mavin, 2018; Cunliffe, 2003; S. Day, 2012), reflexivity remains a contested concept

with the understanding being affected by the researcher's philosophical stance. Alvesson and Sköldberg (2009:8) consider reflexivity as drawing attention "to the complex relationship between processes of knowledge production and the various contexts of such processes, as well as the involvement of the knowledge producer". They argue reflexivity means paying attention to the political, cultural, social, linguistic and theoretical elements that are intertwined in the process of developing knowledge and how these elements influence the way in which empirical material is constructed, interpreted and written. Whilst Alvesson and Sköldberg use the terms 'reflexive' and 'reflective' interchangeably, I choose to use 'reflexive' in cognizance of the ongoing definitional debate between the two terms (Corlett & Mavin, 2018; Hibbert, Coupland, & MacIntosh, 2010). My position is that 'reflection' suggests it is possible to mirror or represent a separate reality, an idea which is antithetical to a process ontology. Therefore, rather than the metaphor of a mirror, I use the metaphor of a lens that allows me to focus on different aspects of leadership practice. The lens metaphor recognizes that rather than reflecting 'reality', I can offer an interpretation of leadership through the philosophical lens of a process world view informed by Pragmatism and a theoretical view derived from the emergent ideas of LAP.

4.2 The challenge of studying LAP processually

Leadership research has a strong tradition of quantitative studies underpinned by largely positivist, individual-centric assumptions and the extensive use of questionnaires as a method, which has given rise to the 'typical leadership study'. Hunter, Bedell-Avers and Mumford (2007) found that most studies focused on the dyadic relationship between leader and subordinate and use self-report survey methods to identify leadership traits and behaviours. Whilst acknowledging the flaws of relying on self and subordinate assessments against pre-determined behavioural scales, the solution offered was to encourage the examination of contextual moderators and control for potential bias thereby increasing the 'scientific' validity of

empirical work in the field. Moreover, Hunter and his colleagues advocated a greater focus on investigating the process variables of leadership and proposed that conducting more detailed, multi-level (individual, team, and organization) studies could generate alternative models of leadership that could be tested to identify causality. That quantitative methods, derived from a positivist position, dominate leadership research is further evident in two reviews published in *The Leadership Quarterly* a decade apart (Gardner et al., 2010; Lowe & Gardner, 2000) that argued strongly for the use of the experimental design to tease out causal relationships and provide testable hypotheses.

Strident critiques of the contribution made by positivist, hypothesis-driven approaches (see for example Alvesson, 1996) cite the lack of convincing evidence that this methodological stance had produced empirically well-supported theories that explain the leadership phenomenon. Moreover, the views that the outcome of research needs to be an abstract, generalizable theory, and that the use of objective studies that produce statistically valid and replicable findings is the only way to produce leadership theory, are both questionable. The culmination of these concerns was a call to reorient the nature of leadership research through the use of more qualitative methods (Alvesson, 1996; Bryman, 1986; Morgan & Smircich, 1980). This call was partly behind the establishment of the journal, *Leadership,* in 2005, which argued that "the understanding of leadership is best enhanced by encouragement of a diversity of theoretical positions and research methods and the exploration of a great variety of research contexts and settings." (D. Collinson & Grint, 2005:7). In his review of the first five years of *Leadership*, Bryman (2011) concluded that the articles published had contributed to greater methodological diversity and highlighted the absence of questionnaire-based research and the prevalence of semi-structured interviews and the qualitative analysis of documents as increasingly popular research designs.

LAP scholars recognise that to engage with the 'doing' of leadership requires radically different, and more sophisticated, methodological approaches that gain access to the

progressive unfolding of leadership practice (Carroll et al., 2008). The extant empirical LAP literature indicates a strong qualitative focus with observations and interviews being the most commonly used methods (see table 6 for an overview of methodological approaches). What is noticeable is the growing use of methods such as ethnographies, shadowing and following conversations as more dynamic approaches to studying LAP. This is consistent with Raelin's observation that LAP scholars will need to go beyond the established quantitative methods used in leadership research and "take advantage of more narrative forms of inquiry, such as narrative text and other ethnographic methods, using thick descriptions that carefully capture the dialogical activity concurrently in process" (2011:202).

Table 6 - Methodological approaches used in LAP research

Empirical Study	Method of generating data	Method of analysis
Carroll et al. (2008): Leadership as Practice: Challenging the Competency Paradigm	Semi-structured interviews with participants on a leadership development programme	Identification of discourses that reflected a sensitivity to practice
Crevani et al. (2010): Leadership, not leaders: On the study of leadership as practices and interactions	Ethnographic fieldwork (observations and interviews) in three organizations	Analysis of interactions to describe situated practices
Denis et al. (2010): The Practice of Leadership in the Messy World of Organizations	Qualitative fieldwork (observations, interviews and collating documents) in a healthcare organization	Vignettes (narrative and quotes) to illustrate four features of leadership
Carroll and Simpson (2012): Capturing sociality in the movement between frames: An illustration from leadership development	Conversations that took place in an online forum as part of an 18-month long leadership development programme	Analysis of the use of 'frames' in written conversations to identify where there was movement between different frames

Endrissat and von Arx (2013): Leadership practices and context: Two sides of the same coin	Single, ethnographic case study in a Swiss hospital (observation, interviews, naturally occurring talk and collation of documents)	Narrative of people's experience of leadership and change. Thematic analysis to identify practices and contextual factors
Fisher and Robbins (2014): Embodied leadership: Moving from leader competencies to leaderful practices	Analysis of interviews from a case study of military advisers in the Australian Army Training Team in Vietnam	Thematic analysis to identify embodied leadership practices
Zerjav et al. (2014): A leadership-as-practice perspective on design in architecture, engineering and construction projects: interaction analysis of a collaborative workshop	Video-recording of a collaborative design workshop in the Netherlands	Video-based interaction analysis to identify 'turns' where individuals contributed a speech act to the interaction
Chreim (2015): The (non) distribution of leadership roles: Considering leadership practices and configurations	Comparative case study (interviews and documents) across four acquisitions within an organization	Analysis of leadership configurations and practices
Meier (2015): Configurations of leadership practices in hospital units	Comparative case study (observation and interviews) across four hospital units in Denmark	Analysis of leadership practices
Carroll (2016): Leadership as identity: A practice-based exploration	Shadowing a team leader and observing interactions	Narrative of the emergence of identify and the impact of identity on practice
Ford (2016): Gendered relationship and the problem of diversity in leadership-as-practice	Life history narrative interviews with local authority managers in England	Life history narrative analysis

Sergi (2016) Who's leading the way? Investigating the contributions of materiality to leadership-as-practice	Ethnography informed fieldwork in a software development company including observing meetings, interviews and collating documents	Analysis of interactions and documents
Kempster and Gregory (2017): 'Should I Stay or Should I go?' Exploring Leadership-as-Practice in the Middle Management Role	Autoethnography with a middle manager involving interviews	Co-constructed auto-ethnographic narrative to identify themes
Crevani (2018): Is there leadership in a fluid world? Exploring the ongoing production of direction in organizing	Ethnography informed fieldwork in two organizations	Analysis of interactions to describe situated practices
Simpson, Buchan, and Sillince (2018): The performativity of leadership talk	Observed and audio-recorded meetings in an Arts company	Analysis of conversational turning points

4.3 Shadowing situations – a mobile method

The need to engage with movement and to follow people, objects and ideas as they travel through time and space underpins the burgeoning interest in mobile methods. The 'mobilities turn' in organization studies (Sheller & Urry, 2006; Urry, 2007) pays attention to the dynamic continuity of experience rather than the fixed structures within which this experience is more conventionally understood. Sociologists Büscher and Urry (2009) argue that existing methods deal poorly with the fleeting, the chaotic, the non-causal and the complex, and that alternative methods are needed that can engage with people on the move and to explore the process by which movement is accomplished. More mobile methods include following people, objects or things,

studying virtual mobilities such as texts, websites and online forums, mobile ethnographies conducted using video or 'walking with' an individual, and using diaries to ask respondents to record what they were doing and when and how they were moving.

According to McDonald (2005:458), shadowing "has the ability to capture the brief, fragmented, varied, verbal and interrupted nature of organizational life" yet has seldom been used or discussed as a research technique. Less than a decade later, organization studies scholars were lauding its resurgence as "the method *par excellence* for studying how actors enact organizations through interactions in everyday situations" (Vasquez, Brummans, & Groleau, 2012:145). This expanding interest recognizes that shadowing offers a way of engaging with the dynamic, immediate and transient nature of organizing, addressing some of the problems faced when conducting traditional ethnographies in organizations such as the need to become a fully participative member of the group, the requirement for prolonged periods of immersion, and the difficulties of needing to be in more than one place at the same time (Czarniawska, 2007). By far the most prevalent use of shadowing is as a kind of one-to-one ethnography, following individual actors during their everyday activities and recording their actions through video/audio recording or fieldnotes. This is the focus of much of the methodological literature on the topic (Gill, 2011; Gill, Barbour, & Dean, 2014; McDonald, 2005).

Whilst there are significant overlaps with other observational methods, shadowing allows the researcher to interact with individuals, ask questions and gain access to in-the-moment interpretations of what is happening. It also allows researchers to engage directly with practice and to gain insights into the usually invisible, frequently mundane, aspects of work that are difficult to articulate. Shadowing enables the researcher to observe actions embedded in the social and cultural context and therefore provide a more holistic understanding of the processes of organizing than

could be accessed through interviews or more stationary forms of observation. Within organization studies, there is interest in using shadowing as a method for following projects or issues rather than individuals (Sergi, 2012; Vasquez et al., 2012) thereby enabling the study of both human and non-human actors and the relationship between them.

Decentring the leader in favour of leadership as a dynamic collaborative and communicative process necessitates a different focus for the 'shadow'. Instead of following a person, an object or a defined project, I propose focusing on an emergent situation where the need for change requires leadership and then shadowing the unfolding of action that constitutes ongoing transformational change. The idea of a 'situational approach' to studying leadership was mooted by Alvesson (1996:457) who argued that by attending to certain situations it would be possible to gain "an interpretative, historical, language-sensitive, local, open and non-authoritative understanding of the subject matter". Whilst agreeing with his reasoning, there is a risk that adopting the notion of a situation as a fixed context invites a substantialist and representational approach to analysis. Instead, I advocate the broader Pragmatist definition of a situation, which foregrounds the performativity of leadership by allowing for a plenum of agencies (Cooren, 2006) that make a difference to transforming the situation over time. Therefore, rather than a situational approach, I suggest that *shadowing situations* offers a more productive method for studying ontologically processual LAP.

Vasquez, Brummans, & Groleau (2012) offered a conceptual toolbox that detailed the doing of shadowing as three interrelated framing practices: delineating the object of study; punctuating the flow of a given organizational process to determine the boundaries of the field; and reflecting on the relationship between the researcher and the object/person being shadowed. Applying these frames allows me to further explicate this approach to shadowing situations. Central to this methodology is the

need to identify an 'indeterminate situation' that can be followed through the transformative process of Inquiry. Further, given that the tensional nature of such a situation is emergent and is constituted through talk, it is vital that the researcher is present during relevant conversations. Once a situation is identified, the emphasis of the research shifts from a general engagement with the organization to a narrower focus on following the actions constituting, and being constituted by, the transformation of the situation.

Defining the boundaries of shadowing research requires decisions as to when to enter and exit the field, where, when and what to shadow and what events or places to privilege for the study (Vasquez et al., 2012). Identifying a 'situation' to shadow thus influences decisions as to which meetings to attend, which documents to gather and which people to initiate conversations with. Moreover, the theoretical sensitivities of the researcher inform which features of the situation are foregrounded (for me this was the entwining of conversation and text that produced direction). Given the dynamic nature of LAP, there will never be an end-point at which the outcomes of leadership are complete, therefore the decision to leave the field will likely be influenced by time constraints; the risk of the researcher 'outstaying their welcome'; or the transformation of the shadowed situation towards a more settled guide to further action. The final frame encourages us as shadows to consider the performative effect of our presence on the focus of our research i.e. the unfolding situation. I return to this idea later in this chapter.

To summarise, this study was informed by a series of guidelines for conducting Pragmatist research and sought to identify an appropriate 'mobile' method that would enable direct engagement with the unfolding of leadership. Reviewing how other processual LAP scholars had undertaken empirical work provided a further steer and led me to conclude that organizational shadowing, and specifically shadowing situations, offered a methodological approach that complemented the philosophical

underpinning of my work. However, it is worth noting that the presentation of the methodological argument in this chapter is, of necessity, very linear and implies an *a priori* understanding of how the research would be conducted that is deceptive. Instead, the methodological approach evolved dynamically as I performed my research and was only 'crafted' retrospectively to reflect the requirements of a written thesis.

4.4 The practicalities of conducting fieldwork

Having outlined the methodological argument, this section provides a detailed overview of the practicalities of conducting shadowing research in a public-sector organization.

4.4.1 Accessing a space to experience leadership

Having decided to shadow situations in which leadership emerges, the first challenge was to gain access to a suitable organization. In terms of the sector for my research, my funding as part of the Strathclyde Business School Health Cluster was predicated on conducting an empirical study in a health-related organization. Whilst my professional background was not in health, the high-profile media coverage of plans to integrate health and social care provision across Scotland piqued my interest and I began to build a network of contacts who were involved with this change.

By way of background, legislation was passed in 2014 that brought into effect the Health and Social Care Partnerships, the single biggest reform in the way health and social care were delivered in Scotland since the creation of the NHS. The Scottish Government and policymakers had been working on the concept of integrating health and social care for nearly 20 years and the move to legislate was driven by the election of the Scottish National Party (SNP) in 2007 as it formed an integral part of their election manifesto. The *Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014* was passed by the Scottish Parliament in February 2014 and granted Royal Assent on 1st April 2014. The election of a SNP led government in May 2016 provided further impetus for the

establishment of 31 Integrated Joint Boards (or Integrated Authorities as they have become known) across Scotland. These Integrated Authorities ran as 'shadow' authorities for 12 months prior to their becoming 'live' with full statutory and financial responsibility on 31st April 2016.

The legislation entailed the bringing together of services previously delivered by NHS Scotland and by the Local Authority into a new organization with statutory responsibility to deliver a range of services to the population resident within their geographical area. The drive for greater integration is a key component of a wider public-sector reform programme that seeks to encourage greater community participation and the transition from secondary care (hospitals) to primary (General Practitioners) and social care. The creation of these new Integrated Authorities is widely recognised to be problematic with the bringing together of two distinctly different organizations (Local Authority and Health Board) each with disparate aims, cultures, and roles. Added layers of complexity were inherent due to governance structures that required the Health and Social Care Partnership Chief Officer to be accountable to both the Health Board (which in turn was accountable to the Scottish Government Health Minister) and the Council Executive (which was accountable to the elected Local Councillors). This reporting structure, alongside mixed degrees of engagement with the change resultant from its legislative imposition, created what Joni Smith, the Scottish First Minister's Policy Advisor described as a "perfect storm" that would necessitate "strong leadership" (personal conversation).

My initial introduction to one of the 31 Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) organizations in Scotland came through a Visiting Professor at Strathclyde University who had previously been the Chief Executive of a Local Authority and been involved in establishing several HSCPs. He agreed to make an approach to a large, city-based HSCP on my behalf and, having secured agreement in principle to my research from the Chief Officer, I then engaged directly with the Head of Organization Development (OD) to

agree on the scope of my access. Initially, access was limited to six-month attendance at the monthly Senior Management Team (SMT) meetings and at the monthly or fortnightly leadership team meetings held by the care group executive teams for Children's, Adults and Older People's services. As I established relationships with members of the SMT and leadership teams, this initial observational access evolved as I began to attend additional meetings and have one-to-one conversations with individuals. By mutual consent, the length of my engagement was extended and became relatively open-ended.

4.4.2 Identifying 'situations'

Having secured access to one of the HSCPs, I spent the initial three months (October 2016 to January 2017) attending leadership meetings. This initial immersion with the HSCP was invaluable in allowing me to familiarise myself with the organization both in terms of the key actors attending leadership meetings and the pressing issues that were shaping their discussions. However, a sense of unease that had begun to emerge during my initial engagement with the HSCP became more pronounced on reviewing my fieldnotes of the meetings I had attended. I became concerned that the range of topics covered in the meetings I was attending was too broad and dealt with in too cursory a manner to observe the producing of direction and shaping of movement. To narrow down my focus to allow me to observe how direction was being produced on a smaller number of issues, I chose to attend the Adult Leadership Team (ALT) meetings only. However, even with this reduced scope, there were more than 20 different agenda items covered at each fortnightly meeting, so it became apparent that I needed to find a way to further focus my study.

From my engagement with the research site, two 'situations' emerged that were evidently tensional within the organization and, therefore, interesting to me as a researcher. The first was a multidisciplinary short-term working group that was established by the Chief Officer (Strategy and Planning) to consider the

transformational reform of how services were provided to vulnerable adults with multiple and complex needs. The second emerged from the need to produce a five-year strategic direction for how Adult Mental Health Services would be provided within the city. Both situations engendered a sense of uncertainty within the HSCP that how services had been delivered historically to both care groups (adults with multiple and complex needs and mental health service users) might no longer be appropriate to address the needs of those using the services whilst concurrently meeting the pressing requirement to achieve financial savings. Both situations were described to me by people working within the HSCP as 'requiring strong leadership'.

The decision to focus on these two situations was driven primarily by opportunism. Whilst I had started attending the three leadership team meetings, the Adult leadership team met more regularly making it well-suited to gathering empirical material in a shorter timeframe. Moreover, from the first meeting I attended, the breadth and contested nature of the discussions was intriguing and the challenging dynamics within the group piqued my interest. By spending time with the group fortnightly, I formed working relationships that enabled me to request access to a more focused series of meetings i.e. those debating the mental health strategy. Having identified this as a situation to shadow, I then actively sought out another situation within Adult Services that comprised a different group of people. 'Adults with Multiple and Complex Needs' was just surfacing as an issue when I entered the field and the short-term nature of the focus group's remit (initially three meetings) made it accessible to me. I never consciously decided that two situations were 'enough'. However, when I reflected on my fieldnotes from the early meetings with both groups, I felt that the empirical material was providing the breadth and depth of insights to enable me to explore leadership-as-communicative-practice, therefore, I did not actively seek access to any further situations.

4.4.3 Gathering empirical material

The term 'data' did not sit comfortably with this research study as it implied an objectivity that is problematic as "data are never pure, free from theory, language and an interpretive bias, they are always constructed in terms of a particular framework, prestructured personal and cultural understanding, vocabulary and perspective" (Alvesson, 1996:460). This argument corresponds with Dewey and Bentley's (1949 [1960]) concerns about the misplaced separation of knowing from the knower. As a researcher, I am an integral part of the trans-action that I am shadowing, and my recording of the trans-action is inevitably influenced by my own beliefs, values, and emotions and by my sensitisation to the theory that underpins my perspective on entering the field. Therefore, throughout this thesis, I use the descriptor 'empirical material' in cognizance that this material was produced by me as I performed my research.

That meetings are ubiquitous in everyday organizational life is widely recognized (Boden, 1994) and Weick (1995) suggested that meeting talk is synonymous with organizational action. Therefore, attending meetings seemed a logical place in which to observe leadership unfold in practice. In total, I observed 75 hours of meetings defined within the HSCP as leadership meetings. Due to the sensitive and political nature of the meetings observed, I was not permitted to audio-record them, therefore, each meeting was described using detailed fieldnotes plus personal comments were written post-meeting. Where possible, specific conversations were replicated in their entirety but where this was not possible due to the speed with which the conversations were moving, summations of the content and emotional aspects of the dialogue were captured. In addition, I wrote notes after each meeting to record the informal 'chats' I had during breaks and to capture my initial reading of what I had observed in the light of my conceptual framing. Having decided upon two situations to follow, the creation of a strategic direction for Mental Health Services and the redesign of services for

Adults with Multiple and Complex Needs, I then began following these situations by attending meetings, discussing the situation with the attendees and joining the email distribution lists so I could follow actions that occurred out with the meetings. I attended 10 hours of meetings regarding Mental Health and 6 hours with the Complex Needs working group plus many more hours at the SMT and Adult LT meetings where these situations were discussed. Again, it was not possible to record these meetings, so the empirical material consisted of fieldnotes of the content of the meeting supplemented by personal notes of the informal discussions held with people during breaks.

In addition to 'corridor conversations', I arranged individual meetings with key actors within the two situations to reflect on what had taken place during the meetings and discuss their perceptions of how leadership was being accomplished. These meetings were positioned as conversations rather than interviews to encourage informality and to allow for a generative discussion without the restrictions of a structured format. Each conversation began with a brief overview of the purpose of my research and then an open question about how they thought leadership was accomplished within the HSCP. The conversation then flowed organically. I also shared my emergent thoughts with the research participants to gauge their responses to them. These one-to-one conversations provided an opportunity to explore some of the historical, cultural and political factors that formed part of the context in which leadership was required. In total, 11 conversations took place over a six-month period, with each conversation ranging from 30 to 90 minutes duration. All participants agreed to these discussions being audio recorded and these were subsequently transcribed.

Finally, documents were collated from all the meetings attended. These included emails, agendas, minutes of meetings, papers, and reports discussed during meetings, presentations and project plans. Given the propensity of the organization to produce papers for every agenda item, it quickly became apparent that there were significant

numbers of documents that were superfluous to following the emergence of leadership. Therefore, for this study, only documents that referred to or were directly focused on the topics of Adult Mental Health and Complex Needs were reviewed. In total, 25 documents were relevant to the Mental Health Inquiry and 17 documents were relevant to the Complex Needs Inquiry.

After a nine-month engagement with the HSCP, I withdrew from the field. It is always difficult to know when to stop generating empirical material in a processual study. Therefore, I chose to cease my observations when each situation had reached a specific milestone. For the Mental Health situation, this was the establishment of a programme of work to define the implementation plans for the agreed strategy. For the Complex Needs situation, it was the disbandment of the short-term working group and the presentation of a report to the Senior Management Team. The request by the Chief Officer to present my observations at a Leadership Awayday in August 2017 also provided an effective signpost to those I had spent time with that my fieldwork was at an end.

4.4.4 Generating insights

Fairhurst and Uhl-Bien (2012) proposed that studying leadership as a communicative, relational process required new forms of analytical tools. They identified multiple approaches which they captured under the banner of 'Organizational Discourse Analysis'. Leadership scholars, they argued, should view methods of organizational discourse analysis as alternatives to traditional survey-based approaches that engage more with the doing of leadership. Specifically, they provide a way to attend to 'how' questions - how leadership is accomplished in terms of "strings of jointly-produced utterances or actions; patterns of coordination (or lack thereof); struggles over meaning and interpretation; and, increasingly, attention to objects (e.g. technology), sites (e.g. the physical setting), and bodies (e.g. how the trappings of power manifest itself in the human body)" (Fairhurst & Uhl-Bien, 2012:1047).

Given the focus of this study is on leadership-as-communicative-practice, consideration was given to existing tools such as discourse and conversation analysis; tools that have previously been used by the Montreal School (and are typical forms of analysis within a *performative process* approach). However, these methods were not suitable for this research for two reasons. Firstly, the concept of *leadership-as-communicative-practice* proposes that written documents are agential in producing direction and using conversation/discourse analysis alone would fail to engage fully with the contribution of non-human actors. Moreover, the discomfort of the SMT with the meetings being audio-recorded was also a limiting factor in terms of the options available to me for conducting analysis due to the lack of transcripts.

Whilst doing research can be considered as a 'thick performance' (Sergi & Hallin, 2011), this term is equally useful to describe the analysis and presentation of processual empirical material. To offer an interpretation of how leadership was performed within the HSCP, I undertook three phases of analysis. The first phase entailed retrospectively constructing the 'situation' (in Deweyan terms) and a processual narrative that captured the transformative process of Inquiry. The appeal of the concept of 'situation' is that it provides a way to engage with the dynamics of LAP yet accessing the holistic evolution of a transformed situation is only possible in retrospect. As researchers, we are always *in medias res,* in the middle of everything (Cooren, 2015) and we can only construct our understanding of the situation through backstories, the referring to past conversations in the observable present, and our own experience of the evolving situation. Therefore, it was through conversations with key actors and reviewing previously issued documents that the emergence of an unsettled situation could be understood. Through my own experience within the situation, I was able to make visible the transformative process of leadership in producing direction.

As Inquiry unfolds, movement is accomplished in the 'turns' that emerge in conversation through co-orienting activity. The second phase of analysis, therefore,

entailed a detailed exploration of the empirical material to look for three features of co-orientation: identifying the A-B-X triad; an intention to organize; and the generation of a text that represented a revised interpretation of the A-B-X relationship. A challenge with using the text-conversation dialectic as an analytical device is that only texts are observable as these provide the content of the conversation. 'Conversation' is the dynamic, hard to access process through which texts are used to orient A and B to each other and to X. Therefore, "the researcher is placed in the position of an interpreter of interpretations" (Taylor & Van Every, 2000:104) thus the onus is on us to make sense of these textual interpretations in an attempt to answer the question, 'what is going on here?' In presenting insights from this study, co-orienting activity is described through a mixture of diagrammatic illustrations of conversations, narrative, and quotes.

The third phase of analysis foregrounded the role of documents in leadership-as-communicative-practice. Throughout my fieldwork, I gathered documents and identified those that were relevant to the two situations. I then traced how each document was subsequently referenced in both SMT/ALT meetings and within situation-specific meetings; and where it was referred to in co-orientational conversations before making inferences as to the agential role of certain documents in producing direction. The two situations were considered separately in the process of analysis and are not intended to be comparators but to complement each other in building greater insights into the communicative performance of LAP. As a final point, it is important to acknowledge that both Inquiry and co-orientation are analytic resources adopted by me, as a researcher, to study leadership movements. The people who were involved in the situations studied were unaware of the processes by which leadership was being accomplished. Instead, their focus was on getting on with the challenge of coping with day-to-day organizational life.

4.4.5 Ethical considerations

In reviewing the ethical issues involved in shadowing, Johnson (2014) proposed two equally important dimensions: the procedural ethics that form part of institutional ethics processes; and the ethical issues that emerge, and are addressed, in practice. Procedurally, as part of gaining access to the HSCP, I was required to secure ethical approval from the Local Authority in addition to the internal University of Strathclyde process. I produced Participant Information Sheets and Consent Forms (see Appendices 1 and 2) and completed ethics approval forms for both organizations. Ethical approval was granted by both Institutions in September 2016. Prior to attending the first Senior Management Team meeting, I issued the Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form to all those on the attendee list and requested email responses to confirm their willingness to participate. However, what became clear was that the population attending these meetings was very fluid and new people and substitutes attended each meeting. This provided a challenge in terms of consent and it became problematic to keep track of everyone in attendance and whether they had agreed to participate. Having discussed this dilemma with the Head of OD, we agreed that I would ensure consent was gained from anyone I met individually and that the agreement by the Chief Officer that I could attend meetings alongside the formal ethics approval would suffice for the transient population. Whilst none of those observed raised any concerns about my presence, the difficulty in gaining informed consent was a source of agitation for me as an inexperienced researcher.

The term 'ethics in practice' was coined to denote "the day-to-day ethical issues that arise in the doing of research" or "ethically important moments" (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004:264). These are the unanticipated experiences that a researcher encounters in their fieldwork that require in-the-moment, and often improvised, responses that are not covered in the procedural ethics process. That unforeseen ethical issues emerge

during the unfolding of the research process was also highlighted by Sergi and Hallin (2011) in their vignettes from active researchers in the field of management studies.

In addition to the issue of informed consent, I also experienced ethical issues relating to my boundaries as a researcher. In one case, my informal conversations with one Senior Manager led me to have concerns about their mental health and to reflect on the appropriateness of me, in my capacity as a researcher, raising this issue within the organization. However, recognizing that I cannot separate out me, as a researcher, from me as someone with personal empathy, I decided to have a confidential conversation with the Head of OD to highlight my concerns. It transpired that other colleagues had also shared their concerns about this individual with her and that appropriate support was being offered. I also experienced significant pressure from members of the organization to provide feedback on individual leadership capabilities which placed me in the undesirable position of having to refuse. I sought to sidestep this issue by explaining that my interest was not on individual leaders but on the unfolding process of leadership and that my presence in the organization was as a researcher and not as a consultant. This remains a live issue as, even after presenting my insights and leaving the field, I am still receiving requests to attend a 'more detailed feedback session' with the Executive Team of the HSCP who want to probe more into my experiences.

The requirement to make on the spot decisions about how to approach unexpected ethical issues has been a significant methodological challenge. However, as Czarniawska points out, any form of shadowing "requires constant attention and continuous ethical decisions" (2007:58) and can, on occasions, feel psychologically uncomfortable for the shadow. For me, the need to improvise in the moment is consistent with Dewey's view that making judgements about whether an action or decision is 'good' or ethical is determined in the process of Inquiry. Inquiry provides guidance on how to act when faced with a moral dilemma and wherever there are

alternative possible options there is a need to reflect on which is the "better, wiser, more prudent, right, advisable, opportune, expedient etc." (Dewey, 1916b:335) in terms of its consequences. On each occasion, when faced with a conflictual ethical issue, I considered the potential practical consequences of my actions and used that to guide my decisions about the best, as opposed to the right, approach to take.

4.5 Applying a reflexive lens on methodological choices

The burgeoning interest in reflexivity stems from the perceived methodological 'crisis' of qualitative research, broken down by Denzin and Lincoln (2000:17) into the "triple crisis of representation, legitimation, and praxis". Several authors (Corlett & Mavin, 2018; S. Day, 2012) propose that reflexivity offers a means of exploring these three issues by asking the following questions: What are our underlying assumptions about the production of knowledge?; What is considered legitimate knowledge and how do power, researcher identity, and relationships affect the doing of research?; How can reflexivity be used to address methodological issues to produce good quality research? I have used the three areas of producing knowledge, doing fieldwork and evaluation to structure my consideration of the methodological issues arising from this research.

4.5.1 Producing knowledge

One aspect of reflexivity is to question what kind of knowledge is possible – the underpinning epistemology – and how do we come to know something. These questions bring to the fore a key component of Dewey's thinking, that we come to know about our world through experiencing it and that it is through our experience that we create maps that enable us to understand our current situation and make predictions about the future. Rather than there being a reality separate from us, or a constructed reality, there is a reality based on our experience, that "we are inescapably situated within a stream of experiencing that constitutes our human condition" (Martela, 2015:539). In his interpretation, Martela proposes that Dewey adopts a

'fallibilistic instrumental epistemology' in that any knowledge created is recognised to be both useful in aiding our understanding of the future and open to being challenged and changed. My reading leads to a slightly different conclusion as Dewey consciously chose not to engage in debate about epistemology as he found this term problematic with its implied distinction between what is known and the knower. For the same reason, in his later works, he eschewed the term knowledge which he considered "too wide and vague" (Dewey & Bentley, 1949 [1960]: 296) in favour of *knowings* defined as trans-actionally experienced behaviours and *knowns*, knowings that have become temporarily stabilized in time and space. These *knowns* can be referred to as warranted assertabilities in that they are instrumental in guiding future action but are always fallible and subject to further Inquiry. For this thesis, I have chosen not to use the term 'epistemology', instead following Dewey's lead and arguing that we come to understand the world through our direct experience of it and that rather than seeking 'truths', the search for warranted assertabilities is more meaningful when engaging with a constantly changing world.

Equally critical to Dewey's position is that knowings and knowns cannot be separated from the knower, thereby acknowledging the role of the researcher in the creation of warranted assertabilities. This view unsettles the representationalist assumption that researchers can objectively and accurately represent external reality. Instead, the researcher is recognized as an integral part of the process of research and that any account offered will depend on the guiding philosophical lenses, the aspect of practice foregrounded, and their situated and relational experience. Whilst recognizing that producing knowings is a social process, the presenting of these knowings in a written thesis with the corresponding choice of language is a primarily individual pursuit and inevitably reflects my personal historical, social, cultural and theoretical frames.

4.5.2 Doing shadowing research

Methodological reflexivity requires us to critically appraise our own methods and to consider our relationships with the research context, participants, empirical material and resulting insights (Corlett & Mavin, 2018). In terms of the shadowing method adopted, I have previously made the case that this is consistent with an ontologically processual view and enables direct engagement with the dynamic movements of leadership. That shadowing is acknowledged as a mobile variant of observation (Czarniawska, 2007) supports the position that this is the most appropriate way to follow an emergent phenomenon such as leadership. Moreover, I have argued that my role as a researcher imbricates me in the trans-actions I followed and that my personal, social and cultural experiences all influenced the creation of empirical material and my interpretation of this. Thus, as I entered the field, I carried with me the 'baggage' of being a mature female student transitioning into academia after more than 20 years' experience working in HR and consultancy roles with strongly held beliefs about the social nature of leadership. My sensitisation was further developed by my early exposure to the ideas of LAP, ideas that resonated with me as a practitioner whose interest is in understanding how leadership is done in organizations and how the process of leadership can be developed and improved.

As I began my fieldwork in the HSCP, I became aware of conflicting self-identities that were influencing my study. Initially, I felt very much an outsider (see Urban & Quinlan, 2014 for an interesting perspective on being an insider or outsider when shadowing) in the organization due to my lack of previous experience in the health and social care sector. I struggled with a steep learning curve in terms of understanding the pertinent issues, the complex organizational structures and the politics inherent in bringing together two diverse organizations whose remit and budget are influenced by both national (Scottish Government) and local (which party had control of the Council) politics. On occasions, I felt obliged to ask whoever I was sitting next to for clarity on

the meaning of terms or acronyms, an experience that further exacerbated my discomfiture. Moreover, as a doctoral student, I perceived myself to be an inexperienced researcher, which brought to the fore other uncertainties and insecurities, particularly when quizzed on exactly what I was doing by defensive managers.

As I became more familiar with the HSCP and more comfortable chatting to those attending meetings, my perception of my role changed. Whilst I retained a sense of 'outsiderness' in terms of the sector, my previous experience as a senior manager meant I was at ease in the context of leadership meetings and well apprised of the dynamics of the conversations. Being of comparable age to the research participants, used to dressing appropriately for operating at a senior level in business, and being able to share life experiences as a working mother also contributed to my levels of comfort. To my own surprise (and slight chagrin), I developed a sense of loyalty to the leadership teams I had shadowed and was conscious that, during my presentation at the Leadership Awayday, I inadvertently slipped into referring to 'us' and 'we'. Whilst I did not perceive that I would 'go native', a risk identified by other shadows (B. Johnson, 2014), the boundaries between being an outsider and insider in this context were more fluid than I had anticipated.

Equally, my relationships with the participants evolved over the time I spent with them. In the case of Chloe[4], the Head of OD, my professional background led to her asking for my thoughts on the leadership teams I was observing and to seek reassurance that her views of the leadership capabilities and issues corresponded with mine. We began having regular coffee meetings to discuss the direction my research was taking, and she appeared grateful to have someone to 'offload' on about the challenges she faced in her role. By contrast, my relationship with James, the Medical Director, morphed into a mentor-mentee relationship as he had previously completed his own doctorate (MD)

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[4] All names used are pseudonyms.

and took a keen interest in the progress I was making in my research. My decision to leave the field was, in part, influenced by his questions about whether I was at risk of having too much material to draw from. In another case, Jane, one of the Heads of Adult Services, was keen to have conversations about her own leadership style and, once I had decided to leave the field, she requested a 'closure meeting' to discuss how I perceived her as a leader and how she might develop her capability. At the end of our discussion, she made a throwaway comment about valuing my informal 'coaching'. These examples highlight one of the challenges of shadowing, that of maintaining boundaries. In each conversation, I had to choose how to respond and my desire to build reciprocal relationships resulted in my drawing on my professional skills to go some way to meeting the needs of the other person. Had I refused to engage, or overtly cited my status as 'just a researcher', I believed this would have been to the detriment of my research. Similar experiences were cited by Gill, Barbour, & Dean (2014) in their shadowing experience.

Overall, the performative effect of my presence in the HSCP was more pronounced than I had anticipated given that much of my creation of empirical material was rooted in near-silent observation of meetings. My initial agreed access only allowed me to observe and my contributions were only ever to introduce myself, explain my research to newcomers or to engage in social chat during breaks, yet others in the room were evidently aware of my presence. For example, during one discussion the criticality of leadership was mentioned and one of the Heads of Adult Services, Charles, glanced over at me and jokingly said "you could get a PhD in that!" thus reminding people of the reason for my presence. The decision by several people to actively seek me out during coffee and lunch breaks to either share their thoughts on leadership with me, to ask for my thoughts on what I had observed or just to let off steam, further highlighted that my presence as part of the trans-action was influencing the actions of others. Therefore, simply by being present during the discussions brought a more explicit focus for the other actors of how leadership was being enacted.

4.5.3 Evaluating research

The final way in which reflexivity informs my research is in consideration of how to evaluate its quality. For scholars working within the tradition of positivism, the criteria for evaluating the standard of research are well established in terms of the validity, generalizability, reliability and the drive to remove bias and achieve objectivity. The dominance of quantitative research in leadership has led to attempts to extrapolate these criteria onto qualitative research. This fails to recognise that qualitative research is heterogeneous and informed by a number of philosophical stances, therefore, a static, universal set of criteria for evaluation is not appropriate. Johnson and his colleagues (P. Johnson, 2015; P. Johnson et al., 2006) argue that any evaluative framework needs to consider whether the methodological principles adopted are consistent with the *a priori* philosophical commitments and take account of the diversity of approaches. This, they suggest, brings reflexivity to the forefront of any research evaluation. Whilst proposing a heuristic for several approaches to qualitative research (neo-empiricism, critical theory, and postmodernism), they offer no view on the evaluation of ontologically processual or Pragmatist informed research.

Based on the facets of conducting processual research identified in this chapter, there are broad questions that would be appropriate to ask when evaluating the quality of this research. The first is whether the research is connected to practice and driven by the search for a resolution to a real-life problem. Given that my motive for commencing this study was driven by a practitioner's frustration with the existing understandings of leadership and leadership development, this search for actionable outcomes has always been at the fore. The second question is whether the insights offered are useful for practitioners in guiding future actions. In the latter part of my engagement with the HSCP, I was invited by the Chief Officer to share my initial findings at their Leadership Awayday. By sharing initial outcomes with the most senior 50 managers within the HSCP, I was able to explore how my interpretations were

received by the participants and encourage them to engage in discussions on leadership practice within the organization. The feedback I received was very positive, my observations resonated with the audience and I have subsequently been asked by the Executive Team to meet with them for more detailed feedback. My engagement with the HSCP was also influential in securing their involvement in a subsequent research project exploring collaborative leadership (Simpson & Buchan, 2018).

The third question is - can I convince fellow researchers of the soundness of my insights? The outcomes of Inquiry, warranted assertabilities, provide maps of our experience that are useful in predicting the future, thus, "for any assertion to be warranted even within our own system of meaning, we have to come to it through a process of inquiry that is credible according to our own standards" (Martela, 2015:540) and those of the academic community to which we belong. My intention in this thesis is to present my interpretation of the situations shadowed. By doing this, I seek to encourage academic colleagues to engage in debate as to whether my insights are the 'best explanation' or whether they themselves create a sense of doubt that will trigger further Inquiry. My hope is that this thesis generates subsequent debate as this will enable us to further develop our understanding of the phenomenon of LAP.

4.6 Chapter summary

A challenge with viewing LAP as a dynamic, transformative process is how to engage with and understand a phenomenon that is continually in motion and, in which, the human and non-human actors are dynamically entangled. This chapter opened by exploring current approaches to conducting process research in organization studies before proposing a guide for conducting Pragmatist informed process research. There are a very small number of studies within the LAP body of work that explicitly draw on a process ontology, therefore, there is an opportunity to develop additional mobile methodological approaches to engage with leadership as it unfolds in practice. Shadowing situations offers a way to develop the work of methodologists who

advocate organizational shadowing (Czarniawska, 2007; McDonald, 2005). It offers an approach to studying LAP that recognises the irreducible entwining of humans, non-humans and the situation in the transformative process of Inquiry; and Inquiry and co-orientation are proposed as theoretically informed analytical lenses for engaging with the communicative actions that transform situations. Having outlined the methodological approach that underpins this research, the next two chapters describe the 'thick performance' of leadership in the transforming of two situations, the development of a new approach to delivering services to Adults with Multiple and Complex Needs and the creation of a strategic direction for Mental Health Services.

5.0 Situation One: Adults with Multiple and Complex Needs

This chapter focuses on the first of two situations shadowed within the Health and Social Care Partnership, that of 'Adults with Multiple and Complex Needs'. An overview of the sources of empirical material that inform this chapter is included in Appendix 3. LAP, as the theoretical perspective underpinning this study, recognises that leadership does not take place in a vacuum and always influences and is influenced by the situation in which it emerges. Therefore, I start this chapter with a detailed description of the situation based on my immersive engagement with the organization. This detour is critical to understanding why the issue of providing services to adults with multiple and complex needs necessitated leadership. Against this backdrop, I then explore how the situation was transformed through Inquiry and how leadership, as a 'thick performance' (Sergi & Hallin, 2011) emerged and was made visible through the dynamic entwining of conversation and written documents. I have, inevitably, made choices as to what material to present and have selected examples of co-orientation around topics that relate to the core rather than the peripheral features of the issues pertaining to adults with multiple and complex needs.

5.1 Understanding the situation

Within the city centre locality supported by the HSCP, there are several hundred highly vulnerable adults characterised by chronic homelessness and rough sleeping, mental health issues and a dependency on drugs and/or alcohol. In addition, these individuals have a pattern of repeat offending and custodial sentences and a higher than average use of Accident and Emergency services. Supporting this group of adults has significant financial ramifications for the HSCP and external partners such as the Police, Community Safety and Homelessness organizations as well as for acute hospital services. Moreover, the outcomes for these adults are often poor as their health and social care needs transcend individual care group boundaries e.g. Addictions, Mental

Health and Homelessness Services, and the consequent fragmented response results in people not receiving timely and appropriate support.

In response to the growing fiscal challenges faced by the HSCP plus political pressure to reduce the number of rough sleepers in the city centre, a series of service reviews was initiated early in 2016 with the dual aim of improving outcomes for service users and identifying cost-saving opportunities. It was following a review of the city's Homelessness Services that the expression 'Adults with Multiple and Complex Needs' entered the organizational lexicon. The review concluded that there was a small group of adults for whom Homelessness Services found it difficult to secure appropriate accommodation, a group 'who are multiply excluded, who have complex support needs and whose experience of health, homelessness and social care services is punctuated by exclusion, transience, crisis and missed opportunities' (HSCP Internal Report). The recommendation of the strategic review was to embed a housing-led response to homelessness within the city where the focus was on rapid re-housing of homeless adults (often referred to as a 'Housing First' approach) and providing ongoing support to enable people to sustain their accommodation. This approach is underpinned by growing evidence that having a home (and not just a 'roof') is the best base from which to address wider health and social care needs. The integration of aspects of the NHS and Local Authority into the HSCP was also felt to provide an opportunity to bring together diverse services to ensure individuals were supported out of homelessness rapidly.

At the same time as the review of homelessness was published, separate reviews of public drug injecting and criminal justice services were also shared with the Senior Management Team (SMT), both of which made comparable observations about this group of adults whose needs meant they required support from different services offered by the HSCP. These documents crystallised the need within the HSCP to consider 'Adults with Multiple and Complex Needs' as a distinct population who

required a different model of delivering services that would deliver improved outcomes. The baton was picked up by Natalie, Chief Officer (Strategy & Planning) who, alongside Tom, the Head of Homelessness Services, endeavoured to bring together the disparate threads in relation to this group of adults. To raise awareness of the imperative to radically change service provision, Tom presented a report to the SMT in September 2016. Whilst there had been numerous conversations leading up to the creation of this report, I have chosen to follow the unfolding of the situation from this point as it was the first time that the moniker 'Adults with Multiple and Complex Needs' had been used and the issue included as an agenda item at the SMT meeting.

At this point, it is useful to introduce the main actors who form the 'cast' for this performance. The primary forces behind the review of service provision for adults with multiple and complex needs were Natalie, Chief Officer (Strategy & Planning) and Tom, Head of Homelessness, and they served as the main interface with the SMT on this issue. Whilst there were up to 15 people present during the focus groups, not all were actively engaged in the conversations. Alongside Natalie and Tom, other key contributors included Andy, a manager within the Criminal Justice team; Alison, Head of Addictions and Michelle, a manager within her team; James, Medical Director; Paul, a doctor who was leading a project to establish a drug users centre; Janet, a manager within homelessness services; Carole, head of a charity supporting families affected by drugs and alcohol; and Craig, Chief Executive of a homelessness charity who was working closely with Natalie and Tom (for more details, see figure 5).

Figure 5 - Key players in the Adults with Multiple and Complex Needs situation

Within the HSCP

Natalie – Chief Officer (Strategy & Planning)

Tom – Head of Homelessness Services

James – Medical Director

Charles – Head of Adult Services

Chloe – Head of Organization Development

Andy – Service Manager (Criminal Justice)

Michelle – Service Manager (Addictions)

Paul – Associate Medical Director

Alison – Head of Addictions

Janet – Service Manager (Homelessness Health Services)

Susan – Service Manager (Sexual Health)

Third Sector Partners

Craig – Chief Executive, Homelessness Shelter

Carole – Head of Services, Council on Alcohol and Drugs

Judy – Director of Homelessness Network

5.2 The transforming of the situation

There is a paradox when using 'situation' as both a focus for shadowing and for studying the transformative process of leadership. The appeal of the concept is that it provides a way to access the unfolding of LAP over time, yet it is also only fully accessible in retrospect. I could only make sense of the holistic situation through gathering documents and backstories to understand what had happened prior to my

entering the field, and then draw on my own experiences and analysis of fieldnotes and documents to shadow the flow of the transforming situation from the point at which it became visible to me (see figure 6 for an overview of the key communication events that punctuated the unfolding of the situation). I left the field prior to the final report being presented to the SMT but remained on the distribution list so continued to receive email updates and verbal updates from Chloe, the Head of OD.

Figure 6 - Overview of the Adults with Multiple and Complex Needs situation
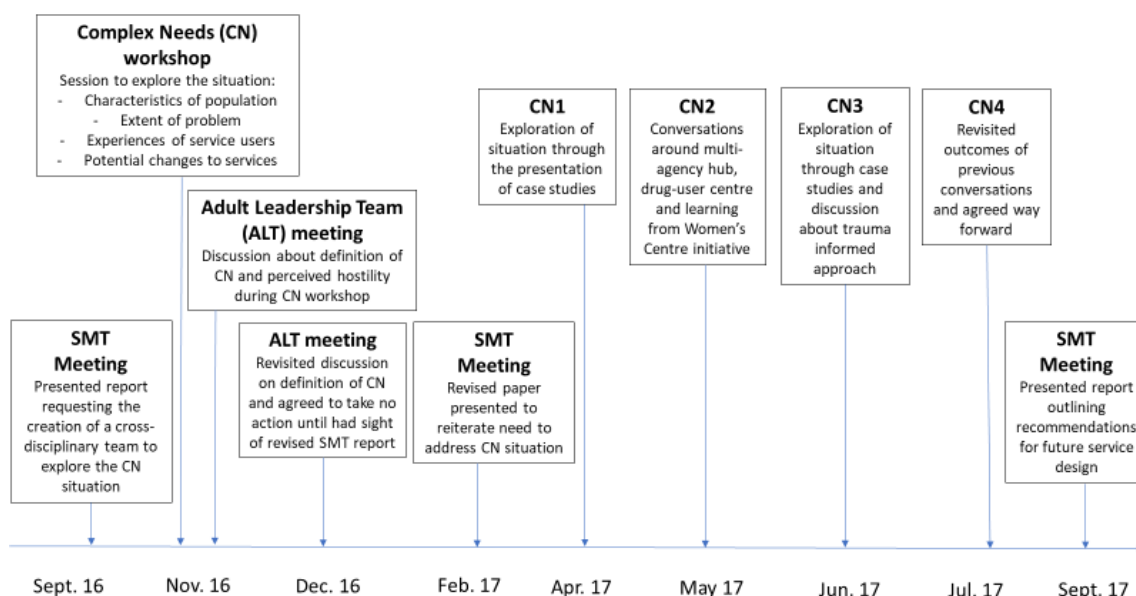
Natalie explained to me how her growing concerns about the inability of the HSCP to effectively engage with adults with multiple and complex needs had prompted a conversation with Tom, the Head of Homelessness Services about how outcomes might be improved, *"it kind of came about organically"*. She also explained how she had chatted to Andy about an initiative they were both involved in to establish an innovative centre that offered a range of services under one roof to women who had recently been released from prison (the Women's Centre), *"I was struck by its success and difference"*. In talking to Natalie, Tom and Andy, it was apparent that whilst they recognized that the current situation was problematic and shared a desire to improve

the outcomes for this group of vulnerable adults, their starting points were very different due to their professional backgrounds (Natalie's in social work, Tom's in homelessness and Andy's in working within the criminal justice system). However, Natalie felt strongly that there was a coalescence of a desire to address the needs of this population with an opportunity to manage the financial cost pressures faced by the organization, *"I'm convinced that it is transformational, we need to do something really different with the people with multiple and complex needs, but we can also do it within the available money. So, if we get this right, we could do more."* Thus, the outcome of conversations between Natalie, Tom and Andy was the recognition of an indeterminate situation; a situation where existing ways of working were no longer useful and created doubt about how services should be delivered in the future.

The culmination of informal conversations between Natalie, Tom and Andy was the generation of a report to the SMT to outline their concerns and request permission to establish a cross-disciplinary group with the intent to redesign the existing model of service delivery. This document served to capture the outcome of their previous conversations and to make explicit the indeterminacy of the situation concerning service provision for adults with multiple and complex needs. The report presented to the SMT in September 2016 outlined the problem and the potential to transform the service:

> *Adults with multiple and complex needs are a highly vulnerable group whose health and social care needs transcend individual care group boundaries. Consequently, responses can be fragmented with clients/patients falling through the 'net'. This can be compounded by a range of additional factors including the reluctance of individuals to engage with statutory services. Recent analysis of public injectors coupled with findings from homelessness and criminal justice work reinforce the importance for the HSCP in reviewing and recommending*

service delivery arrangements. This has the potential for transformational
change and for financial efficiencies.

According to Dewey (1938:107), "the first result of evocation of inquiry is that the situation is taken, adjudged, to be problematic." Thus, the report shared with the SMT summarised the fundamentals of the problem and proposed a cross-disciplinary group be established to consider options for achieving transformational service reform and financial efficiencies. Given the significant budgetary pressures faced by the HSCP, this proposal was well-received by the SMT and permission was given to Tom, the Head of Homelessness to move forward with the recommendations.

A 'complex needs workshop' was convened by Tom in November 2016 to further explore the challenges faced with supporting this population and to brainstorm potential solutions. Reviewing the written notes from the workshop suggested progress was made in deepening the understanding of the complexities of the problem. However, informal conversations with those who attended this session confirmed that it had been an ill-tempered meeting characterised by defensiveness and hostility. In particular, there was an unwillingness by Charles, Head of Adult Services, to engage with the process with him describing the workshop to his colleagues as *"useless"* and *"very adversarial towards us as the mental health team".* Natalie acknowledged that the workshop had not been as successful as she had hoped, and that Tom had struggled to effectively engage with Charles, *"some groups like criminal justice were really engaging, addictions were really engaging, and mental health said it had nothing to do with them."* Therefore, the workshop that had been intended as the starting point for an ongoing programme of activity failed to engage with key players and the Inquiry appeared to stall.

After a lull for several months, Natalie and Tom endeavoured to refocus the Inquiry by returning to the SMT with a revised report which proposed that Natalie (who had not

been present at the previous workshop) would convene and facilitate a series of focus groups. To bring in alternative perspectives, it was proposed that members of the voluntary sector who worked with the same population also be included, *"I brought in the third sector as I like the challenge, I get from them. They're more nimble, more flexible than we are and are up for a challenge" (Natalie)*. It was over the course of the four focus group meetings that observable progress was made in terms of developing and testing ideas that would transform the effectiveness of service provision for adults with complex and multiple needs.

My engagement with the situation began in November 2016 and I shadowed the unfolding of this situation as it was discussed in both the SMT and Adult Leadership Team (ALT) meetings between November 2016 and March 2017 and through a series of focus groups that took place between April and July 2017 (CN1, CN2, CN3, and CN4). From the conversations that took place during these meetings, four key themes emerged as having the potential to transform both the service delivery model and outcomes for adults with complex needs. The first was the need to shift the emphasis of care from transactional services to more relational, person-centred care. The second was the need to build therapeutic relationships that recognised that many vulnerable adults had experienced trauma in their lives and to train staff in trauma-informed care. Thirdly was the need to offer 'hubs' where those adults requiring support could access a wide range of services rather than having to seek out each service individually. Finally, there was an agreement to the urgent rehousing of homeless adults to provide a secure base from which to address other social and health-related concerns.

That the situation had been transformed over the period from September 2016 to September 2017 could be observed in several ways. Firstly, my own attendance at the multiplicity of meetings enabled me to observe the movement as members of the HSCP discovered more about the situation by exploring the complexities of the problem, sharing experiences from innovative service designs and considering potential

solutions. My perception was that the primary site in which direction was produced was the CN focus group. Whilst there was much support for addressing the issue of adults with multiple and complex needs within the SMT (*"this is a big prize for us"*), the situation was only discussed briefly during three meetings. In contrast, during the ALT meetings in November and December there was undisguised animosity towards the initiative and towards Tom and Andy, led by Charles who had represented the ALT at the initial complex needs workshop. Charles explained to me during a coffee break that he felt the emphasis on such a small group of adults was unjustified and that the wider provision of mental health services to thousands of people warranted such a focus. He also viewed the Women's Centre as receiving undue attention given the number of vulnerable adults it was able to support. The strength of feeling expressed by Charles influenced his colleagues in the ALT who remained sceptical about the value of the intended service redesign and agreed to postpone detailed discussions until the next step for the review were more apparent.

Thus, the transforming of the situation was accomplished primarily across the four CN focus group meetings. Whilst the early meetings foregrounded developing a shared understanding of the problem and possible options, by the later meetings there was growing agreement on how services should be delivered in future to achieve better outcomes within stringent financial budgets. Less tangible than the changing content of the conversations was the change in energy between the CN meetings. During the first meeting, it appeared that people were being polite and respectful but seemed overwhelmed by the enormity of the task they faced. By the end of CN3, the mood felt much more positive and upbeat with far greater willingness from key players to engage in challenging the views of others. A similar observation was made by Natalie at the end of CN3, *"we have been overwhelmed but now we have taken some action and we know we can do something constructive for people who have mental stories."*

Another noticeable change was in the language used to refer to the people who would access future support services. Whilst the agenda and minutes of the focus group meetings continued to refer to 'Adults with Multiple and Complex Needs', during the conversations the group increasingly used the term 'vulnerable adults'. This subtle shift in language reflected the move away from generic statistics to growing personalisation of the individuals who used the services through the use of case studies and stories. It also mirrored the recognition of the need to move from impersonal to relational and person-centred approaches to care. Natalie was a strong advocate of retaining this linguistic change and encouraged the group to embed this way of talking about service users into their everyday practice, *"I am keen to use this language we have started to use here around vulnerable people and trauma-informed approaches to delivering care."*

Members of the group themselves observed that there had been a shift in the group's understanding of the situation, *"I came in here thinking I knew everything about complex needs but now I understand that there is a lot we don't know" (Michelle)*, whilst Tom observed that the group had *"rehearsed all the issues"* and now knew what action was required. Moreover, there was a change in the group themselves with several members noting how much they had learned through the conversations and a recognition of the collective nature of the Inquiry, *"none of us can solve this on our own" (Craig)*. As Andy commented, *"initially, I felt tension at the first session, but this journey means our conversations now are like night and day. The progress has been significant and built trust. Using evidence and themed discussions have helped build trust and comparing and contrasting stories was informative in making it real."* The use of the word 'journey' suggested that the participants had experienced changes themselves as a result of their engagement in the focus group conversations.

The transformation of the situation was also made visible in the three reports presented to the SMT in September 2016, and February and September 2017. These

three documents captured the 'state of play' at different points in the unfolding of the situation. The first represented the start of the Inquiry, whilst the second was an attempt to refocus and rebuild flagging momentum after an inauspicious start. The third document captured the outcome of the conversations that took place during the four focus group meetings and offered insights into a new, transformed, service for adults with multiple and complex needs. This constituted an *ends-in-view* for the Inquiry or the "foreseen consequences which influence present deliberations" (Dewey, 1930:223).

A detailed analysis of the three documents (see table 7) highlighted that the latter two were amendments to the initial report and significant parts of the document remained unchanged. What was interesting was the movement that could be observed within the written text: document one provided a high-level overview of the problem (identifying the characteristics of adults with multiple and complex needs) and a potential approach to resolving it (cross-disciplinary approach); document two offered a more nuanced understanding of the problem as a result of the complex needs workshop and proposed more specific actions (establishing a series of focus groups); whilst document three focused on seeking approval for recommended changes to future service delivery and offered a clear statement of the desired future direction. Thus, the understanding of the situation and the situation itself evolved over the 12-month period.

Table 7 - Capturing movement in the Complex Needs situation

	Report to SMT September 2016 (Doc1)	Report to SMT February 2017 (Doc2)	Report to SMT September 2017 (Doc3)
Purpose *(as written in the report)*	To brief SMT on a range of issues relating to adults with multiple and complex needs	To update SMT on issues relating to adults with multiple and complex needs and seek approval for project priorities and resource	To update SMT on issues relating to adults with multiple and complex needs and seek approval for recommendations
Understanding of situation	Identified target population as characterised by chronic homelessness and rough sleeping; mental health/drug/alcohol dependence; repeat offending and frequent custodial sentences; high use of emergency medical services Attempted to quantify the size of the population	Greater understanding of the issues with the existing service delivery model: - Operate in silos - Struggle to coordinate care across services - Accommodation services struggle to engage with this group - Expensive and poor outcomes - Trying to 'fix' people	Focus groups allowed for the sharing of experiences and developing an understanding of how to support this group - Need to develop person-centred services - Enable staff to build therapeutic relationships - Train staff in trauma-informed care - Design psychologically informed 'hubs' to deliver services
Outcome	Agreement to a coordinated multi-agency approach to making recommendations for future service delivery	Approval to review and recommend improved service pathways and to hold a series of focus groups	Approval to use the principles to inform the design of the drug-user centre and multi-agency hub Agreement to appoint a new Head of Adult Services to manage the service redesign

In addition to the documents capturing the movement that occurred as the dynamics of the situation were co-discovered, the reports themselves contributed to generating movement. By making visible the challenges of delivering good outcomes for adults with multiple and complex needs, Doc1 influenced the SMT's decision to approve a 'co-ordinated cross-disciplinary approach' to addressing the problem. Natalie and Tom subsequently updated the report and returned to the SMT with the more detailed proposals outlined in Doc2. This triggered a discussion which oriented the SMT around the importance of the initiative for the HSCP and conferred permission to run a series of focus groups. The final version, Doc3, represented the proposed direction of travel for future service design and requested authority to move forward to implement the recommendations. In each case, the document carried the outcome of previous conversations to initiate a conversation with a different group of people; and provided a written text that was approved verbally (and subsequently captured in the written Minutes of the meeting) thus allowing the transformative process to continue.

Given that the significant movement in producing direction (accomplished through leadership) emerged between February and September 2017, the next phase of analysis explored the processes by which the Inquiry progressed, namely co-orientation.

5.3 Producing new directions

This section focuses on the four most significant episodes of co-orientation that emerged during the Complex Needs focus groups. Whilst there were other, smaller examples I could have drawn on, these four were the most central to the generation of a future direction for services to adults with multiple and complex needs. In the examples cited there were more than two people involved in the conversations, therefore the process of co-orienting extended beyond the simple A-B dynamic to encompass A-B-C-D-E etc. More challenging was to establish the object around which people were orienting themselves as X is "inherently negotiable and must be

established interactively" (Taylor & Robichaud, 2004:402) and any attempt by the researcher to identify X *a priori*, fails to capture the complexity of the communicative process. The second feature of co-orientation is *organizing-ness* (Taylor & Robichaud, 2004) therefore the data was analysed to recognise those flows of conversation that demonstrate an intent to organize. Given that my interest is in LAP, conversations that had leadership potential were those that appeared to contribute to producing direction towards a transformed situation. The final feature of co-orientation that could be established in the empirical material was the generation of a text (verbal or written) that captured the outcome of the co-orienting activity.

Natalie, as the chair, began CN1 by articulating a text that formed the anchor for all four examples, *"we need to reconstruct our response to adults with multiple and complex needs as we currently define people by our services rather than by what people with complex needs actually need from us."* This text became the initial object (X), which provided a focus for the co-orienting actions to follow in the group's conversations. Whilst this intent underpinned all of the subsequent discussions, various ways of improving outcomes for adults with multiple and complex needs were proposed, with each of the following examples narrowing the focus of co-orientation to a specific sub-topic.

5.3.1 Co-orientational turn: Adopting a relational approach

A short presentation by Michelle provided insights into her experience of talking to service users to understand why they chose not to engage with the services offered by the HSCP. She detailed the case of Mr. C., a rough sleeper with mental health and addiction issues and a history of criminal activity, who had recently had his leg amputated and was wheelchair bound awaiting rehabilitation support. However, this support was proving difficult to provide as he had been asked to leave hospital due to drug dealing and was now fluctuating between rough sleeping and presenting as homeless. Michelle concluded that his decision not to engage with the HSCP services

was not due to lack of awareness but due to services being delivered in a way that did not fit with the chaotic lives of potential service users such as Mr. C. Recognising this scenario, Craig outlined and shared his view that there was a pressing need to adopt a more relational approach to delivering services that recognised the needs of the users, "*people want relationships*". That this text was immediately built upon by Alison suggests that the group assented to this as an object for discussion (X), thus prompting a short flow of conversation as others in the group oriented themselves around this idea (see figure 7). Whilst there was no disputing the need for more relational services, Alison, drawing on her experiences in supporting addiction, expressed reservations about the over-emphasis on friendships as these could be counter-productive for recovering addicts.

The original conversational object offered by Natalie (to reconstruct the HSCP response to adults with multiple and complex needs) was narrowed down by Craig to emphasise one feature of a redesigned service, the shift from a transactional to a relational focus. Through a series of exchanges, five members of the group verbally oriented themselves to each other (A-B, B-C, C-A etc.) and to the revised conversational object (X). Craig's text *"So, it is key to think about how we retain dignity, choice, and freedom for people who are accessing our services",* summarises a revised textual interpretation of the preceding conversation, and reflects a key feature of co-orientation, that of *organizing-ness* (Taylor & Robichaud, 2004). In this example, the textual summary of the co-orienting activity offered by Craig is received positively by the group with fervent nodding of heads. A further clue that new direction had indeed been produced was that the next contribution to the conversation moved on to a different topic of conversation, a move that was uncontested, suggesting that adopting a relational approach had been accepted as the starting point for subsequent conversations about the future direction of services.

Figure 7 - Conversational excerpt 1
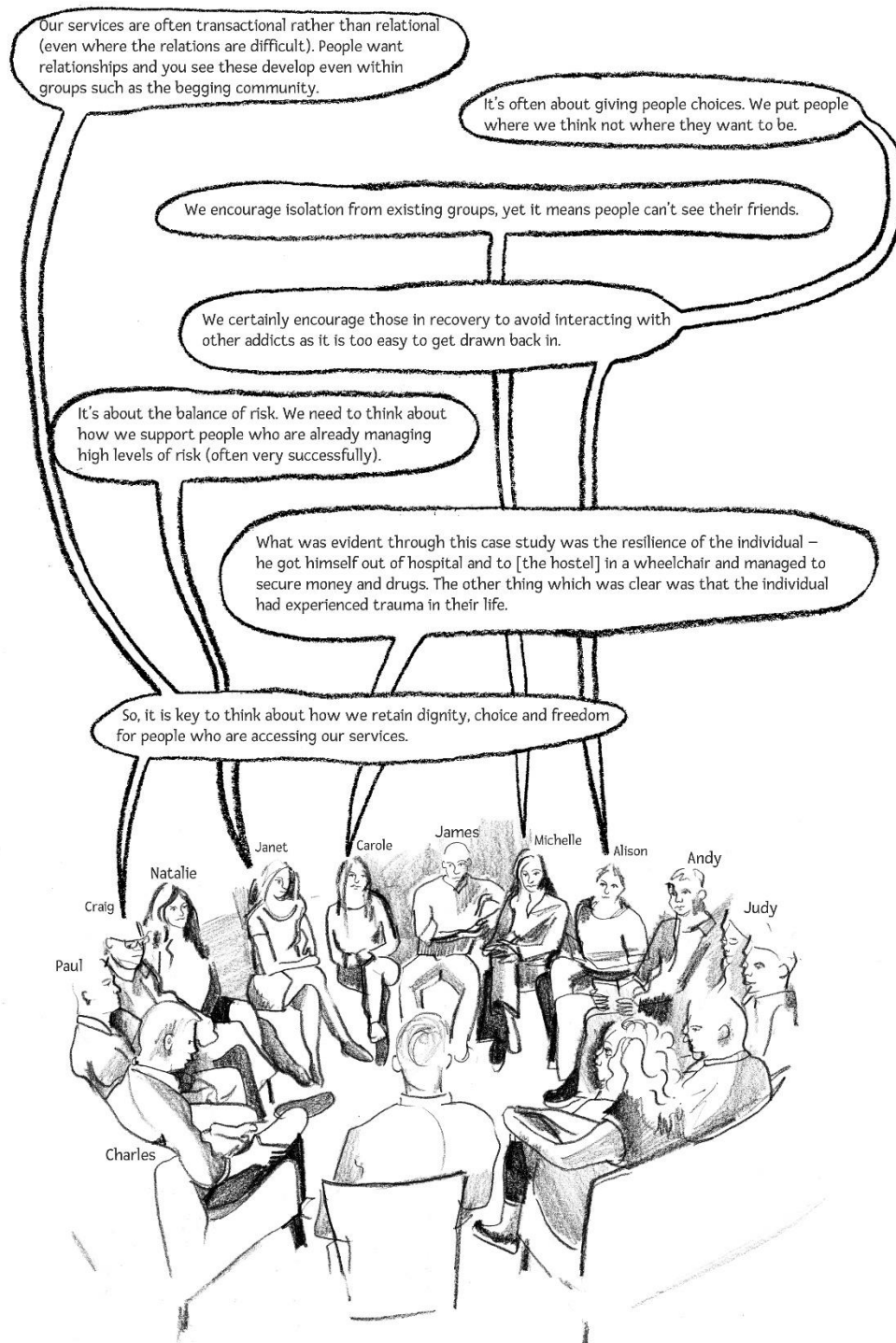
The importance of relationships was revisited during CN2 when Craig presented an overview of the work of the homelessness shelter (see figure 8). Future-looking observations such as *"we need to build relationships" and "we need to protect space for staff to build relationships"* suggested that the centrality of a relational approach to service design was uncontested following the earlier agreement. Instead, the focus of the conversation shifted from co-orienting around the need to build therapeutic relationships to the challenges of doing this (meeting statutory targets for care, cutting through red tape, taking the first step, recruiting different types of staff). This excerpt illustrates differing attitudes being expressed towards the conversational object of how to build these relationships *("it goes back to the staff", "I think it's a leadership issue").* It also suggests a desire among the group to find a position that they were all comfortable with and organize themselves as to how to move forward, *"I'm completely on the page with this but see it as a challenge" (Paul)*. I was intrigued when the point was made by Paul that he perceived it as a *"leadership issue"* and the subsequent comments made about how senior managers would be key to the ability of staff to build therapeutic relationships. Sadly, the group did not devote any time to this aspect of the conversation.

A challenge with analysing this conversational flow from a co-orientational perspective is that there is no explicit verbal text that captured the movement emerging from the conversation (the conversation moved seamlessly onto another topic). However, that two small movements that had emerged during this conversation was reflected in the Minutes of the meeting which captured both the centrality of relationships (*'the importance of working with the service user and building a relationship was acknowledged'*) and the need to rethink the nature of the jobs carried out by support workers (*'it was agreed that the recruitment process required review to ensure a more flexible staff group').*

Figure 8 - Conversational excerpt 2

A recent evaluation of the night shelter [emergency shelter provided for rough sleepers] said people felt 'loved' in that people actually seemed to care about them. The key element is to build trust without boundaries then we can 'journey' with them.

It goes back to staff. We need to build relationships which is challenging when we provide a statutory service which is driven by targets.

I think it is a leadership issue. We need to look at the performance framework if we are not focusing on interventions. I'm completely on the page with this but see it as a challenge. Also, it's often the staff rather than the managers who struggle with this as it changes our expectations of them.

We've changed so users have to make lunch with the ingredients provided and then anyone can have lunch including the staff. We don't see the role of our staff as to 'do' everything for them. They need to empower and enable others.

It is a challenge for senior managers, as despite our best efforts, we're not having the impact we want. We need to protect space for staff to develop relationships and the challenge is to make the initial leap and then to protect it for a period of time.

We have examples of HSCP staff working in the night shelter who have tested out this new way of working.

It needs the support of senior managers plus their help in overcoming the red tape. In some ways the current financial and political uncertainty is helping to push the new ideas such as the Drug Users' Centre as we have to find alternative ways of providing service.

If we keep working in the same way that we always have, we'll keep spending the same money and getting the same results.

Often the blockers don't come from the managers, they come from the staff as they need clarity. Managers are often better at dealing with the 'grey' areas.

We have a huge workforce and a whole range of attitudes among our workforce so lots of our people will be drawn to a different way of working. We need to think about what we are recruiting for. Is it a Sexual Health Nurse or a Vulnerable Adults Worker with Sexual Health specialism? I recommend the second but it's about balance as we don't want to lose the expertise.

Alison

Tom

Michelle

Andy

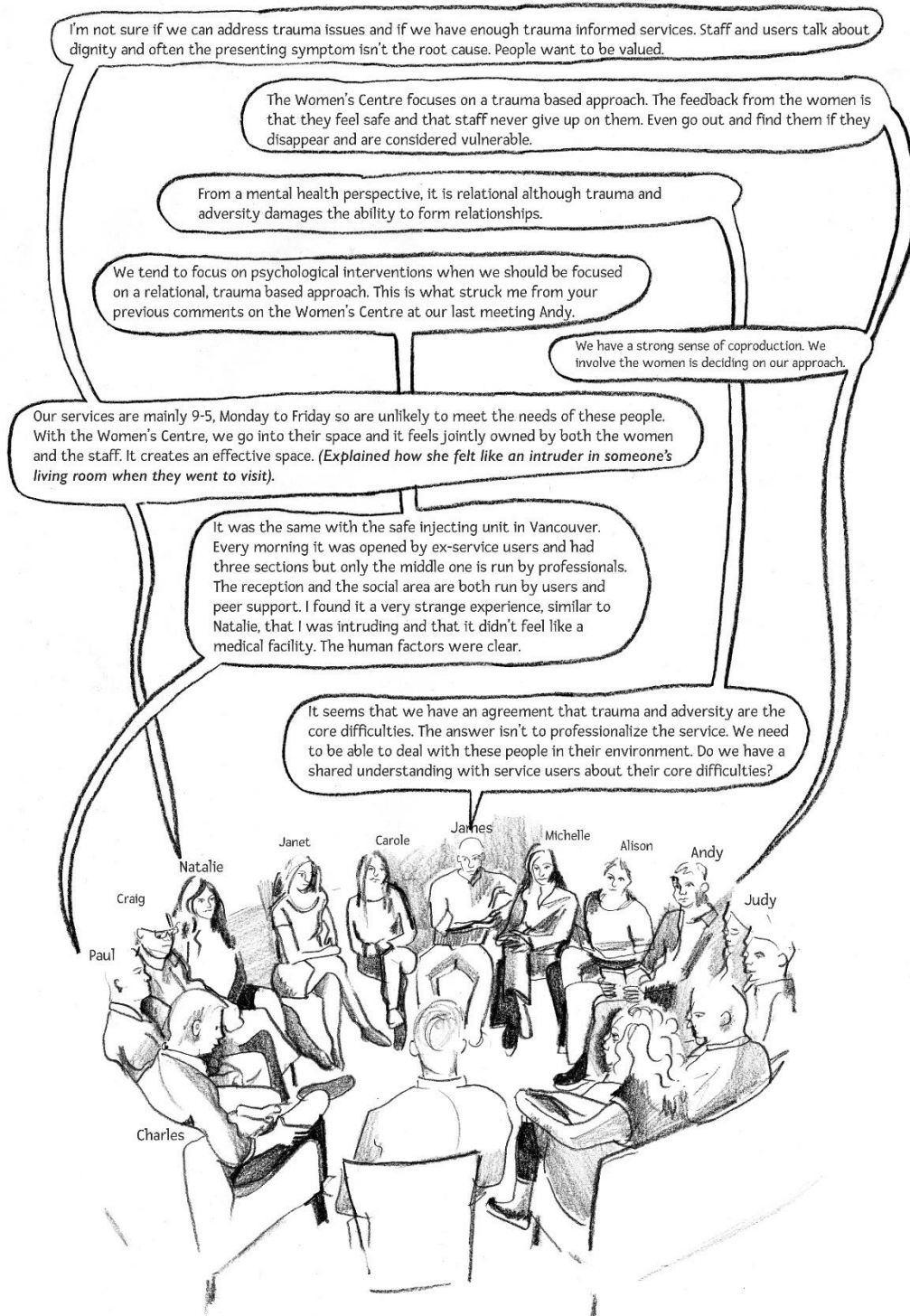Natalie

Paul

Susan

Craig

James

123

5.3.2 Co-orientational turn: Delivering trauma-informed care

That trauma underpins many of the health and social care issues experienced by adults with multiple and complex needs was first recognized in Michelle's presentation about Mr. C. and was referred to in conversational excerpt 1 by Carole *("the individual had experienced trauma in their life")*. However, this issue was not picked up by the group and constituted as a conversational object at the time. It was only later in the first focus group meeting that the question of how to support people whose lives have been affected by traumatic experiences is foregrounded (see figure 9). After an exchange of views drawn from previous experiences working in mental health (James), with the Women's Centre (Natalie and Andy) and visiting a drug injecting unit in Vancouver (Paul), the group co-oriented around trauma as a core feature in the lives of adults with multiple and complex needs (*"It seems that we have an agreement that trauma and adversity are the core difficulties"*) and that future services should provide trauma-informed care in a supportive and safe space (*"we need to be able to deal with these people in their environment"*).

By way of background, trauma-informed care is a framework of support grounded in an understanding of, and responsiveness to, the impact of trauma that emphasizes physical, psychological and emotional safety to create opportunities for trauma survivors to rebuild a sense of control in their life. With a trauma-informed approach, staff are encouraged to ask 'what happened to you' rather than 'what's wrong with you' thus creating a more engaging and respectful environment centred around compassion and empathy.

Figure 9 - Conversational excerpt 3

What is interesting in this example is that whilst illustrating a simple A-B-C-D-X co-orientation (Natalie, Andy, James and Paul orienting to each other and to the conversational topic of the role of trauma), this conversation highlights that co-orienting activity is not necessarily confined to a continuous time and place. It encompasses and manifests the extensive and ongoing relationships between group members. That Natalie, Paul, Andy, and James worked closely together and had well-established, respectful relationships led to a constructive conversation that focused on areas of agreement and sought to build on each other's ideas (*"this is what struck me from your previous comments Andy", "I found it a very strange experience, similar to Natalie..."*). Moreover, in this exchange, Natalie, Andy, and Paul all drew on their own previous experiences to help others appreciate the importance of the space in which the service was delivered (which became a new conversational object later in the meeting).

The wider potential of adopting trauma-informed care was discussed during subsequent focus group meetings, *"where I would like to get to is that we have a better understanding of how a trauma-informed approach can be used across the HSCP and a shared understanding of where it would be useful. We are doing bits of it, but I am struck by our conversation and how it could be used in other, nonmental health services" (Natalie)*. The enthusiasm for the benefits of the approach grew palpably with an agreed action from the fourth focus group meeting (CN4) to create a series of concrete proposals for embedding a trauma-informed approach across the organization, "*we need to use the trauma-informed approach to review other pathways where appropriate. I don't want to get overexcited about the trauma-informed approach although I am definitely convinced by it!" (Natalie)*.

5.3.3 Co-orientational turn: Creating a safe space to deliver services

Previous conversations had already touched on the need to consider the place in which support was offered but this only became the conversational object (X) part way

through CN1 when the group responded to James's comment *"we need to deal with these people in their environments".* In this example (see figure 10), individuals expressed personal views and recalled past experiences to position themselves in respect of the issue *("you tend to get better outcomes", "you tend to get the story more over coffee").*

Paul offered an option to change the topic of conversation onto the downsides of 'storytelling', but this is not followed up. There was a clear sense that the group was seeking to build consensus with both Alison and Judy drawing on their own experiences working with addicts to re-iterate the importance of the 'space' and Charles confirming that within the mental health arena, there was evidence of more successful interventions when more informal, conversational settings were utilised. After Charles's comment, the conversation became fragmented with new topics being interspersed between reverting back to providing further support for the problem of where and when services are provided. For example, several minutes later Janet returns to the issue, *"there will always be people who choose not to engage and never will - or who will only engage with the street teams."*, that elicits a response from Natalie, *"I agree but this is partly because our services aren't in the right place at the right time."* In the process of orienting themselves to the conversational object, the group deepened their understanding of the situation; a necessary step in the process of envisioning a transformed situation.

Figure 10 - Conversational excerpt 4

Craig, who ran the city's Homelessness Night Shelter referred back to the importance of creating a safe space later in CN1, *"the key success of the overnight shelter is the informal culture and space which has been created. It needs to be welcoming and open (once you have got through the required security to get in)."* He then elaborated on his future aspirations, *"Our driver is to get to the stage where there is no need for a shelter, and instead create a space which replicates the on-site multi-disciplinary team that works so well in the shelter. We are keen to have a hub within the city as see it as a real opportunity to provide health, social care, and personal services. We can also create a hospitable place for people to visit, get food and have a blether."* Whilst there was no disagreement from the group about the need to create such 'hubs' as part of future service design, Natalie pointed out that it would be challenging, *"the challenge for us as professionals is that the space wouldn't be designed in a way which we perceive as 'professional' though it will meet the needs of the users. We have to go to them in their space rather than trying to bring them into ours".*

Natalie returned to the issue of safe spaces during CN2 when she reflected on her experiences visiting the Women's Centre, an initiative held up as throughout the focus groups as an exemplar of an effective multidisciplinary provision of services (see figure 11). Throughout this conversation, there is a subtle shift from recalling the problems of the past (review of services for heroin users, sexual health staff being underutilized) to starting to envisage an alternative future. The way forward for the redesign of services emerging from this conversation would entail creating boundaries but involving staff and service users in agreeing on the rules; using peer support; building relationships to enable multiple sources of support to be offered and accepted; and creating multiagency teams. As the group co-oriented around the need to create safe spaces to deliver services, the language used in the conversation gained greater force or 'modality (Taylor, 2006), *"we need to", "we have to"*, as the group moved towards agreeing on the basis for action. Paul's verbal text, *"we need a multi-disciplinary vulnerable adults' team"* captured the outcome of this co-orienting activity.

*Figure 11 - Conversational excerpt 5*
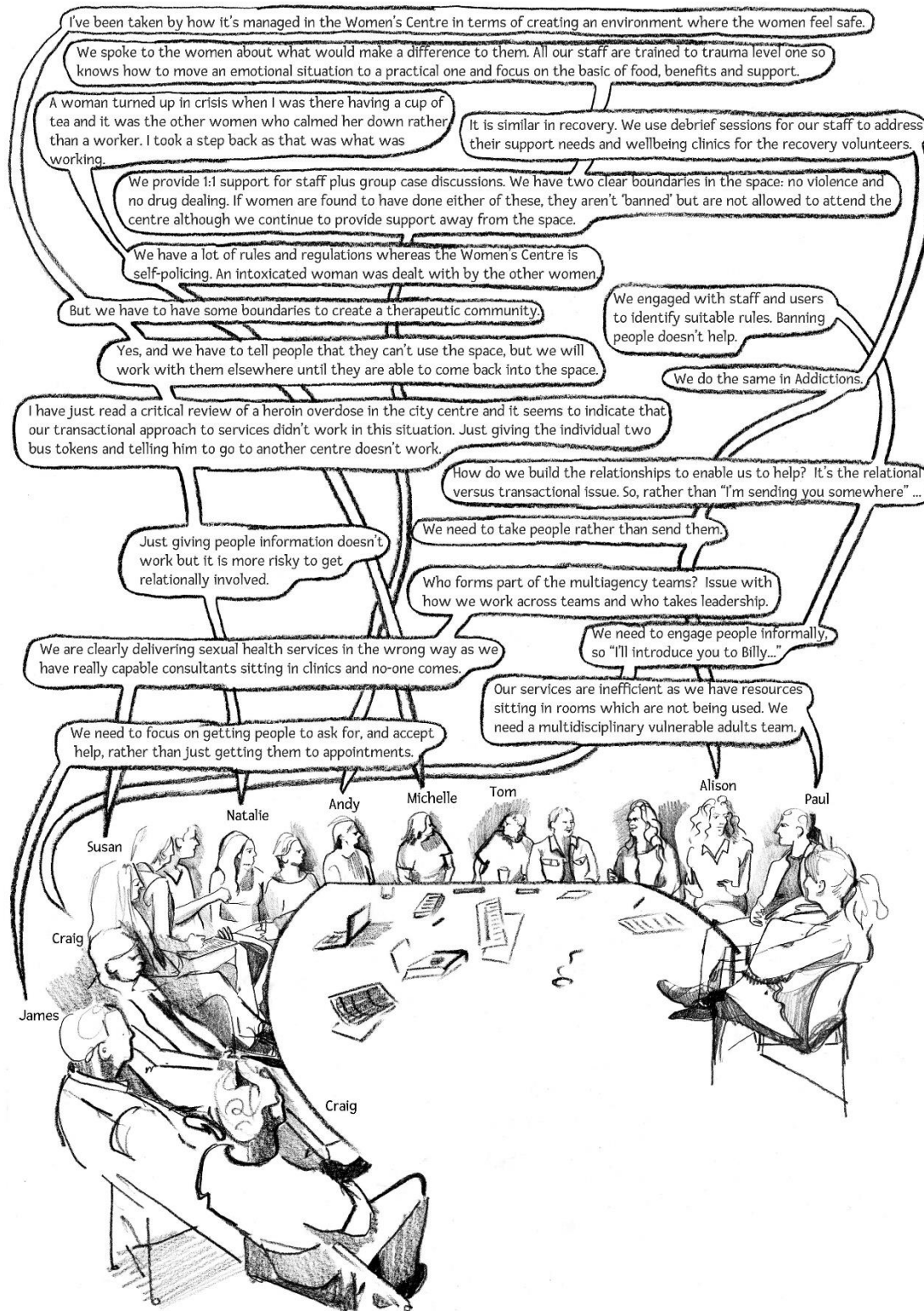
The outcome of Inquiry is that an alternative view of the future is co-created that removes the previous indeterminacy within the situation and provides a guide for subsequent action. The co-orienting of the group around the need to create multi-disciplinary 'hubs' triggered a new topic of conversation as to where this revised approach could be piloted within the city. Paul had responsibility for establishing a drug user centre whose focus was on the provision of a safe facility for addicts who might otherwise inject on the street (a trend associated with higher rates of HIV infection). The remit of this project was primarily clinical with priority given to creating a sterile environment for drug injection. However, through conversations with others in the group, Paul reflected on the design of the unit and recognised that the facility provided an opportunity to create social spaces either side of the medical part of the centre; spaces that could be managed by trauma trained staff and offer pathways to other services. Paul acknowledged the change in his perspective, *"I have found this conversation very helpful as it has highlighted a number of things we should consider in terms of the drug users centre – the importance of the actual space, building relationships, providing dignity for users, offering peer support and other services such as nursing and housing".* Thus, small changes, or turns, in the conversation created a ripple effect that changed the trajectory of the project to establish a drug user centre.

5.3.4 Co-orientational turn: Providing Housing First

The final conversational excerpt (figure 12) shows Alison identifying yet another feature of the existing service in relation to Michelle's presentation about Mr. C., which she wanted the group to orient themselves to (thus renegotiating X). Alison was a strong advocate of 'Housing First', a specific initiative to prioritise getting people into stable accommodation as a first step to supporting adults with their other multiple and complex needs for care services. Whilst the group accepted housing as a topic to discuss, there were differing views as to the appropriateness of this as a solution.

Unlike the largely consensual co-orientation in the first three examples, the 'talking out' of attitudes towards Housing First was more contested with greater emphasis placed on the problems of the existing accommodation options available. Natalie deliberately played 'devil's advocate' in this discussion, *"we need to avoid assuming that Housing First is the right approach",* despite this being a key HSCP strategic initiative. By doing this, Natalie encouraged others to express concerns about the limitations of the current approach. Carole's comment that adults with complex needs need to address multiple issues side-tracks the flow of conversation onto a new topic, reflecting the ease with which the conversational flow can be drawn away from any given conversational object. Natalie briefly reintroduced the topic of housing later in the meeting, *"do we need to focus on harm reduction rather than Housing First?",* which elicits a counter-view from Craig, *"my focus is on homelessness, therefore, Housing First will always be key"* but the group did not re-engage with this conversational object. The meeting concluded with the process of co-orienting ongoing in that no text had been generated that captured a revised interpretation emerging from the conversation.

Figure 12 - Conversational excerpt 6
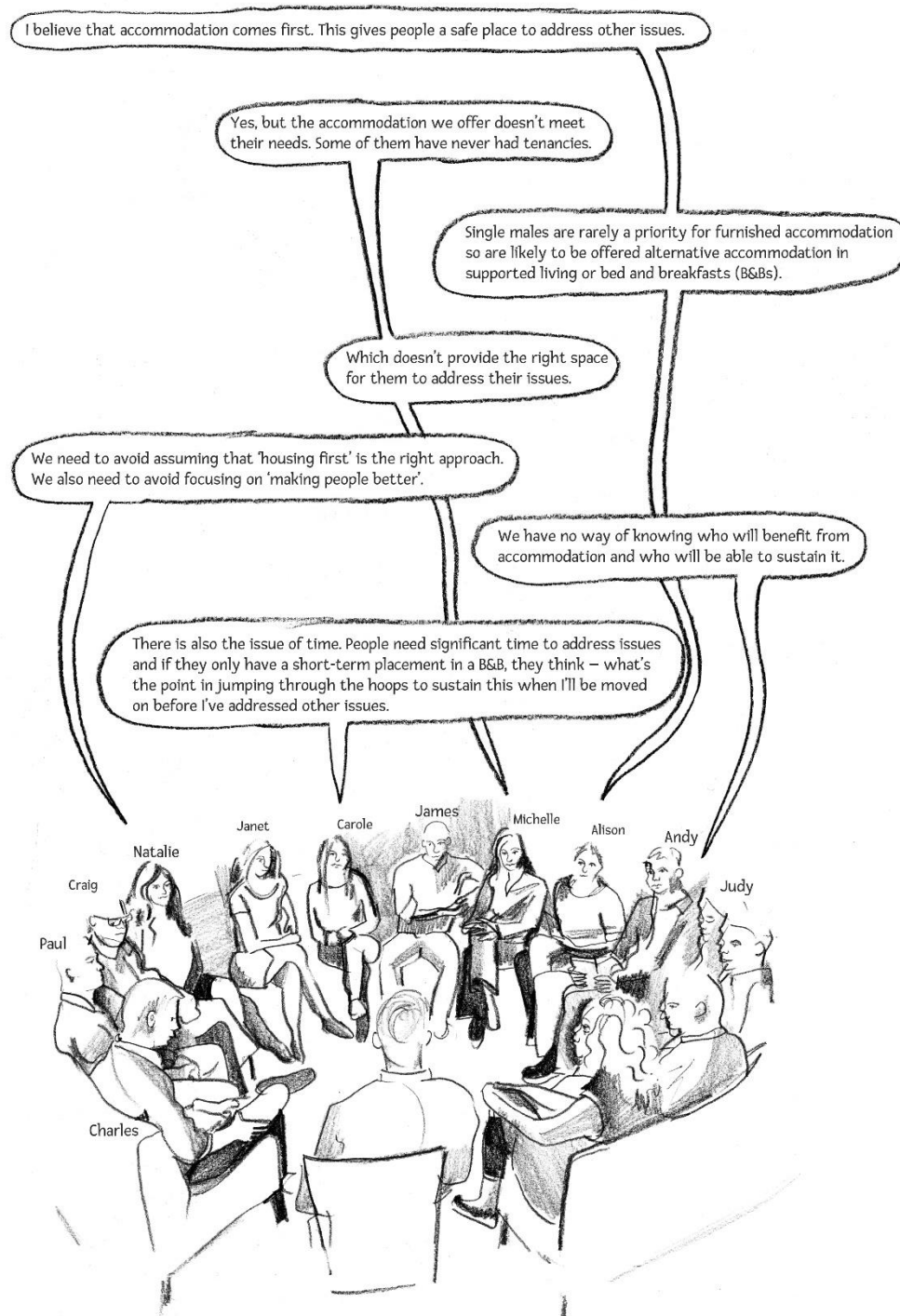
It was during the third focus group meeting that there was a noticeable movement towards agreeing on the importance of housing in supporting adults to address health and social care needs. Following a case review of the differing outcomes for adults engaging with traditional, siloed services compared to the Women's Centre, Michelle concluded that *"early accommodation seems to be key as all four Women's Centre cases are now in stable accommodation whereas all four traditional cases remain rough sleepers",* a view that received verbal support from others in the group. In retrospect, this text can be viewed as capturing the outcome of co-orientation. There was no further debate about the centrality of housing in redesigning support services in this or the subsequent focus group meeting, yet the group advocated Housing First in their final recommendations to the SMT. This suggests that the act of 'talking out' the issue enabled the group to organize themselves and reach a tacit, if not explicit, agreement on a way forward.

5.4 Performing leadership: Some insights

When reading the extracts from the empirical material cited in the preceding sections, it is likely that the reader will be struck by the mundane, frequently circuitous nature of the conversations quoted. Yet this was my experience of the 'doing' of leadership in this situation, as a low-key communicative process with no grand gestures or Martin Luther King style oratories. Whilst processual LAP foregrounds processes and decentres the leader, this is not to deny the existence of entities, or leaders, in the process. Natalie stood out as a 'leader' by virtue of her position as a member of the HSCP Executive team, the sponsor of the work and the chair of the focus group. However, whilst an engaged contributor in the meetings, she did not dominate and was merely one of many voices in each conversation. Thus, the performance of leadership was a collaborative, collective process of producing direction and shaping action through communication.

In the 'Adults with Multiple and Complex Needs' situation, new directions were produced for the improvement of health and social care services that would lead to improved outcomes for vulnerable adults in the city. By recognizing that past practice, which separated different types of services into specialist silos, was no longer adequate for current and future needs, a process of Inquiry was triggered that sought to transform the situation. Over the course of four focus group meetings involving contributors from various service areas, this Inquiry evolved through multiple small shifts, or co-orientational turns, that ultimately produced a radical plan for transformation that was presented to the SMT for approval.

My analysis showed that co-orientation occurred across three different timeframes. Where the conversational object was relatively uncontested as in the need for more relational services (conversational excerpt 1), the process of co-orientation was completed within a single conversational flow. In conversational excerpt 3, co-orientation was completed in a single meeting, albeit across fragmented conversations that circled around a variety of different topics. Finally, in conversational excerpt 6, a co-orienting move that was initiated in the first focus group was not completed until two months later, at the third focus group meeting. To add further complexity, there were also examples (such as conversational excerpt 2) where the text offering a revised interpretation following a conversation, was captured in written rather than verbal form in the Minutes of the meeting.

A further insight that emerged through my analysis was the agential role of written documents in generating movement. As discussed earlier in this chapter (section 5.2), the three reports presented and discussed at the SMT meetings were influential in gaining formal authority to take action that moved the Inquiry forward (to set up a complex needs workshop, establish a series of focus group meetings, and implement recommended changes to future service delivery models). They also enabled the revised understanding of the situation that emerged through the workshop and focus

groups to be disseminated to a wider population within the HSCP. In the case of the SMT, this was to update them on progress and seek approval for the recommended way forward. The reports were also circulated by individual members of the SMT to their respective leadership teams for information, reaction and comment. A member of the SMT emailed the Adults with Multiple and Complex Needs Report (September 2016) to all members of the ALT and it was the discussion around this document at the subsequent ALT meeting that enabled me to experience the resistance to the initiative that prevailed amongst the group. Thus, the three reports were agential in raising the visibility of the issue across the HSCP, carrying information, ideas, and recommendations from one communication event (and from one group) to another, and conferring permission to act to move forward.

When attending to the smaller movements generated through co-orientation, the entanglement of written documents was also evident. Michelle handed out a PowerPoint slide at the beginning of CN1 and used this to highlight the multiple needs of a service user, Mr. C. This prompted several strands of conversation about the specifics of the case that allowed the group to further distil the problems that prevented the HSCP providing appropriate support. As the group sought to co-orient around the need to adopt a relational, trauma-informed approach to care, members of the group referred back to the story of Mr. C., *"what was evident through this case was the resilience of the individual".* The ineffective provision of services also prompted the comparison with the Women's Centre as a counterpoint for ways to deliver services. PowerPoint slides were used again in CN3 to further contrast the outcomes of traditional approaches to delivery support with those provided by the Women's Centre and prompted further conversations about how to transfer the lessons learned.

After each focus group meeting, Minutes were produced and circulated. These documents captured key discussions and actions from the meeting and offered insights into co-orienting activity. Sometimes this took the form of a statement representing

the verbal texts uttered as part of the conversation e.g. the text *"it was agreed that a trauma-informed approach was important for both the multi-agency hub and drug users centre"* appeared in the Minutes of CN1 thus supporting the co-orientation discussed in excerpt 3. Sometimes the written text reflected the author's interpretation of the co-orienting activity. Within conversational excerpt 2, there was a sense of the group organizing themselves around the importance (and difficulties) of building therapeutic relationships. Yet there was no identifiable verbal text that neatly concluded the co-orientation. Instead, the Minute-taker captured her interpretation of what had been tacitly agreed, *"the importance of working with the service user and building a relationship was acknowledged."* Given that the statement went unchallenged by the group when the Minutes of CN1 were circulated, it would appear there was an agreement with this written text.

Given my sensitivity to the role of written texts in leadership movements, I became increasingly aware that documents provided a degree of comfort to the group. In an interesting exchange at the end of CN1 Paul commented*, "we've had a non paper-based discussion about trauma based approach and creating a safe environment but we need to explore more about what these mean"* which prompted Natalie to ask, *"Would it be useful to summarise these into a paper to discuss at the next meeting?"* The requested paper was circulated by email prior to the third focus group meeting yet was only referred to fleetingly during the meeting. Similarly, Natalie asked for papers about the multi-agency hub and the drug users centre to be written and shared. Whilst Craig handed out and discussed a short report on the multi-agency hub during CN2, Paul never brought a paper back to the meeting, yet the conversations about the redesign of the drug users centre continued irrespective of this. During my time in the field, it appeared that there was a cultural norm of producing papers for most meetings and this exchange suggested that there was a habitual entwining of documents with conversations within the HSCP. The circulating of agendas for each focus group meeting was also indicative of a habit as these documents were not referred to during any of

the conversations. Therefore, not all documents that formed part of the situation contributed to movement.

As I considered the hybrid agency within the leadership process, I found it difficult to separate out the contribution made by documents from the wider process of communication. In the context of co-orienting activity, documents were presented verbally and the subsequent conversations 'talked out' both the content of the documents and the accompanying verbal utterances. The role of documents in enabling progress through the transformative process of Inquiry was more clearly defined with the reports to the SMT providing turning points that authorised new actions. Based on my findings, I would argue that certain documents were agential in generating leadership movements and producing direction but as irreducible trans-actors, inseparable from the human actors and the situation which necessitated leadership.

5.5 Chapter summary

Shadowing the transformation of the 'Adults with Multiple and Complex Needs' situation allowed me to access the movements of leadership in the ongoing flow of practice. This scenario met the criteria of a 'situation' as defined by Dewey: it was a concrete problem that was experienced by human actors; it contained both animate and inanimate objects i.e. documents, places such as the Women's Centre, concepts such as Housing First and Trauma-informed Approaches; it brought together past experience of working with vulnerable adults with the potential for a different future; and it represented a unified whole in relation to the specific issue of providing services to adults with multiple and complex needs. By retrospectively analysing the situation, it was possible to follow the process of Inquiry as multiple groups within the HSCP (SMT, ALT, CN focus group) came to a shared understanding of the untenable conditions of existing service provision to adults with multiple and complex needs, then explored

options for alternative ways forward, and finally made commitments to a new mode of practice.

At every stage of this Inquiry, dynamism was injected into the process by means of co-orientational turns, which served to redirect and reshape the trajectory of ongoing conversations. Exploring the complexities of the problem through conversation allowed the group to shift their focus to how to address these concerns and subsequently to the action required to deliver better outcomes for users of their services. Co-orienting around problems, options and actions were achieved across three timeframes: within a conversation; across a single communication event; and across multiple communication events. Written documents formed an integral part of the leadership process as they instigated and informed the conversations and, through inscribing the verbal texts, transported these texts through time and space to inform and contribute to future conversations.

These initial insights offer an understanding of how leadership was performed in a specific situation, the transforming of services for adults with multiple and complex needs. Building on this foundation, the next chapter will further develop these ideas through considering a second, more complex, situation that was shadowed as part of this research, the creation of a strategic direction for Mental Health Services.

6.0 Situation Two: Mental Health Services

The aim of this chapter is to explore how leadership is performed in a separate but overlapping situation that of creating a strategic direction for the provision of Adult Mental Health services across the city. From the outset, this Inquiry was more complex and volatile than 'Adults with Multiple and Complex Needs' due to the large number of people who required support for poor mental health and the structural complexities of how mental health services were provided. Moreover, the key actors in this situation were all very familiar with working with each other and had a shared history that meant they were very comfortable to challenge each other and put across their point of view in strong terms. This contrasted with the Complex Needs focus group who did not know each other well and, as one person said to me, were 'on their best behaviour.'

The chapter begins by outlining the background to the situation before exploring its transformation in two ways. Firstly, I reconstruct a narrative of the unfolding situation and offer my interpretation of the movement and change I experienced as a participant. Secondly, I draw on a key document that formed an integral feature in the creation of a strategy for mental health services, the 'Five-Year Forward View'. During my engagement with the situation, this document was revised and reissued on a number of occasions with version seven of the document being presented to the SMT with detailed recommendations. Following the evolution of the Five-Year Forward View allowed me an alternative means of accessing and observing the transformation from indeterminacy to a more settled situation. I then shift my focus to the organizing process that enabled progress through the transformative process of Inquiry and analyse four examples of co-orientation. This analysis allows me to offer further insights into how leadership is communicatively constituted, and into the hybrid agency that shapes action and produces new directions. Appendix 4 provides a summary of the sources of empirical material used in this analysis.

6.1 Understanding the situation

The issue of mental health service provision is recognised within the health and social care professions as intractable, a 'wicked problem' that is neither easily defined nor simply addressed (Rittel & Webber, 1973). Mental health meets the definitional criteria of a wicked problem in that there are many people with contradictory opinions about the causes of poor mental health and how to address these, and it is unlikely that there is a 'solution' to the problem, merely ways of improving people's mental wellbeing. Equally, wicked problems are characterised by being part of other, interconnected problems, therefore cannot be considered in isolation. In the case of mental health, there is a growing evidence base that suggests mental health is closely associated with adverse early life experiences such as poverty, abuse, neglect and exposure to alcoholism, drug use and domestic violence. The entangled nature of the causes of mental illness, alongside the growing number of people experiencing poor mental health, underpinned the challenges faced by the HSCP in identifying a strategic direction for the provision of services. These external challenges were exacerbated by several internal challenges.

Firstly, prior to the creation of the Health and Social Care Partnerships, accountability for the provision of mental health services in the city resided with a single entity, the Mental Health Partnership, which formed part of the National Health Service (NHS). The creation of the integrated health and social care structure led to a fragmentation of mental health services with responsibility being split across six separate HSCPs. Therefore, any attempts to change service delivery needed to reflect, and achieve buy-in from, the wider mental health system. Secondly, whilst having strategic oversight for mental health services, the Adult Leadership Team (ALT) was responsible only for the operational management of services to adults while service to children and older people were delivered by their own respective leadership teams. Mental health issues were also pervasive among people using other support services delivered by the ALT,

namely, homelessness, addictions, sexual health, and prison and police custody healthcare.

The already complex environment in which this situation unfolded was further intensified by the need to achieve substantial financial reductions across all aspects of the Adult Services budget. The requirement to deliver year on year cost-savings created a highly pressured environment for members of the ALT. Unlike the 'Adults with Multiple and Complex Needs' situation where financial efficiencies were desirable but not foregrounded in the conversations, achieving stretching savings goals was an essential and 'front of mind' feature of the mental health situation. As I began shadowing, the ALT was being driven to provide detailed plans to the SMT and, ultimately, to the Board of Directors, for how they would achieve a 10% budgetary reduction, of which 4% needed to be found from mental health services. The magnitude of the challenge faced by the ALT was captured succinctly by James, the Medical Director, *"if we had enough money and a single organization, the leadership challenge would be much more straightforward. Unfortunately, we are working now on goodwill, mutuality, shared interest and a wee bit of culture and past history. And that would probably have been ok if we weren't under such extreme financial pressure, but I think it is difficult to do that in the new world and I'm not sure that the mental health system will survive".* It was within this challenging, multifaceted environment that the ALT was charged with delivering transformational change to both mental health service provision and the associated cost base; a challenge that was recognised as necessitating leadership.

The 'cast' for this situation (see figure 13) was primarily a subset of the wider ALT and consisted of those whose role entailed responsibility for an aspect of mental health service provision within the city. Both the ALT and the Mental Health Strategy Group (MHSG) meetings were chaired by Stuart, Head of Strategy and Operations for Adult Services, and the three Heads of Adult Services, Charles, Jane and Gillian, brought

operational expertise to the discussions. Each Head of Adult Services was responsible for a geographical area within the city, and for being the lead for certain services e.g. Charles was the lead for mental health services. This operational knowledge was complemented by professional input from James as Medical Director, alongside Matthew and Vipin who provided specialist clinical perspectives. Chris, as Planning Manager and Chloe, as Head of OD, provided support and structure to the process of agreeing to the strategic direction for mental health services.

Figure 13 - Key players in the Mental Health Services situation

Stuart – Head of Strategy and Operations

James – Medical Director

Jane – Head of Adult Services

Charles – Head of Adult Services

Gillian – Head of Adult Services

Chloe – Head of Organization Development

Chris – Planning Manager

Matthew – Lead Psychologist

Vipin – Lead Psychiatrist

6.2 The transforming of the situation

When I began my fieldwork in October 2016, there was already a recognition in the HSCP that there was a need to make radical changes in the provision of mental health services. Stuart, Head of Strategy and Operations, explained to me that there had already been several conversations about the issue and that *"the Chief Officer is looking for transformational change, but it is difficult to find a 'big idea' in Adult Mental*

Health." Therefore, I again found myself *in medias res*, in the flow of an already
unfolding situation (Cooren, 2015)*.* Through conversations with several of the key
actors, I constructed an understanding of what had triggered the Inquiry and the key
communication events that preceded my involvement (see figure 14 for a timeline of
the situation).

Figure 14 - Overview of the Mental Health Services situation
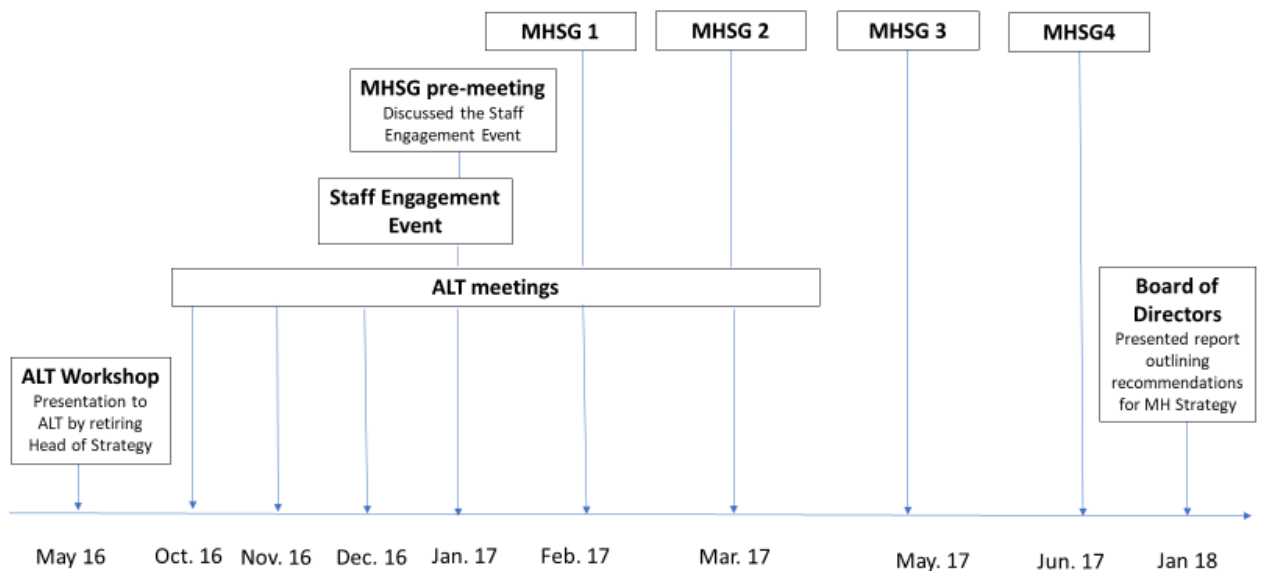
The situation regarding mental health provision within the HSCP was gradually
recognised as indeterminate over a period of months. A workshop in May 2016 was
identified by three members of the ALT as the trigger for growing unease about the
feasibility of continuing to provide mental health services using existing service
mechanisms. During this session, Geoff, the retiring Head of Strategy for Adult Services,
delivered a hard-hitting presentation to his team outlining how demand for mental
health services in Scotland had grown by 29% in the period 2011-2015 at a time of
increasing fiscal austerity, and he challenged his senior managers to consider the
ramifications of these trends for the ongoing delivery of service. For Stuart, this

workshop was "*the origins of planting something in my mind or reinforcing in my mind that a long-term view was essential because if we were going to make any changes that were going to take time to plan for, we couldn't just turn the switch from one day to the next.*" He also recognized that the criticality and the indeterminacy of the situation was foregrounded by the pressure being exerted on Adult Services to deliver year on year cost-savings, "*the other thing which I think drove this was our attempts to identify savings for 17/18 and I think there was a dissatisfaction with the salami slicing and a feeling that ok we recognize that we need to make savings but actually making it this way didn't feel right.*" A similar concern was expressed by Jane, one of the Heads of Adult Services, "*I understand the reasons why we were being forced to take fairly short-term approaches to the savings challenge. We could keep doing that, salami slicing is the phrase we like to use, and we could keep kind of taking that approach and being fairly arbitrary about where we take the savings from but if we kept doing that, were we confident that we would be taking savings from the right places?*" Thus, there was an acknowledgement amongst those senior managers within Adult Services that the existing approach of 'salami slicing' to achieve short-term savings, with its potential for 'death by a thousand cuts', was no longer either a viable or desirable way to tackle the issues of providing mental health services with a reduced budget. By continually making small cuts across the service, the opportunity to consider more transformative changes was lost.

That three members of the ALT, independently, cited this workshop as the initial source of their concern suggests that the growing doubt and uncertainty was leading to the recognition of an indeterminate situation. Frustration with the current approach to change built over several months, encouraged by frequent informal conversations among James, Stuart, and Jane about the need for more innovative approaches. However, it was not until October 2016 that the pressure to deliver budgetary savings resulted in Jane's frustrations finally bubbling over during an ALT meeting where she passionately voiced her concerns about the short-termism of current savings proposals.

She reflected this scenario to me, *"I was saying, you know, I really don't think this is the way we should be doing this and I think, if I'm asking myself these questions, even if other people aren't asking them out loud, I'm sure other people must be thinking the same way and would it not be possible for us to sit down and take a view on our strategic direction."* In response to her outburst, Stuart asked her to convene a meeting to discuss the process of defining a strategy for mental health services, so she immediately spoke to a few people, agreed who would be the most sensible people to get in a room and set up a meeting of what would develop into the Mental Health Strategy Group (MHSG).

Therefore, despite recognising as early as May the inability of past service delivery models to meet future demands, it was not until the autumn of 2016 that an Inquiry was triggered. As Stuart observed, *"we've identified that the existing system is suboptimal, so we need to be honest about our need to address existing inefficiencies and the less than optimal outcomes for patients".* At this point, through informal conversations primarily between Stuart, Jane and James, there was an explicitly voiced agreement that "there is something seriously the matter, some trouble, due to active dissonance, dissentiency, conflict among the factors of a prior non-intellectual experience" (Dewey, 1916a:11) and that action was now required to understand the problem in greater detail.

To progress their Inquiry, a small group met several times during October to capture their understanding of the problem in a document, the 'Five-Year Forward View for Mental Health'. Drawing on the UK benchmarking data, specific geographical benchmarking data for each Scottish authority, demand details for Mental Health services, demographics, and financial savings targets, the group made the case for transformational change. The paper outlined the problem in stark terms: intense budgetary pressures meant that mental health services faced unprecedented clinical and workforce challenges; the gap between demand for services and the resources

available to meet these demands was growing exponentially; and the existing system was inefficient and was not always providing the best care for those using the services.

A draft Five-Year Forward View document (version 4) was discussed at the ALT meetings in November and December with the intent of achieving agreement around the core messages. These were, however, highly contested conversations with many concerns about the challenges of considering the wider mental health system beyond the HSCP, the need to link to other services such as drugs and alcohol, and the need to consider prevention and recovery in addition to treatment. The outcome of the discussions was an agreement that, whilst there were many intricacies still to consider, the Five-Year Forward View offered a reasonable reflection of the problems, represented the 'direction of travel' and should form the basis for future action. Thus, the sense of doubt that was articulated in numerous informal conversations flowed into a more explicitly defined problematic situation. This process occurred in parallel with tentative discussions about what might constitute alternative future approaches that were clinically appropriate, palatable to clinicians and would achieve the required cost-savings across the system. It was only at this juncture in the Inquiry (December 2016) that Chris, Planning Manager, voiced his desire to move the discussions onto a formal Project Management footing; a suggestion made and agreed at the Adult Leadership Team in January 2017, which led to the creation of the Mental Health Strategy Group with responsibility for setting up and managing the programme of work.

Initially, there seemed to be only limited options available to the Mental Health Strategy Group to address the challenge of delivering improved services to more people for less money. Stuart explained the 'headline' options, *"we've got two choices: we either cut in-patients and build up the community services or we protect in-patients and decimate community. The second scenario would strangle the whole system within a very short space of time and is obviously counter-intuitive."* James reiterated the

devastating consequences of the second option, *"the sums of money coming out of community would be of an extent that it wiped out effective service. It would be like a meteor strike that we were looking at, so we thought, this isn't doable."* Even before my fieldwork commenced, and as was evident at the first observed conversation around the Five-Year Forward View in November 2016, there was already tacit agreement that the only credible option was to reduce hospital beds and invest in community services. Thus, movement towards transforming an ambiguous situation was already underway.

During the first Mental Health Strategy Group meeting in February 2017, the conversation focused on creating a programme plan that would move from high-level themes to developing detailed, implementable recommendations. This was a noticeable shift from the preceding conversations at the ALT meetings and reflected agreement with a broad direction of travel. Once again, the Five-Year Forward View was positioned as a core contributor to the process, *"I would like to take forward our ideas into a work programme with detailed activities. We need to examine the key constructs in our five-year strategy and work out how we will deliver them."* (Stuart)*.* The group identified four specific areas that they believed warranted comprehensive review to identify actionable options: how the current system of crisis, or unscheduled care, for those suffering acute mental illness was structured and what proportion of bed occupancy was related to emergency admissions; how the scheduled care services offered in the community could be delivered more efficiently; how to transition from primarily clinical treatment models to a social care model of recovery; and finally, as 25% of mental illness is potentially preventable, how to be more effective in early detection and intervention particularly among children and adolescents. The transformational nature of these changes was observed by James in his typically understated way, *"I think these ideas are actually more radical than they first seem. It will require a bit of rethinking. For example, to accept that most in-patient care will only be for emergencies is a bit of a shift."*

A striking feature of the discussions across the Mental Health Strategy Group meetings was the complexity of the options under consideration and the interconnected nature of all the different workstreams. Whilst seemingly clear-cut in terms of the four main areas for reform (unscheduled care, scheduled care, recovery, and prevention), as the conversations progressed each of these areas expanded and subdivided and the overlaps with other workstreams and projects became more apparent. Illustrative of this was that for the group to make recommendations for future unscheduled care services, separate reviews were required of the existing crisis teams, the out of hours community psychiatric nurse service, home treatment teams, mental health liaison services, GP out of hours cover and acute hospital admissions. Over the series of four MHSG meetings, the Inquiry moved organically from the generative process of identifying strategic options to the introduction of a greater focus on how these options might be implemented.

The outcome of Inquiry is a judgement that the process has run its course, the ideas have been tested, and they appear to be of use in anticipating a workable future (Brown, 2012). Given the complexities in delivering mental health services to the disparate population served by the HSCP, it was not feasible to continue to shadow the Inquiry until the recommendations of the Five-Year Forward View were implemented and all the difficulties that had triggered the Inquiry had been addressed. The likelihood is that this will take several years during which new Inquiries may result in further transformational changes in project objectives and plans. However, the first deliverable identified by the MHSG was a detailed plan for the strategic direction of mental health services. This served to determine a way forward, at least for the immediate present, which will provide mental health services for the anticipated future. As such, the indeterminate situation that triggered this Inquiry was transformed into a new situation sufficiently determinate to admit further action. The implementation of the recommendations continued as part of this dynamically evolving project, *"discussing a strategy is uncomfortable but implementing it is going to be a lot more uncomfortable*

and difficult. We've got a thousand people's actual practice to change" (Chris). However, the original 'perplexity' about how to deliver better services whilst simultaneously reducing costs had been resolved, at least temporarily, with the coalescence of key stakeholders around the direction of travel for mental health services.

Initially, the Five-Year Forward View was due to be presented to the Board of Directors for approval in September 2017, but the volume of work required to develop and cost the recommendations alongside other operational pressures meant that the report was finally taken to the Board in January 2018. During my engagement with this situation, considerable progress was made in gaining buy-in to the overall strategy of shifting the balance of care to community services and placing greater emphasis on prevention and peer-led recovery. Greater clarity was also achieved in understanding how to operationalise this shift by making practical changes to service delivery models. Furthermore, the increasing structure of meetings around agreed workstreams and formal programme management documentation, accompanied by less contested discussions, suggested that the group were moving forward with greater assurance that their recommendations were the best options available given the circumstances.

Ultimately, the detailed options that would, collectively, support the shift in the balance of care from in-patient beds to community services and from treatment to care, emerged and were refined incrementally over a period of months. Therefore, considering individual conversations or meetings in isolation would disguise the movement being made across the overall Inquiry. Only by shadowing the frequently repetitious flow of conversations over many months did the extent of the movement become apparent.

6.2.1 The evolution of the 'Five-Year Forward View' document

Throughout the previous narrative, there are numerous references to the 'Five-Year Forward View' document; a highly influential actor within this situation. The Five-Year Forward View was initially positioned as a discussion document to initiate generative conversations amongst a small group of managers. A rough 'draft' version of the Five-Year Forward View for Mental Health was first shared with the Adult LT at the end of November 2016 (version 4). The intent was to update the wider group on the conversations that had taken place and to seek their feedback on the initial thinking. Concerns about the potentially controversial content of the document led to it being referred to as a discussion paper, marked as confidential and watermarked as a 'No Status Ideas Paper'. James, as the author of the Five-Year Forward View, used the document at the ALT to support his case for the need to develop a comprehensive strategy for mental health services that 'brings together financial and clinical realities and matches short-term financial challenges with viable service configurations' (excerpt from Minutes of ALT).

The first iteration of the Five-Year Forward View provided a written text reflecting the outcome of previous co-orienting activities that had taken place during the informal conversations between Stuart, Jane, Gillian, James, and Chris, in which they had sought to organize themselves around the fundamentals of the problem. By circulating the document to the wider ALT, the previous conversations were extended by introducing different perspectives and challenges. During the subsequent Adult LT meeting in December, there was further co-orienting activity as the group debated the core messages in the document. This was, however, a much contested discussion with numerous issues raised such as: whether the group should focus on the city or the wider mental health system *("I work for the city", "as do I but we need to consider system-wide");* and whether the document should lead with service improvement rather than costs (*"I fundamentally disagree. We can't avoid talking about costs"* and

"we need to be honest about the need to escalate changes in the light of cost pressures").

What was interesting was the continual foregrounding of the document itself in the conversations, *"we need to get consensus that the paper is 80-90% right as it will form the centrepiece for the staff engagement event", "this paper is the biggest show in town – or should be", "the paper is too self-contained and should discuss links with other services", "the paper would benefit from more illustrations of how services would be integrated", and "the paper should be positioned as the direction of travel and provide candour on our current context".* Stuart concluded the conversation by stating his view that *"we need to move the paper from 'no status' to 'status' by August 2017 as it needs to be implemented from April 2018."* That the paper itself was considered to have/not have status suggested that it was ascribed agency within the conversations. This inference was supported by the follow up concerned comment from Jane, *"I have a fear that putting something on paper makes it a commitment, but we haven't tested it yet, and no-one is allaying my fears".* This suggested that Jane also attributed the document with an agency that was distinct from the conversation; that the act of writing down the co-orienting activity of the group was in itself performative. The outcome of the ALT meeting in December 2016 was an agreement that the Five-Year Forward View represented the 'direction of travel' but still required significant work on the detailed implementation. It was agreed that this version of the document (version 4) should be shared at the Staff Engagement Event in January.

For James, the purpose of the Five-Year Forward View was clear: "*we're starting something innovative to some extent and it takes a lot of discussions and reformulating as you go. So, the document is a container for all the thinking that's going on"; and "it's so big, it needs a framework for it all to hang together. It's too big to hold in your head and what we're trying to do, after each discussion, is to go back and amend it so we are trying to construct something and actually I think it needs to be rewritten, refounded."*

His observations highlight several ways in which the document contributed to generating movement and producing direction. Firstly, it provided a way to capture the complexities of the situation as they were discovered, a 'container' which could hold more information than could be retained by human memory. Secondly, it provided the input, or text, to inform multiple conversations that 'talked out' these ideas and generated revised understandings of the changing situation. Whilst James, as the author, provided the initial 'voice' within the document, the ongoing revisions that occurred after each conversation allowed other voices to be captured.

A further way in which the document generated movement was by enabling the ideas developed by a small group of people to be transported to different locations and groups (such as the ALT and the Staff Engagement Event). The Five-Year Forward View prompted further conversations that enabled a deeper understanding of the situation to be created. Finally, the agreement by the ALT to the 'direction of travel' outlined by the Five-Year Froward View gave permission to the MHSG to proceed to develop detailed implementation plans and instigate a formal programme of change. Moreover, the Five-Year Forward View was also used to inform the creation of other documents such as the set of PowerPoint slides that were then used to engage key staff and other stakeholders with the early thinking and the presentation to the Board in January 2018.

The use of the document as a resource within conversations was illustrated during the first MHSG meeting in a short conversational flow between James, Jane, and Stuart (see figure 15). This exchange places the Five-Year Forward View itself as the conversational object (X) around which the group is co-orienting. Whilst Matthew perceived the document as too abstract and idealistic, Jane argued that it was informed by the experiences of the group. Stuart expressed his view that whilst the current version of the Five-Year Forward View outlined the high-level strategy, "*it defines our direction of travel",* it needed to be continually 'shaped and formed' by their subsequent conversations.

Figure 15 - Conversational excerpt 7
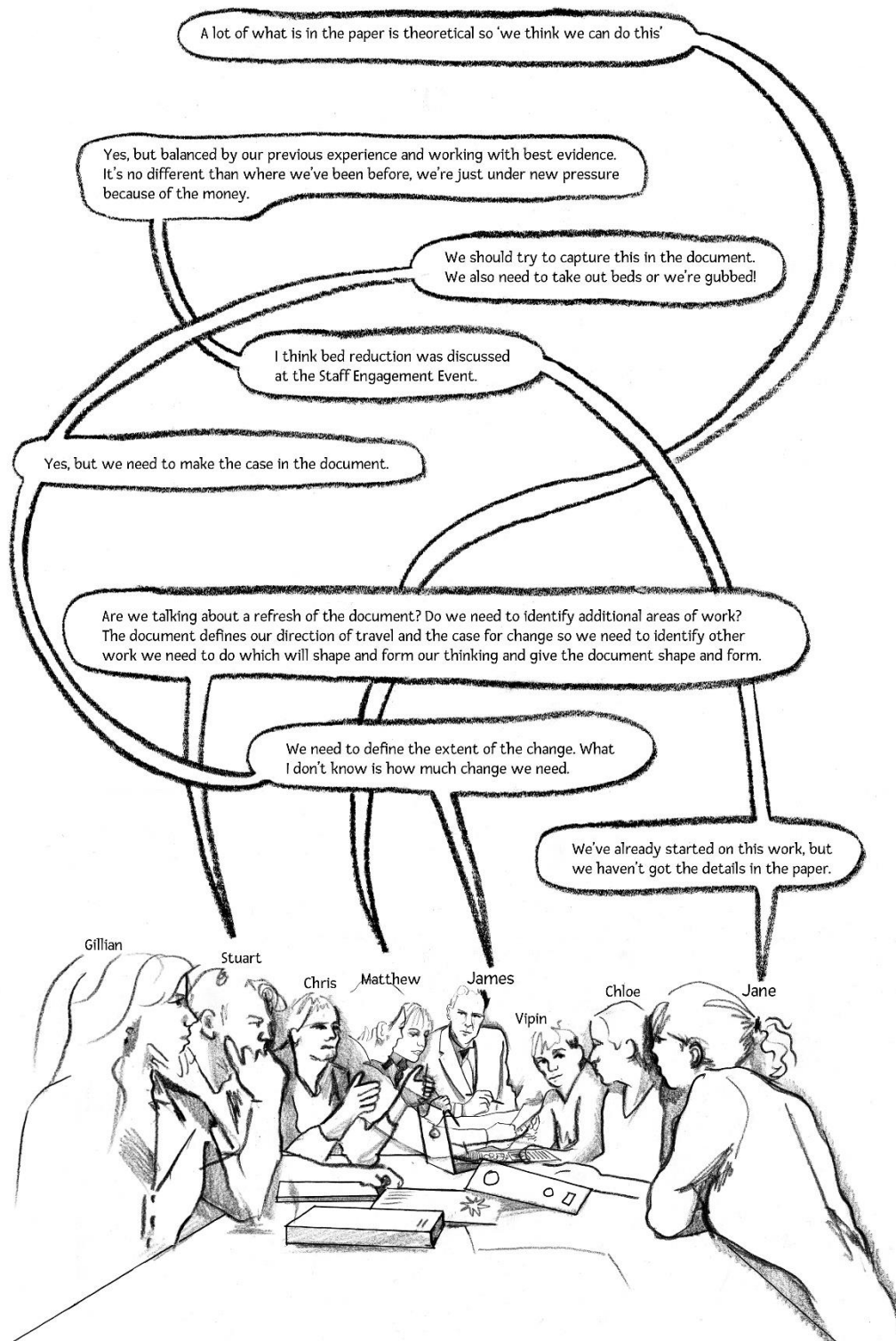
James, as the main author of the document, concurred with this view and, as the conversation continued, opened his laptop to project a copy of the document onto a screen and began to add potential headings to the document. That the document was a key actor was apparent throughout the shadowing period as the paper was continually revised and rewritten in response to the dynamic and evolving nature of conversations; conversations that were, in turn, instigated in response to the Five-Year Forward View.

Tracing the various iterations of the Five-Year Forward View reflected the messiness and interweaving nature of the Inquiry (see table 8 for a high-level summary of the changes across different versions of the document). Version 4 of the document was the first version circulated to the ALT and the first version that I received. As the Inquiry progressed, the document became more detailed and moved from being a container for information (external benchmarking data and internal status) and high-level ideas to making an argument in support of detailed recommendations and identifying how these changes could be implemented. Versions 6 and 7 of the documents were distributed after I left the field therefore, I was not present when they were discussed in meetings. However, from conversations with James and Chris, I discovered that these versions reflected the outcomes of broader engagement across the HSCP and with external stakeholders. Even when shared at the highest level within the HSCP, there was a clear sense that the document was not, and may never be, finished, *"the document itself will be open to further modification as necessary as we develop an implementation plan to support delivery of the proposed recommendations."* (version 7, p.6).

Table 8 - Capturing movement in the Mental Health Services situation

	Version 4	**Version 5**	**Version 6**	**Version 7**
Length	26 pages	28 pages	70 pages	82 pages
Designation	No Status Ideas Paper	Draft Ideas Paper	Draft Master	Draft Master
Content	Primarily external benchmarking data Overview of the current position within HSCP Four possible courses of action - Reduce in-patient beds - Improve unscheduled care system - Improve scheduled care system - Focus on prevention	Additional external benchmarking data A repeat of the overview of the current position from v.4 Development of each of the four courses of action with HSCP specific data	Focus on whole system integration and dependencies Context section (with less benchmarking data) Four courses of actions presented with supporting evidence and clear recommendations for specific actions Addition sections - Impact on workforce - Risk assessment - Financial assessment - Governance and management	Development of the outline report distributed as v.6 Previous gaps in the report populated Additional section added on stakeholder engagement

To summarise this part of my analysis, the transformation of the Mental Health situation was made visible in several ways. Firstly, by constructing a holistic overview of the situation based on conversations with key actors, reviewing documents and then travelling with other actors as the situation unfolded. This enabled me to compare both the content and timbre of the conversations around the strategic direction for mental health from entering until leaving the field. Secondly, reviewing the shifting content and focus of the Five-Year Forward View provided a further way to access the new directions produced by leadership. Having made the overall transformation visible, I now explore how the basic unit of organizing, co-orientation, punctuated the ongoing flow of practice by creating turns in conversation.

6.3 Producing new directions

The examples of co-orientation discussed in chapter five were, for the most part, consensual. However, in the Mental Health situation, the process of co-orienting was more challenging and entailed greater conflict. To demonstrate that co-orientation "does not dissolve differences; it merely serves as a medium to give them expression (or to exclude them from consideration)" (Taylor & Robichaud, 2004:404), the examples I have selected for this chapter focus on conversations which were characterized by disagreements.

6.3.1 Co-orientational turn: The primary reason for making changes

Within the MHSG, there was coalescence around the fundamental problem that required to be addressed, namely the need to shift the balance of care from hospitals to communities. Where there was greater debate was around whether the financial imperative was the primary or secondary driver for the change. Having been raised at the ALT in December 2016, the issue of whether the problem should be presented as a financial or a service issue arose again during the first meeting of the MHSG in February 2017 as the group discussed the Five-Year Forward View document (see figure 16). Matthew made the opening gambit about the need to be honest about the purpose of

the document (X) and expressed his view that the financial imperative is paramount. Whilst agreeing with this view, Stuart and James maintained that there should be an acknowledgement of the problems endemic in existing services. The conversation then moved onto a different topic, but the issue was revisited in both the second and third meetings as the group continued to wrestle with their discomfort about allowing financial pressures to determine service delivery.

Figure 16 - Conversational excerpt 8

The next excerpt (figure 17) is taken from the third MHSG meeting when the issue of how to position the Five-Year Forward View is reintroduced. Jane verbalises the challenge that the group ultimately faced, that both positions were equally valid and would drive any proposed solutions. The group continued to hold their respective views as to whether cost-savings or service improvements should be the stated problem to be addressed. However, there was a clear will to find a way of aligning these disparate views to enable the group to become organised and agree on a way forward (*"I think we all agree with you but…", "I think we all recognise this, but it's where you stand").* Jane attempted to bring the conversation to a close with her comment that there was never going to be a satisfactory form of words to accommodate everyone's views and offered to articulate in writing a compromise that people could accept. This suggestion was accepted and thus the MHSG co-oriented around the need to reflect both service improvement and cost reduction in the Five-Year Forward View and any communication about the strategy. Interestingly, despite Jane offering to bring back a document for the group to discuss further, this never happened. My sense was that the process of airing their disagreements allowed the group to recognise that any communication would need to acknowledge both the financial and service improvement drivers. Therefore, this conversation created a 'turn' in the unfolding of the situation.

Figure 17 - Conversational excerpt 9

6.3.2 Co-orientational turn: The remit of the Mental Health Strategy

The first MHSG meeting began with a discussion around the remit of the group. Prompted by the request from the Chief Officer for the group to produce a Terms of Reference for the programme for the other HSCPs who had a vested interest in any changes to the provision of mental health services, a conversation arose about the scope of the programme of work (see figure 18). The initial conversational object focused on the need for the MHSG to engage with the wider mental health 'system' and influence the other HSCPs to align with the propositions being developed. The Terms of Reference (TOR) document was regarded as an influential text in selling the benefits of adopting a system-wide programme to the Chief Officers and thereby gaining their approval. There was a brief exchange as to how best to use the content of the document to achieve agreement with Stuart advocating a focus on the overall approach whilst Gillian argued that greater detail would be more persuasive. This short exchange prompted action in that the TOR document was redrafted, circulated to the group and agreed at the second MHSG meeting. The final version of the TOR was then presented, and approved, at the Chief Officers meeting in May. In this example, the Terms of Reference created a change in the trajectory of the situation by capturing the outcome of the co-orienting activity and gaining permission from the Chief Officer group to develop detailed proposals based on the broad themes identified in the Five-Year Forward View.

Figure 18 - Conversational vignette 10
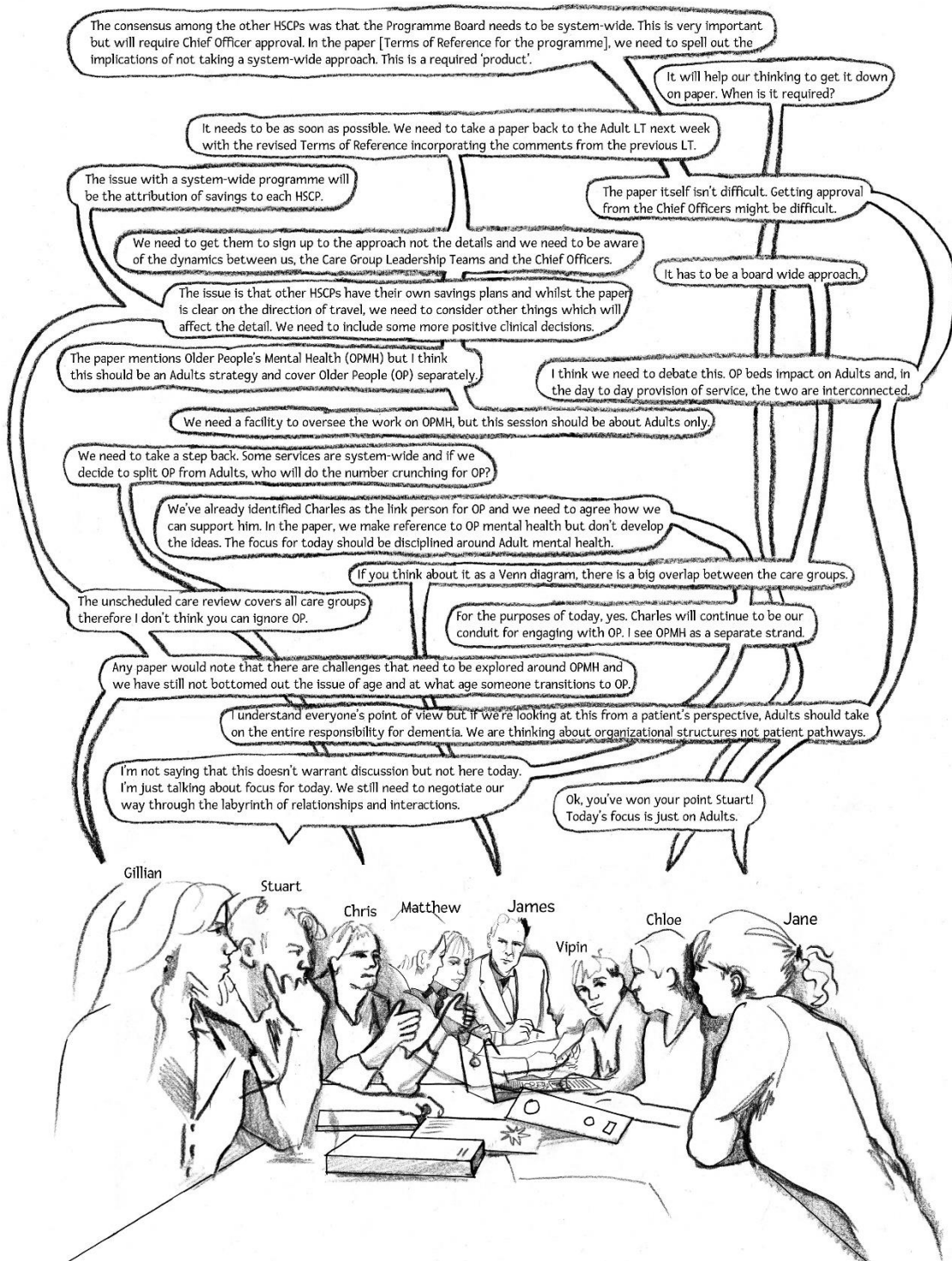
Discussing the need to build relationships across HSCPs led organically onto an internal organizational issue of how to integrate the work on Older People's Mental Health (OPMH) into the programme. Stuart outlined his view that Adults and Older Peoples mental health services should be treated independently whilst recognising their interconnections. Jane disagreed, *"I think we need to debate that"* before offering a counterview. In recognition of the need to move forward, Jane offered the comment, *"I understand everyone's point of view",* a gesture that Stuart attempted to respond constructively to, *"I'm not saying it doesn't warrant discussion"*. Whilst not reaching a consensus, the attempt by Stuart and Jane to accommodate each other's views enabled the group to organize themselves around the focus for the meeting and hence move the conversation forward. The tacit agreement to give primacy to adult mental health services became formalised in the third MHSG meeting when the group agreed that OPMH should sit as a separate but integrated workstream within the overall programme.

Two further insights emerge from conversational excerpt 10. The first is the interweaving of documents through the conversation. Early in the meeting, Chloe suggested that *"it will help our thinking to get it down on paper"* whilst Stuart referred to the initial draft of the Terms of Reference for the Chief Officers, *"the paper mentions Older People's Mental Health"*, to introduce a new conversational topic before referring to it again shortly after (*"In the paper, we make reference to OP mental health"*). In the light of the disparate views expressed, Gillian suggested that the Terms of Reference could be used to capture the interface between Adult and Older Peoples mental health services, *"any paper would note that there are challenges"*. This indicated an advocacy for the importance of capturing the complexities of the situation in written as well as verbal form; and for using a document to capture a form of words that the group could co-orient around.

The importance of relationships in achieving movement was another emergent insight from this excerpt. The group recognised that gaining agreement from the HSCP Chief Officers was critical to their ability to implement the tough decisions that would be required around bed numbers. Thus, the group briefly explored how best to 'sell' the message to these key stakeholders. Stuart's comment, *"we need to be aware of the dynamics between us, the Care Group Leadership Teams and the Chief Officers"* drew explicit attention to the challenges faced by the MHSG both within and outside the HSCP. The antagonistic relationship between the Adult and Older People's Leadership Team was apparent throughout my fieldwork. From my chats with them, it appeared that the ALT thought that OP mental health services should fall within their remit whereas the OP Leadership Team remain committed to pursuing their own strategy for this population. After numerous conversations about how best to manage this 'tricky' relationship, the group co-oriented around asking Charles to act as an interface to build links between the two leadership teams and to ensure the Older People perspective was represented. This decision removed much of the heat from conversations around OPMH and enabled the MHSG to move forward with developing detailed proposals.

In addition to the explicitly referenced relationship between the MHSG and the Older People's leadership team, there were also unspoken relational dynamics at play. Whilst it may not be immediately obvious in the excerpt above, the debate between Stuart and Jane about whether OPMH sat within the remit of the group was emotionally charged with tempers beginning to fray on both sides. Despite conceding the argument during the meeting, Jane was clearly annoyed with the group's failure to resolve the issue of OPMH when she spoke to me during the coffee break. In her view, there were organizational issues getting in the way with the ongoing 'bun fight' between Adults and OP to claim savings made from the reduction of beds. Jane perceived that it was Stuart, as the most hierarchically senior member of the group, who should be driving the resolution of this issue and she was frustrated by his failure to act. The power dynamics between these two were interesting as, despite the disparity in seniority,

Jane was comfortable to challenge Stuart's position and he deferred to her expertise in mental health and actively sought to acknowledge and accommodate her views. Thus, power appeared to be negotiated within the conversations as opposed to being brought *a priori* into the discussion because of organizational hierarchies.

6.3.3 Co-orientational turn: Prevention as a strategic driver

One of the core tenets of the mental health strategy was the need to prevent the onset of mental illness. In the following example, the conversational object was whether 'prevention' should form a workstream within the overall transformation programme. James, as a passionate advocate for addressing the underlying causes of mental health in adults, made the case for its inclusion whilst Jane argued that its scope was too wide and unclear. After a temporary diversion onto the broader issue of education and attainment, Jane brought the discussion back round to prevention (see figure 19).

This excerpt highlights that the outcomes, or texts, produced from co-orienting activity were frequently implicit rather than explicit. Jane's reservations about incorporating prevention into the overall programme were acknowledged and both James and Stuart attempted to persuade her that producing a written Terms of Reference was the best way to move forward. The conversation was circular and contested before Stuart closed the topic by stating the need for a TOR for each of the four workstreams. Interestingly, there was no further discussion at subsequent meetings to revisit the inclusion of prevention as a workstream. Instead, through the process of airing differing views, the heat seemed to dissipate from the issue. Thus, 'prevention' became a standing agenda item at the subsequent meetings with James convening a separate group of people to identify actionable proposals to incorporate into the Five-Year Forward View. Once again, the creation of a document (TOR) was presented as a way of moving the conversation forward and to bring together disparate views into one place as a resource for further conversations.

*Figure 19 - Conversational excerpt 11*
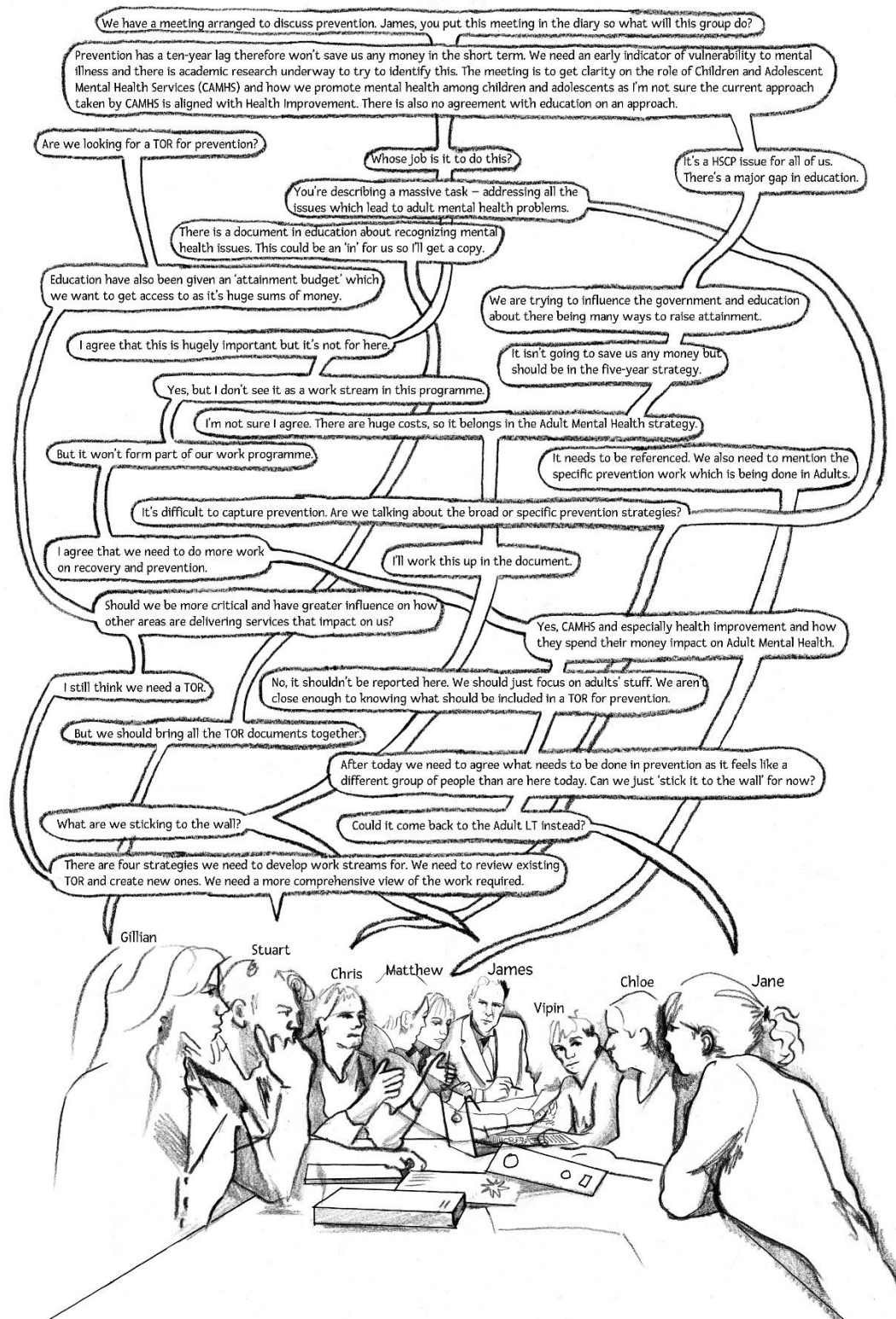
6.3.4 Co-orientational turn: Modelling bed usage

According to Dewey, a core attribute of the process of Inquiry is experimentation and testing of potential options to ascertain their value in guiding future actions. Pressure to quantify the financial cost-savings attributable to their recommendations made this a key focus for the MHSG. The need to test assumptions through a process of bed modelling was offered as a conversational object to the group by Stuart and was readily picked up by others who brought their knowledge of existing bed modelling activity to bear on the current discussion (see figure 20). There was an immediate agreement around the need for a coordinated approach to modelling bed numbers driven by the assumptions being captured in the Five-Year Forward View. James then dived into the detail of the options prompting Jane to try to pull the conversation back to restating the group's agreement to instigating a comprehensive bed modelling exercise. Her statement, *"I think we've agreed the need for a desktop exercise"* provides a revised text that captures the co-orientation of the group; a co-orientation that is captured in the Minutes of the meeting.

This excerpt again emphasises the centrality of documents in the creation of co-orientational turns. In addition to Stuart using the Five-Year Forward View as the starting point for understanding the remit of the bed modelling exercise, James projected a diagram from the document onto the screen in the meeting room to draw the group's attention to specific data requirements. Moreover, having agreed that bed modelling was a key dependency, James offered to bring a document (TOR) to the next meeting to enable more detailed conversation as to the scope of this workstream. During the subsequent meeting, it was an Excel spreadsheet, projected onto a screen that provided the anchor for discussions to ascertain the key questions that need to be answered through the data. Moreover, this excerpt highlights the role of previous experience and conversations as resources to inform the present conversation.

Figure 20 - Conversational excerpt 12
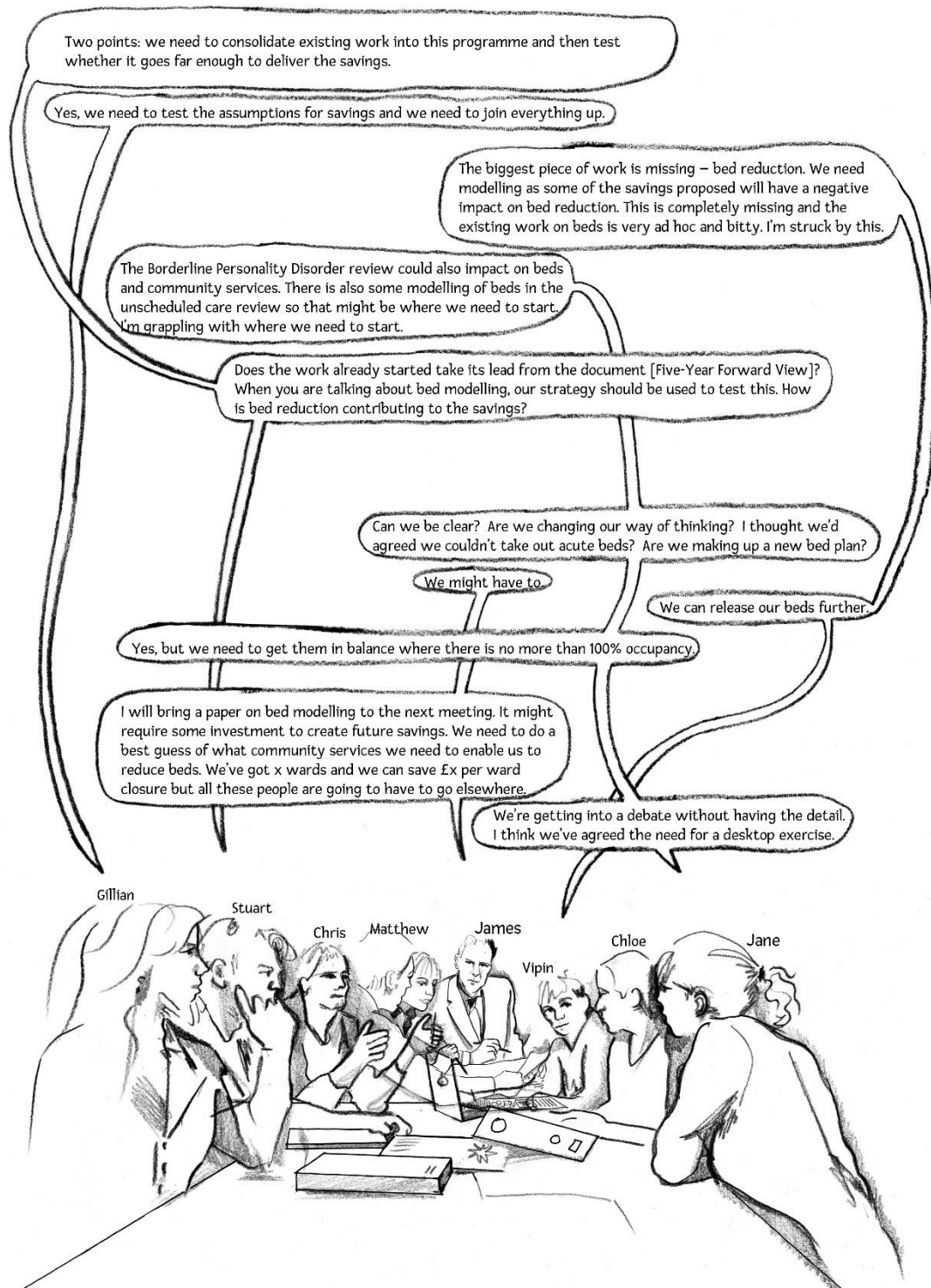
6.4 Performing leadership: Some insights

There were many similarities across the two situations shadowed for this study. Using the transformative process of Inquiry to trace the overall movement over time illustrated the messy and frequently repetitious nature of conversations as the group sought to learn more about the situation and to organize themselves around the best available strategy for providing mental health services against a backdrop of financial austerity. Producing direction and shaping action were achieved through numerous, seemingly inconsequential, conversations, the outcome of which was carried forward to the next communication event through both people's recollections (memory traces) and the capturing of positions and agreements in written documents. The examples cited in this chapter also provide further illustrations of the different timescales of co-orienting activity: within a single conversational flow; across a series of conversational flows within one meeting; and across multiple meetings.

The use of documents in performing leadership was also evident within the Mental Health Services situation. The Five-Year Forward View was undoubtedly the document that served as the anchor for most of the conversations and this document was revised as the group learned more about the evolving situation. However, there were other equally influential texts that informed the discussions of the MHSG. The use of an Excel Spreadsheet projected onto the wall was used to present the preliminary findings of the bed modelling exercise and prompted the group to start to identify the specific questions that they wanted to answer using the data. Producing and discussing TOR for the emergent workstreams also served to instigate more in-depth conversations on both the appropriate remit for the work and the specific actions required to achieve progress.

My sense was that the group was struggling to fit all the pieces of the jigsaw together and to integrate the diverse array of ideas, attitudes, and initiatives. The use of documents such as the TOR for each workstream and the overall Five-Year Forward

View were, therefore, integral to capture details of the multiplicity of Inquiries that were required to inform the options being developed. As the Inquiry progressed to evaluating these options, the Five-Year Forward View and the Staff Engagement Event slides (or, as they were usually referred to, 'James's slides') were again used as a reference point to guide the group's judgements. Stuart particularly was keen to ensure that the proposals being considered were aligned with these documents, *"I suppose my reason for circulating the presentation again is because there are elements in it which I thought were really useful. It was more reminding ourselves of our starting point and testing whether those original assumptions are right or whether we've found contrary evidence or better evidence that would take us in a different direction."*

There were, however, a number of differences between the two situations studied. In the Complex Needs situation, Natalie was visibly attributed the role of 'leader' by others in the group. In the development of a strategy for mental health services, no attributions of leadership were made. Whilst Stuart was the most hierarchically senior, no-one else in the group had a direct reporting relationship to him and my perception was that he was not treated, nor did he act, differently from others in the group. When I asked him about his role, Stuart perceived himself as a facilitator rather than a leader. As a participant, this felt to be a collective albeit challenging process of producing leadership; a process that involved the entwinement of conversation with documents with people and material objects, in transforming the situation and producing new directions.

Another difference was in the nature of the conversations observed. Whereas the conversations in Situation One were largely respectful and constrained, the conversations between members of the MHSG group were characterized by dissent, conflict, and high levels of emotion. From the conversational excerpts cited here, the ongoing contentious relationship between Jane and Stuart becomes clear. They had worked together for many years and therefore brought 'baggage' from their previous

experiences into the MHSG. Much of the co-orienting activity that took place was to find ways of overcoming their personal frustrations and differences of opinion to enable the group to move their conversations forward. Thus, the relational dynamics of co-orientation were foregrounded in this situation and supported the observation that co-orientation is "not merely the immediate focus of situated interactions, occurring in a particular time and place, but also the manifestation of an ongoing relationship" Taylor and Robichaud (2004:403).

6.5 Chapter summary

This chapter focused on illustrating three features that I have argued are core to the concept of *leadership as communicative practice:* transforming situations; co-orientation; and hybrid agency. Through retrospectively creating a holistic view of the situation, it was possible to trace the transformation from doubt as to the sustainability of a short-term approach to cost-savings, to the agreement of a five-year strategic view for mental health services. By travelling alongside the other actors as the situation unfolded, I was able to make visible the changes that occurred to all trans-actors (people, documents and the situation) through the process of Inquiry.

That leadership was performed through the entanglement of conversations and documents was further illustrated in this chapter. A plethora of frequently mundane conversations enabled the MHSG group to talk out differing attitudes towards key issues, organize themselves, and establish the basis on which they were comfortable to act. Analysis of this situation found further examples of co-orienting activity occurring across three timeframes. However, unlike the Complex Needs situation, the co-orienting activity that took place in the MHSG meetings was largely characterized by dissonance rather than consensus. Moreover, the conflicted nature of many of the conversations also foregrounded the influence of previous experiences and relationships in the process of co-orientation.

Through tracing the evolution of the Five-Year Forward View through several iterations and analysing how it was used within co-orienting conversations, the performative nature of documents was further illustrated. During the shadowing period and beyond, the Five-Year Forward View document provided a container for complex ideas; a means of capturing and then clarifying the problem, potential recommendations and the associated risks; a 'text' to be talked out in conversation; a way to articulate the direction of travel and communicate these to a wider audience; and, ultimately, as a vehicle for gaining agreement to a new strategic direction of mental health service provision. In addition to being an actor in the performance of leadership, the Five-Year Forward View also offered an alternative lens through which to make visible the movements that created a strategic direction for mental health services that shifted from a hospital led model to greater investment in community services.

Shadowing two situations, 'Adults with Multiple and Complex Needs' and 'Mental Health Strategy' allowed me to empirically study the concept of *leadership-as-communicative-practice.* In the next chapter, the insights gained through my research will be discussed in greater depth and the contribution made by this study to developing the ideas of LAP will be elaborated.

7.0 Leadership-as-communicative-practice

The original motivator for this research was to explore how leadership could be reconceptualised to offer insights into how to 'do' leadership more effectively. LAP was identified as offering a framing of leadership that moved beyond the traditional leader-centric view to foreground the social and material process of doing leadership. Within this body of work, an opportunity was identified to 'elaborate and extend' (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2011) the existing theoretical and empirical understanding of LAP grounded in process ontology. Specifically, there was significant scope to deepen our understanding of the communicative aspects of leadership practice both human and non-human. Therefore, the research question that informed this study was *how is the work of leadership communicatively accomplished?*

To provide a theoretical answer to this question, the existing literature on LAP was considered along with the ideas of the Montreal School of CCO and a Deweyan view of practice. The concept of *leadership-as-communicative-practice* proposed that situations are transformed through the communicative process of Inquiry as co-orientating activity creates turns that change the trajectory of everyday conversations. A key feature of LACP is the irreducible relationship between human actors and documents in performing leadership. In addition to extending existing theorising of processual LAP, a further objective of this study was to explore these ideas empirically. To do this, I spent nine-months within a Scottish Health and Social Care Partnership shadowing the unfolding process of leadership in two problematic situations that necessitated leadership. Thus, this thesis offers a response to the call made for LAP scholars to move beyond theory and provide empirical support for their ideas (Kempster et al., 2016).

Drawing on my reading of theory and the empirical insights offered in chapters five and six, this chapter will provide an informed guess, or what Dewey (1938) described as a warranted assertion, in response to the research question. The chapter begins with

some general observations about the challenges of observing leadership before discussing how the empirical study provided a deeper understanding of key elements of LACP, namely co-orientation, Inquiry and hybrid agency. The implications of these insights for practice are then considered. The chapter concludes with a reflexive commentary of the experiences gained from designing and conducting LAP research informed by a Pragmatist, processual lens.

7.1 A discussion of the empirical material

Leadership, from an LACP perspective, is a process of organizing that produces direction, shapes movement and brings about transformative change. It is a performance that is realized through the entwining of human and non-human communication. An early insight from my study was the difficulty in translating this theoretical perspective on the communicative constitution of leadership into empirical observation. After several months of immersion within the research site, I became increasingly concerned that I could not 'see' leadership. Initially treating leadership as having an 'essence' that could be found demonstrates the ease with which I, as a newcomer to processual thinking, slipped into the fallacy of concreteness, or what Kelly (2008) describes as the category mistake of seeking leadership's essential character. Just as the philosopher Gilbert Ryle (1949) cited the story of the tourist arriving in Oxford looking for 'the university' separate from the colleges, libraries and science labs, I mistakenly assumed that I could 'see' leadership separate from the ongoing communicative practice of everyday organizational life.

The idea that it may not always be possible to 'see' leadership caused some consternation when I suggested it to senior managers within the HSCP. The Chief Officer had invited me to present my research at an awayday with fifty senior managers. I began by offering an alternative view of leadership not as a 'thing' that can be easily observed and recognised but "a relation of almost imperceptible directions, movement and orientations, having neither beginning nor end" (Wood, 2005:1115). I

then suggested that frequently we only recognise leadership has accomplished new directions in retrospect. These ideas prompted some interest from the group. However, the most significant response related to my comment that I had not observed leadership in the designated 'leadership meetings', a comment that created a veritable buzz around the room. As I explained, formal 'leadership' meetings constituted part of the leadership process by agreeing the proposed direction, authorising action and monitoring progress towards an alternative future. However, the process of producing direction and ultimately transforming situations took place in other communication events throughout the organization such as the MHSG and the Complex Needs focus group meetings.

Given my experience within the HSCP, I would suggest that the terms 'leadership meeting' or 'leadership team' were misnomers as (a) they implied that these were the only places where leadership occurs and (b) much of the remit of these organizational structures was on stabilising and making routine new habits (arguably better described as management) as opposed to the creative action implicit in performing leadership. Therefore, my research suggested that the ongoing work of leadership was accomplished, not just in designated leadership meetings but in everyday communicative activities as people responded to the perpetual messiness of organizational life.

Having identified that LACP was difficult to observe, this study explored creative ways to access the 'imperceptible movements' of leadership. Two complementary lenses have been offered as ways to 'make visible' the concept of LACP: co-orientation as a way to 'zoom in' on the detailed process of organizing that generates movement; and Inquiry as a way to 'zoom out' on the transformative change generated through a plethora of co-orientational turns. Considering leadership through a zoom lens that can be adjusted to different focal lengths offers a dynamic way to examine the phenomenon from differing viewpoints – to zoom in to look closely at selected details

and to zoom out to see the big picture – recognising that these are vantage points rather than fixed positions (Kanter, 2011).

The notion of 'zooming in' and 'zooming out' has been used in both the leadership and practice literature but not in the same way, nor has it been used previously within the LAP literature. In her practitioner focused article, Kanter (2011) encouraged leaders to use wide and narrow lenses to aid their strategic decision-making, zooming in on the detail and zooming out to access the bigger picture. Alternatively, Nicolini (2009) used the metaphor to advocate switching between theoretical lenses to study both individual practices and the interconnectedness between practices. For processual scholars, the language of zooming in and out provides an addition to our vocabulary that recognises the holistic phenomenon of leadership and how applying different focal length lenses can offer new and complementary insights. Moreover, the language of the zoom lens avoids the reified, dualistic language of 'macro' and 'micro' levels that sit awkwardly with processual, Pragmatist informed philosophy.

Having explained the metaphor, I now 'zoom in' to discuss the intricacies of co-orientation before 'zooming out' to explore how a multitude of seemingly mundane co-orientating activities cumulatively generate movement through Inquiry thus transforming the situations.

7.1.1 Revisiting co-orientation

Taylor's theory of co-orientation was informative in developing the concept of LACP. Taylor argued that co-orientation was the 'basic unit of organizing' that enabled people to talk out differing attitudes towards a negotiated conversational object and coordinate their response. In the process of discussing their respective views, an alternative understanding of the conversational object was generated that enabled action. Whilst co-orientation theory has not previously been utilised within leadership

studies, the emphasis on creating movement through conversation dovetails well with a processual view of LAP.

Having theorised that situations would be transformed through the ongoing process of co-orientation; the fieldwork offered an opportunity to explore this empirically. Specifically, the empirical material was analysed to identify examples of conversations that contained the three features of co-orientation: identifying an A-B-X triad; the intention of human actors to get organized, not just talking for the sake of it; and the generation of a text that represented a revised interpretation of the A-B-X relationship. In both the situations shadowed, there were multiple examples of co-orienting activity that created 'turns' that changed the trajectory of the conversations and enabled the discussion to move to another conversational object thus creating new directions. These examples illustrate how talk can 'reorient the flow of practice' (Simpson, 2016).

These empirical observations complement Simpson, Buchan, & Sillince's (2018) temporal analysis of turning points in leadership talk, where they identify performative movements arising in the living present when remembered pasts and imagined futures are juxtaposed in the ongoing flow of conversation. From their analysis, they proposed five performative actions as types of turning points in leadership conversations: *problematising,* described those aspects of talk that recognised an unsatisfactory present situation; *imagining,* speech acts that consider future options and how these might inform the present situation; *recalling* draws on past knowing as a resource to aid present discussions; *committing* concretises the present actions required; and *justifying* introduces the idea of valuation into the conversation by normalising the actions as the best thing to do in this context. A brief review of the empirical material highlights examples of these performative movements within the co-orienting process. For instance, in the first Complex Needs focus group, one of the participants commented, "*we need to reconstruct our response to adults with multiple and complex needs as we currently define people by our services rather than what they need from*

us", a speech act that brought together the past (how they define people) with the future (reconstructing services) in a single utterance to create what Mead describes as 'the present'.

An alternative approach to turns was offered by Ramsey's (2016) characterisation of 'conversational travel'. Drawing on ideas from improvisational theatre with its focus on the dialogical interplay between people, Ramsey proposed that conversation should be considered as the generative player rather than the individuals, a view consistent with Taylor's argument that an utterance gains agency when talked out in conversation. She argued that conversations travel forward through the process of act + supplement whereby any speech act is equivocal until it is supplemented with a further utterance. The initial act can be considered as an improvisational 'offer' that is either accepted or blocked by another person (Johnstone, 1979). The act + supplement dynamic can be seen in the process of negotiating a 'conversational object' as part of the process of co-orientation where one person's offer of a question, statement or insight was either accepted or blocked by other members of the group. By accepting the offered topic, the group then sought to build on this to co-orient themselves around the issue. The formulations of 'turning points' and 'conversational travel' offer complementary concepts to co-orientational turns, and all offer novel ways of engaging empirically with the complex and intricate dynamics of LAP.

The empirical study provided several insights that elaborated on Taylor's theory of co-orientation. Whilst co-orientation in Situation One was largely consensual, co-orienting activity in Situation Two was characterized by conflict and dissent. The most emotionally charged conversations observed concerned how to reconcile the need for improved mental health services with the pressing driver to achieve a 4% budgetary saving. However, the lack of consensus did not prevent organizing. Through talking out their differing perspectives, individual members of the group were assured that their view had been heard; and the process of negotiating a common understanding

translated into an agreed way forward. Importantly, reaching an agreement on how to progress did not always entail individual members of the group sacrificing their strongly held views. It did, however, mean that they were able to reconcile their positions sufficiently to agree on the next steps thus enabling a turn in the conversation. This supported Taylor and Robichaud's (2004) argument that co-orientation was a process, not an outcome, and that organizing occurred in the talking out of disparate ideas.

The finding that many leadership conversations are contested was consistent with Crevani's (2018) argument that allowing for differing perspectives to co-exist rather than seeking consensus was a key feature of leadership talk. To sustain new directions does not require differences to be dissolved; what is required is the articulation of these differences. As an aside, Crevani et al. (2010) use the term *co-orientation* in their work to describe the practice of enhancing understandings of possibly divergent arguments, interpretations, and decisions. Whilst there are parallels with the theory of co-orientation, Taylor's use of co-orientation offers a broader understanding of the process of organizing with the translation from text to conversation and back into text. Instead, I propose that LACP offers an umbrella concept that explains how new directions are accomplished in the ongoing flow of practice. The discursive practices suggested by other LAP scholars (Crevani et al., 2010; Raelin, 2016a; Simpson et al., 2018) help us to understand the routines or habits that contribute to co-orienting activity.

A further insight emerging from the empirical study was the timeframes across which co-orienting activity occurred. The process of co-orientation could be made visible by tracing conversational objects from their introduction into the conversational flow through to the emergence of a revised interpretation, or text. My analysis suggested that co-orientation could be observed within a single flow of conversation, across several conversational flows within a meeting, and across multiple communication events. That the process of co-orientation was non-linear and messy, regularly

interrupted as people became side-tracked by other issues, then revised as part of ensuing conversations either during the same meeting or subsequent ones, highlighted the practical challenges of tracing leadership movements. Arguably, it was only through the application of an analytic lens that followed the unfolding discussions about a conversational object, that co-orienting activity was made visible. Therefore, co-orientation emerged as a subtle, and often barely perceptible phenomenon, "one that depends on the dynamic of the immediate conversation and the ongoing experiences of people engaged in a common activity" (Taylor & Robichaud, 2004:403).

As an extension to the original theory, Taylor and Robichaud (2004) proposed that there were three types of co-orientation: around facts; around relationships; and around actions. Multiple readings of the empirical material gathered for this study found little support for this categorisation. Whilst there were some examples whereby the conversational topic was relatively straight forward, there were other examples of co-orientation that did not cleanly fit these categories. For example, the discussion between members of the MHSG around the primary driver for change involved both a 'fact' (whether service improvement or cost-saving was behind the revised strategy) and a 'relationship' (between Stuart and Jane particularly). My interpretation was that the relational dynamics of co-orienting were frequently negotiated concurrently with the content of the conversation. Therefore, I propose that rather than categorising co-orientation into types, it is more useful to consider three different (but interrelated) elements of co-orientation: identifying an *issue* that forms the content of the co-orienting activity; the ongoing negotiation of *relationships* that happen within the process; and the continuing discovery of the *situation* in which the co-orienting activity occurs. Each co-orientational turn highlights new aspects of the situation which changes both the group, and the situation itself.

'Constructing issues' was proposed by Crevani (2011, 2018) as a leadership practice that contributes to producing direction. She defined issues as any question "that

assumes specific importance and emotionally engages people" (2011:285); a question that has sufficient resonance with people that they invest their attention and emotions in negotiating a shared understanding of this issue. The notion of constructing issues has many parallels with the theory of co-orientation (and indeed Crevani cites Taylor and Robichaud in her 2018 article). The offering of a topic within a conversation is accepted if it is considered by others to be an 'issue', a topic worthy of their attention or which triggers an emotional response (such as upsetting or enthusing people). The conversation then focuses on talking out differing attitudes towards this issue with a view to establishing a shared response and affecting the subsequent course of action. The activity of co-orienting is often contradictory and ambiguous and we may share an orientation towards an issue or conversational object without necessarily sharing our view on *how* we should orient to it (Taylor, 2006).

The idea of co-orienting around a shared issue to produce direction is also evident in the adjacent field of strategy-as-practice. Vasquez, Bencherki, Cooren, and Sergi (2017) sought to provide a framework to explain how *matters of concern* become *matters of authority.* For these CCO scholars, matters of concern are those things that matter to or are of interest to people and that drive them "to defend or evaluate a position, account for or disalign from an action, or justify or oppose an objective" (Vasquez et al., 2017:3)*.* These concerns are then voiced in conversation and negotiated before they become legitimised as matters of authority where one course of action is taken over other alternatives. The authors propose three communicational practices that enable this transformative process: voicing and collectively negotiating matters of concern; materializing matters of concern through written texts thus providing endurance through time and space; recognising matters of concern as legitimate and as the basis for action. Applying these ideas to LACP, there are parallels with how leadership transforms situations through Inquiry. The emergence of an indeterminate situation creates a matter of concern that needs to be addressed and through co-orientation, this issue is materialized through conversation and text before a judgement is reached

that translates the matter of concern into a matter of authority. Whilst this idea did not form the theoretical basis of this thesis, the potential overlap in ideas offers an interesting potential for future research.

A final observation about co-orientation relates to power. Whilst not the focus of this thesis, it is difficult to talk about doing leadership without acknowledging the power dynamics imbued in the process. Indeed, the failure of LAP to address issues of power was one of the main tenets of Collinson's (2017, 2018) strident critique although she conveniently ignored the explicit addressing of power by Simpson (2016). Drawing on the ideas of Follett (1996), Simpson contrasts the interactional 'power over' implicit in leadership as a set of practices with the co-emergent 'power with' that is philosophically consistent with leadership in the flow of practice. A trans-actional view of power is understood to be contextual or like the contemporary Pragmatist, Ansell (2011: 130) observed, "because a transactional view treats power as contingent, emergent, and relational, it provides a basis for thinking about power in terms of evolutionary learning". Understanding power from a 'power with' perspective leads to the view that through the shared empowerment of responsibility for decisions, the trans-actions of groups of people will be self-regulating, able to 'tame' individual excesses and to channel actions in a positive direction. Thus, power is continually emergent and renegotiated within the ongoing relational dynamics of co-orientation.

7.1.2 Revisiting Inquiry

Underpinning this research is the Pragmatist maxim that we should attend to the effects of leadership within organizations rather than debating the essence of leadership as an 'entity'. Throughout this thesis, I have used 'the work of leadership' to describe the effects of LAP, adopting Crevani's (2018:89) view that "producing direction, and consequently shaping movement and courses of action, may thus be seen as the core of leadership work." Based on my research, I propose that *transforming situations* is a further effect of LAP and that Inquiry is the process by

which uncertain situations are transformed into new, more settled situations that guide future action.

In the two situations studied, it was possible to trace the unfolding of Inquiry through reconstructing the situation. As a researcher, I became part of both situations after they had been recognised as problematic within the HSCP. Therefore, my understanding of what had happened prior to my fieldwork was based on the recollections of those involved and my interpretation of documents relating to the situations. Once engaged with the situations, I then followed discussions and documents relating to the provision of services for Adults with Multiple and Complex Needs, and the need to reconsider the strategy for the provision of Mental Health Services. My analysis enabled me to provide a holistic narrative of each situation, from the emergence of uncertainty to the generation of a problem that could be explored with a view to judging the best way forward thus removing the initial doubt that had triggered the transformative process.

An unexpected finding was that it was possible to trace the process of Inquiry through the evolution of key documents. In the Adults with Multiple and Complex Needs situation, a single report was circulated to the Senior Management Team on three occasions during the unfolding situation. The first version of the report sought to capture the problem that was creating concern within the HSCP whilst the second version presented the more nuanced understanding of the problem that had emerged from a cross-disciplinary workshop. It was the third version of the report that was produced after a series of focus group meetings that illustrated the extent of the movement. Rather than focusing on the complexities of the problem, this report presented a range of recommendations for how to address the concerns and offered an alternative, transformed way for providing future services to vulnerable adults.

In the second situation, the creation of strategic direction for Mental Health Services, it was the evolution of the Five-Year Forward View document that captured the transformation of the situation. The rationale offered for writing the document was as a response to uncertainty about the effectiveness and financial viability of existing approaches to delivering mental health services. The earliest versions of the document focused on defining the problems faced by the HSCP. In subsequent versions of the document, the focus shifted to capturing the discussions about potential options before moving to increasingly detailed recommendations as the proposed options were tested and refined. It was the seventh version of the Five-Year Forward View that was presented to the SMT as a proposed strategy for addressing the uncertainties that had triggered an Inquiry some 16 months earlier. The iterations of the document reflected the messiness and lack of linearity of the Mental Health Strategy Group's Inquiry as options and recommendations were offered in the early versions of the paper despite the conversations being more focused on explicating the extent of the problem.

In addition to providing a novel lens for shadowing the transforming of the situations, documents were also agential in enabling progress through Inquiry. As has been discussed previously, almost imperceptible leadership movements were generated through the 'turns' created in conversations through co-orienting activity. Carrying these often small and seemingly inconsequential movements forward to inform subsequent conversations relied on a combination of memory traces and documents. Several scholars within communication studies have sought to explain how 'here and now' communicative actions can create larger scale change (Cooren & Fairhurst, 2009). Given the positioning of LAP as a social and material process of organizing, a useful theorisation is offered by Latour (1986, 1996) who argued that collective action is always a hybrid accomplishment, the product of contributions and associations of both human and non-human actors (documents, rules, architectural elements, technology etc.), any of which can make a difference in a given situation.

Drawing on this association thesis, scholars from the Montreal School supported Latour's view that the world is a 'plenum of agencies' (Cooren, 2006) and argued that action emerges from a string of associations linking together a series of human and non-human actors. Moreover, it is through these strings of associations and their increasing textualization (translation into written texts) that organizing occurs. Cooren and Fairhurst (2009:123) contend that no communication event is entirely 'local' but that "their local achievement is always mobilizing a variety of entities – documents, rules, protocols, architectural elements, machines, technological devices – that dislocate. i.e. 'put out of place'…what initially appeared to be 'in place' i.e. local". Therefore, they acknowledge the ability of past communication to transcend time and space and continue to have tangible effects today. The concept of 'strings of association' complemented the earlier ideas of Taylor and Robichaud (2004:410) who observed that "the material, social, and linguistic residues of yesterday's organization influence and enfold into communication".

The idea of 'strings of association' enables further development of the concept of LACP. On entering the field, it was immediately apparent that the conversations I was observing were drawing on previous discussions and documents that I had not been party to. Equally, whilst attending stand-alone meetings, there was a continuity between each communication event resulting from the presence of a subset of the same attendees (though never an identical group) who brought their recollections from the previous conversations into this new setting. Minutes of previous meetings alongside revised versions of documents such as the Five-Year Forward View also created associations linking one communication event to another. The ability of texts to extend through time (they persist beyond the time in which they were originally created) and space (they can move both physically as printed documents and through the ether through technology) has been referred to as 'dislocation' (Cooren & Fairhurst, 2009); and it was the dislocating capacity of documents that contributed to

movement as previous co-orienting activity was carried forward to inform subsequent communication events.

Therefore, the transforming of situations occurred as small movements were generated through co-orienting activity; and these co-orientational turns were carried forward into future conversations through human memories and the capturing of orientations and actions in documents. New directions were generated through the associative linking of one communication event to another through the dislocation of both people and texts. People brought cultural and societal norms, personal histories, pre-existing relationships, documents and memories of the outcomes of earlier co-orienting activity into the present situation. Past acts of organizing continued to exert influence over present decisions about future actions in an unending string of associations.

7.1.3 Revisiting the question of agency

Making the case that transformative change is generated through strings of association foregrounds the complex entanglement of humans and non-human actors in performing leadership. This thesis has taken a narrow view of non-human actors and focused solely on documents as trans-actors within LACP. Initially, my focus was on identifying specific purposes or roles for documents in transforming situations. To do this, I considered how the documents that formed part of the two situations shadowed could be categorised using Sergi's (2013) five actions: making elements of the issue visible; structuring collective and individual work; articulating and bringing together the past and the future; stimulating sensemaking; and signalling priorities and decisions. Within the two situations, each of these five actions was observable and a further one identified – the role of documents in requesting permission to act and gaining the necessary sanction to implement change.

Despite the ease with which I could categorise the roles played by documents, the process of attributing agency to the documents alone for achieving these actions sat uncomfortably with me. Based on my understanding of the irreducibility of social and material actors, any attempt to separate out the social from the material oversimplifies their entanglement (Cooren, 2018). Based on this study, I would argue that the relationship between human actors and written documents was complex as none of the documents that contributed to the movement in the two situations was used separately from the author of the document. Whilst a discussion document such as the 'multi-agency hub' paper prompted co-orienting conversations at the Adults with Multiple and Complex Needs focus group, the paper was verbally presented by Craig, represented his attitudes as the author, and was subsequently revised by Craig based on how his perspective had changed as a result of the talking out of issues by the group. As Cooren (2004:388) observed, "humans are acted upon as well as acting through the textual and physical objects they produce." Therefore, I would argue that it is difficult to separate out agency between the author/presenter and the document itself. Instead, it is more productive to consider the entwinement of these hybrid agencies in generating new directions.

In an attempt to explore the entangled relationship between human and non-human communication, Vasquez, Schoeneborn, and Sergi (2016) studied how documents contributed to the mutual constitution of both order and disorder in the flow of conversations. By offering a specific view as espoused by the author, documents were intended to provide order and fix meaning. Yet the consequent discussion frequently railed against this enforced order, raised questions, challenged the offered view, and led to alternative suggestions. Thus, in attempting ordering, documents opened the possibility for multiple interpretations and served to 'disorder' the conversation as people sought to renegotiate meaning. Applying this line of thinking to LACP, I would suggest that the 'disorder' created by documents contributed to the process of co-orientation. Individuals oriented differing attitudes towards the conversational object

(the document) and sought to organize themselves and generate an alternative interpretation that allowed for future action.

To illustrate the disordering property of documents, I return to Situation Two, the creation of a strategic direction for Mental Health Services. In the second MHSG meeting, the Five-Year Forward View document contributed to heated debates about the content of the Terms of Reference for the overall programme, and for individual workstreams. Whilst the likely intention of the author of each Terms of Reference was to capture the agreed position as they understood it and to order the resultant conversations, the realised outcome of the document was to instigate disorder. By having a written text to 'bounce off', the Mental Health Strategy Group were able to voice their reaction and share their disagreements and concerns in relation to the issues. These often-heated debates about the content of the document led to new understandings being negotiated and captured in revised Terms of Reference. This illustrated how the entanglement of documents and conversation contributed to the ordering and disordering effects of communication, and how this disorder generated movement.

7.1.4 Revisiting LACP

This thesis offers a performative understanding of LAP that brings together a Deweyan understanding of practice with the theorising of the Montreal School of CCO, two schools of thought that have not previously been interlinked in LAP theorising. Whilst the ideas of CCO have informed previous thinking on leadership communication (Fairhurst, 2007; Sergi, 2016; Tourish, 2014), the conceptualisation of LACP engages more deeply with the ideas of co-orientation and hybrid agency than previous work and offers a potential answer to the research question guiding this study. Table 9 offers a revised understanding of LACP informed by the findings of this study.

Two key elements underpin LACP. The first is that co-orientation forms the basis for all organizing and therefore provides a starting point for understanding how the work of leadership is accomplished. Through exploring co-orientation in an empirical setting, key features of the process were illustrated. The second is that the small, often mundane acts of organizing created by co-orientation are materialized and transported through time and space in written texts. Through the association of myriad co-orientational turns, situations are transformed. Weaving through LACP is the agential entwinement of conversations and documents in generating movement. Thus, it is in the inseparable relationship of conversation and documents that leadership is talked, written and acted into existence.

This revised understanding of LACP offers a way to extend the trans-actional understanding of agency as the "ongoing coordinated accomplishment of work" (Simpson, 2016:173). Agency, in processual LAP, emerges from within the leadership situation and it can be people, documents or the entanglement of both that makes a difference in generating movement. The work of leadership is to transform situations, and this is accomplished through Inquiry and co-orientation.

Table 9 - Leadership-as-communicative-practice: Revisiting key ideas

Key elements	Main ideas
Co-orientation	- Leadership movements occur when co-orientational turns punctuate the ongoing flow of practice and change the trajectory towards an alternative future - The process of co-orientation encompasses the 'issue' that forms the content of the conversation, the ongoing manifestation of relationships, and the emerging understanding of the situation - Co-orientation occurs across different timeframes: within a single conversational flow; across a single meeting; and across multiple communication events - Texts within co-orientation may be verbal or written or a combination of the two, and serve to both order and disorder conversations
Transforming situations	- New directions are generated as situations are transformed through the process of Inquiry - Movement emerges through the association of communication events each of which brings past organizing into the present conversation to inform future actions - The organizing emerging from co-orienting activity endures as it is stabilised and moved through time and space through written texts

7.2 Implications for practice

Within every organization, there are unconscious assumptions about leadership that are embedded in their culture and form a 'leadership concept' (Probert & Turnbull James, 2011). The dominant leadership concept in many organizations is that promoted by mainstream leadership scholars and by leadership and management consultants; that leadership resides in an individual and is a skill that can be developed. The prevalence of competency frameworks that drive the identification and development

of leadership skills and behaviours serves to strengthen this individualistic perception of leadership within organizations (Bolden & Gosling, 2006; Harrison, 2017). Growing interest in alternative conceptions of leadership, whilst generating interesting conversations within academia, have arguably had much less influence on organizational practice. Therefore many existing leadership concepts remain unchallenged and ill-suited to the complex situations faced by modern organizations (Probert & Turnbull James, 2011).

Viewing leadership as a communicative process of producing direction and transforming situations offers an alternative understanding that may resonate with practitioners. Foregrounding communication changes the emphasis for those involved in the process of leadership in organizations. Instead of feeling pressure at an individual level to 'live up' to an ever-expanding list of behavioural competencies required of 'good leaders', the onus shifts to leadership as a collective phenomenon entailing building collaborative groups of people who can have effective conversations that enable them to co-orient around how best to act in response to organizational issues. The need to be personally 'transformational', 'charismatic' or 'authentic' is replaced with the social dynamic of forming and maintaining relationships, contributing to effective conversations, managing dissent and engaging more effectively with materialities such as written documents in the process of leadership. Moreover, accepting that direction is a continually emerging dynamic rather than an absolute outcome recognises that much of the work of leadership occurs in the ordinariness of our working lives rather than in observable, grandiose instances of leadership.

Given that one of the original motivators for this study was frustration with my inability to improve leadership in organizations, it is envisioned that the greatest impact of this study will be to reframe how leadership might be developed. Concurring with the view that how leadership development is understood and enacted flows from how leadership is conceptualised (Mabey, 2013), LACP will necessitate a different approach

to development. However, leadership development as an academic discipline is arguably in crisis (Probert & Turnbull James, 2011). The energy that has characterized the search for alternative conceptions of leadership as a social, collective and situated phenomenon has been slow to build in the complementary field of leadership development. Instead, the field has become increasingly criticized for its weddedness to traditional, functionalist approaches that focus on addressing deficits and improving individual performance; approaches that flow from a mainstream understanding of leadership (Bolden & Gosling, 2006; Carroll et al., 2008).

In his review of leadership development literature, Mabey (2013) proposed that three alternative 'discourses', or ways of thinking about the issue, have emerged to challenge the dominant *functionalist* discourse. An *interpretative* discourse views leadership as a co-constructed, relational and contextual phenomenon and focuses development on the lived experiences of leaders, how they make sense of their environment and their interactions with others. A *dialogic* discourse focuses on exploring leadership identities and how people struggle to 'be' leaders. Finally, a *critical* discourse overlaps with many features of a dialogic approach but places greater emphasis on how leadership development marginalises, excludes and dominates certain people (Carroll, 2015). Leadership development, Mabey argued, is always understood and studied through the theoretical lens of the researcher; and authors tend to remain committed to their favoured ontological position.

Developing this line of thinking, I argue that the Pragmatist informed concept of LACP does not fit comfortably within a functionalist, interpretative, dialogic or critical discourse. Instead, I propose an additional ontological lens through which to consider leadership development, that of process. A *process discourse* (drawing on Mabey's terminology) adopts a trans-actional view of leadership as a co-emergent relationship between human and non-human actors and the unfolding situation that produces direction. Therefore, the focus of development moves from individuals (as is the basis

of most competency approaches) to the unfolding communicative process of leadership. This shift is consistent with the changing emphasis from *leader development* as the enhancement of human capital to *leadership development* as the creation of social capital (D. Day, 2001; D. Day, Fleenor, Atwater, Sturm, & McKee, 2014; Iles & Preece, 2006).

Adopting a process approach acknowledges that developing leadership is an ongoing process which will never be finished. Therefore, development interventions are likely to be focused on 'travelling with' groups of people as they learn from their experiences and practice new ways of accomplishing the work of leadership. This contrasts with the more traditional 'event' based leader development that characterises a functionalist discourse. Moreover, as a process ontology gives primacy to change rather than stability, developing leadership will attend to improving collective capabilities to respond to an uncertain future – what Harrison (2017) described as 'collective improvisation', the ability to effectively build ensembles to respond to a rapidly changing context. Therefore, a process approach to leadership development recognises that it will require time, space and support to enable groups of people to learn how to respond more effectively to ambiguity; and within this unfolding context experience, and reflect on, the transformative leadership processes that produce new directions and generate movement.

Despite Raelin's (2016c:128) assertion that "if we are interested in developing leadership along practice lines, the entire face of leadership development will need to change", to date, there has been quite a limited discussion among LAP scholars of what would constitute this change. Denyer and Turnbull James (2016) proposed four principles that should underpin what they call 'leadership-as-practice development' or LAPD. The first, *reviewing and renewing the leadership concept held by learners and their organizations*, provides a way to unsettle preconceived notions of leadership. They propose that exploring alternative concepts of leadership (such as LACP) might

encourage debate within organizations as to different ways of thinking about, and therefore developing, leadership. The second, *surfacing and working with leadership processes, practices and interactions*, highlights the need to focus on what is done to accomplish leadership rather than who is doing it. Whilst agreeing with this change in emphasis, I would argue that in addition to focusing on individual practices, the notion of 'transforming situations' could be introduced to engage with leadership in a more holistic, processual way.

The third principle proposed by Denyer and Turnbull James was *working in the learners' context on their organizational problems and adaptive challenges.* This principle resonates well with the ideas of this thesis as it recognises the situated nature of leadership. Moreover, identifying a specific organizational problem that has triggered an uncertain situation provides the opportunity to work with a group of people as they progress through the transformative process of Inquiry. Through bringing the processes of Inquiry and co-orientation to the attention of learners, they can develop a greater understanding of how they are producing direction and transforming situations. Finally, *working with the emotional and political dynamics of leadership in the system* recognises the relational elements of doing leadership and allows for greater understanding of the processual notion of 'power with' rather than 'power over' (Follett, 1996).

Developing these principles based on the conceptualisation of LACP (see figure 21), I would place more explicit emphasis on the performative role of communication (human and non-human) in accomplishing leadership. Whilst communication is often highlighted as a key skill or competency for leaders, the notion of communication as a social and material process necessitates a shift from developing individual communication skills (often foregrounding a transmission approach to communication) to enabling more effective communicative practice. Specifically, this will require supporting groups of people to learn together how to have effective conversations.

These conversations may entail conflict as the group seeks to organize themselves by talking out differing perspectives, and this should be acknowledged as a necessary and often constructive part of the leadership process. Moreover, there would be value in educating those involved in the doing of leadership as to the critical role of documents in producing direction.

Figure 21 - Principles for developing LACP

- Focus on leadership, not leader development

- Challenge existing assumptions about leadership and encourage the development of new leadership concepts

- Design interventions that:
    - Are situated within the participants' everyday environment
    - Identify leadership processes
    - Travel with participants as they explore and transform a situation
    - Create opportunities for collaborative learning
    - Are future focused

- Emphasise the importance of communication (human and non-human)

To summarise this section, the concept of LACP has two main implications for practice. The first is that it offers a new conceptualisation of leadership that foregrounds the social and material communicative performance of leadership. Such a view may engage many in organizations who may not perceive themselves as leaders. The second implication is for how leadership is developed. Adopting an approach informed by process and practice opens up new avenues for both researching and delivering more effective leadership development.

7.3 Studying LACP: A reflexive view

This final section is slightly tangential to the rest of the chapter as it foregrounds the process of doing this study rather than the theoretical and empirical insights generated through this research. However, I believe this discussion of my experience of conducting process research provides useful methodological insights. As an inexperienced researcher, choosing to adopt a processual lens through which to study leadership has provided many challenges. There are textbooks galore expounding how to conduct positivist and post-positivist research but little to guide a novice wanting to engage with a relative niche worldview. Instead, I faced the frustrating task of trying to piece together how other processual scholars had undertaken fieldwork and then tailor this to meet my own needs. Whilst it was uncomfortable conducting research without the anchor of an extensive literature to draw on, the counter position is that the lack of methodological constraints offered opportunities for greater creativity in research design. In keeping with the heuristic for conducting processual research outlined in chapter four, I end this chapter by casting a reflexive eye over the process of designing and conducting this study.

My experience of performing this research is consistent with the view of Sergi and Hallin (2011:196) that "research tends to be an iterative process, a going back-and-forth and a complicated flux of actions weaving the web that constitutes retrospectively the accomplishment of the studies in question." I began my study with a practical concern about how leadership was achieved in practice and an interest in learning more about the 'doing' of leadership to inform both my teaching and consultancy practice. An initial broad research interest evolved as I immersed myself in the extant literature on leadership as process and practice and my attention narrowed to exploring how leadership is communicatively performed. It was not until I had been immersed in the HSCP for several months that I became intrigued by the prevalence and habitual use of documents in the meetings I attended. This emerged as a surprising

feature from my early readings of the empirical material and shifted my interest towards the materiality of leadership communication.

Theorising LAP using a Pragmatist theory of practice engenders certain views about leadership: that it is a social and material process that unfolds over time; that is trans-actional in that it involves the irreducible entwinement of people, non-human actors and context; and that our knowing about leadership emerges from our experience of the phenomenon. Translating these notions into a methodological approach required me to take a longitudinal approach to study leadership that enabled me to follow the process as it unfolded over a period of months. This allowed me to focus on certain aspects of the process that were of interest to me, namely how spoken and written forms of communication constituted leadership. Guided by my reading of the LAP literature, I initially perceived that ethnography, "a style of social science writing which draws upon the writer's close observation of and involvement with people in a particular social setting and relates the words spoken and the practices observed or experienced to the overall cultural framework within which they occurred" (Watson, 2011:205) or at least an ethnographically informed approach (Crevani, 2011) would be the best design to understand how leadership is accomplished in practice.

On entering the field, I discovered that the members of the SMT and Adult, Children's and Older People's leadership teams were situated in various buildings across the City, each with their own office rather than an open plan working environment. Therefore, other than attending meetings with them, there was no way to immerse myself in the setting in which leadership was emerging. A day sitting at a 'hot desk' in the hope of witnessing informal conversations proved both ineffective for creating empirical material and an uncomfortable experience. Equally, having attended three months of designated 'leadership meetings', it was also clear that this setting alone was not enabling me to observe the communicative processes that constitute leadership. Concern for my inability to study the seemingly elusive 'leadership' led me back to the

literature to recalibrate my thinking as to what I should be looking for and to further explore more mobile methods that would enable me to follow movement and action rather than people or things. By combining the ideas of shadowing (cf. Czarniawska, 2007) and Dewey's (1938) holistic definition of a situation, the notion of shadowing situations emerged as a potential resolution to my predicament. Thus, the research design for this study evolved in response to my practical and emotional experience of doing fieldwork and was guided by my reading of both theoretical and methodological literature.

Making the decision to foreground two situations to shadow was liberating. Rather than frantically trying to capture the content of all the conversations at leadership meetings, I was able to strengthen my observations of the relational dynamics between attendees during those parts of the meeting not related to the transforming of the situation. This provided richer insights than had previously been possible when the focus was solely on capturing conversational content across a multiplicity of leadership situations. It also brought greater clarity as to which meetings I should attend, who I should talk to about the situation and the focus of our conversations. Moreover, creating more 'time' within meetings allowed me to become more sensitized to the movements occurring within conversations, which became more prevalent in the fieldnotes as the research progressed.

Research guided by a processual approach is necessarily performative as the researcher participates in the co-production of the movements and flows that constitute LACP. Although my initial intention in undertaking this study was to retain a distance from participants, I quickly found myself drawn into discussions as my comments on proceedings were invited. The insights generated are thus more about travelling with the flows of change, as suggested by Shotter's (2006) 'withness-thinking', than any attempt to accurately represent the structural and discursive elements of leadership that characterise mainstream 'aboutness-thinking'.

Having identified an approach that would enable me to trace the unfolding of leadership, I then faced the challenge of identifying tools to analyse the empirical material that would enable me to illustrate the movements of leadership. In a complementary study of the imbrication of talk and text in strategy-as-practice, Cooren et al. (2015:375) posed the question of how to study a phenomenon which "implies a temporary, almost slippery, potentially improvised, and highly contingent character?" They proposed attempting to bracket *'fleeting moments of strategy'* from the continuous flow of conversations that took place in meetings using different analytical tools (keywords and matters of concern) to orient their search. Equally important was the focus on the interplay of multiple agents who contributed to strategy-making (people, documents, sites, objects, emotions). Unknowingly, I adopted a similar process of seeking to identify *'fleeting moments of leadership'* using co-orientation as a theoretically informed analytical tool to zoom in on the detailed activities and Dewey's theory of Inquiry as a vehicle to explore how the association of co-orienting activity over time accomplished transformative change. I also attended to the non-human trans-actors within the situation.

Under a hypothetico-deductive approach to research, theory and method are often treated as separate constructs with a linear relationship. Yet this is an overly simplified view of a complex entanglement as they are (or should be) highly interrelated in practice (Van Maanen, Sorensen, & Mitchell, 2007). In explicating his argument for looking at practice from different angles, Nicolini (2009) advocated using conceptual tools to provide analytical resources. That theory and method are mutually informing is central to a processual view that research is a performance in a world made up of flows that unfolds as we, as researchers, are doing it and is continually in the process of becoming. My own experience of performing this piece of research was that it would have been difficult to design a methodological approach that was sophisticated enough to engage with a 'slippery' (Cooren et al., 2015) phenomenon without the insights provided by the theorising of other scholars from the disciplines of practice, leadership

and communication. Moreover, my use of co-orientation as an analytical tool provided new insights into the process that then informed the concept of LACP.

As I began to write, I discovered a further challenge with undertaking processual research. Not least was my constant struggle to capture in words the complexities of the unfolding process of leadership whilst wrestling with my natural preference for neat, linear stories. I was also aware of the instinct to abstract observations from the ongoing flow of practice and use these abstractions to identify discrete practices. Viewing leadership through a lens that privileges activity and movement required me to be mindful of the innate human tendency towards "the fallacy of misplaced concreteness" (Whitehead, 1925 [1967]:51) and to avoid falling into the trap of perceiving 'things' rather than processes and relationships. Moreover, I became increasingly aware of the complexities of language choices when seeking to share my experiences and to describe leadership as a dynamic and continual process of becoming. There may still be occasions in this thesis where I have inadvertently lapsed into 'concrete' terms as I tried to find the best words to conjure up a world on the move, therefore, I ask for a degree of latitude in recognizing that my endeavour is not infallible. As Dewey and Bentley (1949 [1960]:xii) eloquently said, "we introduce into language no melodrama of villains all black, nor heroes all white. We take names always as namings: as living behaviours in an evolving world of men and things".

In summary, this thesis follows the unfolding of a methodological Inquiry triggered by uncertainty about how to conduct empirical research that would be commensurate with a processual, Pragmatist philosophy. Through problematizing the issue and seeking to bring greater certainty to how to effectively perform processual research, several novel solutions emerged. Firstly, the notion of *shadowing situations*, inspired by Dewey's definition of situation offered a way to design research that allowed the following of trans-actions rather than inter-actions and study the recursive dynamics of conversation, documents, and situation. Secondly, the design and application of two

analytic lenses, *Inquiry* and *co-orientational turns*, enabled me to adopt differing vantage points through which to observe the holistic phenomenon of leadership.

7.4 Chapter summary

The aim of this chapter was to discuss the findings of this study and answer the question of how the work of leadership is communicatively accomplished. To summarise, I have argued that leadership, understood as the process of producing direction and change, emerges in response to ambiguity and uncertainty. Dewey argued that Inquiry was a transformative process that changes an uncertain situation to a more settled situation that allows for future action. Therefore, Inquiry is proposed as the process by which leadership brings about change by transforming situations. Moreover, my empirical study illustrated how the association of co-orienting activity and written documents provided the vehicle for moving Inquiry forward. Thus, Inquiry and co-orientation offer complementary perspectives on the transformative process of leadership-as-communicative-practice.

What was an unexpected, but equally rewarding, feature of this study was a deepening understanding of the complexities of conducting research informed by a process ontology. An initial fascination with a philosophical perspective of a world that is continually becoming became a trigger for uncertainty as to how to engage in designing, conducting and writing research viewed through this lens. Through the development of guidelines for undertaking process research alongside the reflexive review conducted above, I have sought to offer insights to guide future ontologically processual research. As the following conclusion will argue, this study has advanced an understanding of processual LAP and provided new insights into how we develop, and research leadership viewed as dynamic, communicative practice.

8.0 Conclusions

The primary motivator for this research was a desire to develop an alternative perspective on leadership that would enable practitioners to better understand the phenomenon and how it is accomplished in organizations. The call to look at leadership through different philosophical and theoretical lenses is not a new one. As early as the 1980s, leadership scholars began to question the assumptions that underpin the traditional, mainstream understandings of leadership yet much of the resultant work continued to focus on leadership as a 'thing' that could be observed and measured. As I began my PhD journey, I too fell victim to this fallacy of misplaced concreteness before being introduced to the potentially transformational ideas of process philosophy. Thus, began the unfolding journey that has led to this thesis.

Informed by different bodies of literature (LAP, process, practice and organizational communication), I developed the concept of *leadership-as-communicative-practice* to offer a possible explanation of how the work of leadership is communicatively accomplished. To explore LACP empirically, I shadowed two unfolding situations within a Health and Social Care Partnership: the review of service provision for Adults with Multiple and Complex Needs; and the creation of a strategic direction for Mental Health Services. The resultant insights highlighted that the work of leadership in each of the two situations involved transforming the situation from one of tension and ambiguity to an alternative situation where the direction of travel was clearer and there was a renewed understanding of how to act in the future. My analysis illustrated how situations were transformed as the co-evolving relationships between conversations and written documents developed strings of association that enabled the temporal linking of communication events; and how co-orientation provided the vehicle for generating movement through the transformative process of Inquiry.

The aim of this chapter is to bring my journey to a close. I begin by detailing the contributions made by this thesis to advancing processual LAP both theoretically and

empirically and to developing the array of methodological approaches used to study a world in continual motion. Next, I outline the limitations of this study before offering some suggestions and directions for future research to continue to deepen our understanding of alternative conceptions of leadership.

8.1 Research contributions

In chapter one, three objectives were identified as the intended outcomes of this piece of research: to advance an ontologically processual understanding of LAP; to conceptualise how leadership, viewed through this lens, is accomplished in practice; and to explore the unfolding of processual LAP empirically to gain insights into the doing of leadership. Through pursuing these objectives this thesis has made theoretical, empirical and methodological contributions. Each of these contributions will be discussed in turn.

8.1.1 Theoretical contribution

The theoretical contributions made by this thesis are to the LAP literature. The first is to advance a processual, Pragmatist informed theorising of LAP as a dynamic social process of producing direction. Specifically, I build on the work of Simpson (2016; 2018) to develop a conceptualisation of LAP, *leadership-as-communicative-practice,* that foregrounds the constitutive nature of communication (human and non-human) in performing leadership. Whilst other leadership scholars have recognised the value of CCO to understanding how leadership is accomplished (Crevani, 2018; Fairhurst & Connaughton, 2014; Tourish, 2014), this thesis develops a deeper engagement with the work of the Montreal School, which when combined with a Deweyan perspective of practice brings new insights to LAP. I have argued that LACP reorients and transforms situations through the complex entanglement of conversation and documents as people respond collaboratively to uncertainty and doubt. Through the performative process of co-orientation, the entwining of conversation and text generates movement. The notion of *co-orientational turns* contributes to the growing body of work in LAP

that seeks to identify what creates the disruptions that change the trajectory of conversations (Carroll & Simpson, 2012; Ramsey, 2016; Simpson et al., 2018); whilst *transforming situation* contributes to our understanding of both the process and effect of leadership in producing new directions.

LACP also gives greater emphasis to the material dimensions of LAP and specifically, the role of documents in accomplishing the work of leadership. Rather than seeking to distinguish discrete actions achieved by documents, I have argued that the agency of written texts is inseparable from the human authors who write and present them during communication events. Moreover, I contend that whilst documents may contribute to co-orienting activity, they are an essential feature of transforming situations. The ability of documents to stabilize and transport the outcomes of co-orientation enables past organizing to inform future movements.

8.1.2 Empirical contribution

The second contribution is to provide an empirical illustration of the communicative constitution of leadership that offers insights to the LAP community of scholars. In response to Collinson's (2017, 2018) critique, Kempster (Raelin, Kempster, Youngs, Carroll, & Jackson, 2017) offered a view that LAP is still in the infancy of its theoretical development. To progress to the 'evaluation and augmentation' stage of Reichers and Schneider's (1990) model of construct development, Kempster argued, requires greater empirical research of which there is currently a dearth in LAP. The nine-month shadowing of leadership undertaken in this study provides an empirical illustration of LAP that may facilitate its ongoing development.

Specifically, this thesis provides an empirical exploration of the concept of LACP and extends our understanding of two processes that enable situations to be transformed: Inquiry and co-orientation. The findings of this study provide additional insights into co-orientation, and how the hybrid agency of people and documents create strings of

association that allow in-the-moment organizing to be transported through time and space to inform subsequent organizing. The findings also provide further empirical support for the idea that documents have both ordering and disordering properties in organizing processes (Vasquez et al., 2016).

8.1.3 Methodological contribution

The final contribution made by this thesis is to develop greater methodological sophistication by articulating a research design and methods that are commensurable with a processual LAP perspective. The lack of existing literature relating to 'doing' ontologically processual research provided a significant challenge for this study. To address this perceived gap in the methodology literature, I created a series of principles that guided my research. This 'heuristic' recognises the challenges of accessing and following a plenum of agencies (Cooren, 2004) on the move and offers an alternative view of how process researchers can evaluate the quality and impact of their work. This is the first methodological contribution of this thesis. Whilst the principles recommended are underpinned by a Pragmatist philosophy, many are equally applicable to designing, conducting and evaluating performative process research informed by other philosophical perspectives. They could equally be used to study processual phenomena other than leadership and therefore contribute to the wider methods debate in organizational studies.

In response to the call for greater focus on mobile methods (Buscher & Urry, 2009), I proposed an extension to the existing literature on organizational shadowing (Gill et al., 2014; McDonald & Simpson, 2014). I have argued that shadowing situations offers a mobile method that enables researchers to trace the evolving dynamics of leadership over time and follow the people, places, objects and artefacts that contribute to enacting leadership. Using a Deweyan definition of a situation allows researchers to trace the movements that emerge from the recursive relationship between conversations and documents. A challenge with shadowing situations is identifying

what constitutes a 'situation' and, drawing on my own experience, I would recommend a period of immersive engagement with the research site to observe as many communication events as possible. Through my attendance at the leadership meetings of the HSCP, I was able to establish those issues that were creating an 'indeterminate situation' and generating sufficient tension within the organization to trigger an Inquiry.

A further methodological contribution made by this thesis is to advocate the use of two co-productive analytical lenses to study leadership movements. The conceptual framing of this study focused on two specific theories that were subsequently used to analyse the empirical material. Inquiry offered a vehicle to zoom out on the process of leadership as two tensional situations were transformed: addressing the untenable conditions of existing service provision to adults with multiple and complex needs and creating a strategic shift in how mental health services were provided. At every stage of these Inquiries, dynamism was injected into the process by means of myriad co-orientational turns, which served to redirect and reshape the conversational flow. Therefore, co-orientation provided a lens to zoom in on the flurries of moment-by-moment movements that constitute leadership and make visible those aspects of the process that are hard to observe. The use of the metaphor of a zoom lens that can offer complementary perspectives on the same phenomenon offers a form of language that is more congruent with a processual worldview and a Pragmatist anti-dualistic stance than the more substantialist notion of macro and micro levels of analysis.

8.2 Limitations of this study

Inevitably, as with any empirical study, there are limitations with this research. In this section, I discuss four of the most pertinent. A central tenet that threads through this thesis is that leadership is trans-actional in that it involves the entanglement of human and non-human actors, yet both my theoretical development and empirical study focused only on the agential role of written texts in the doing of leadership. The

emphasis on documents does not dismiss the involvement of other materialities (bodies, places, spaces, technology) but zooms in on one aspect of materiality as a contributor to the accomplishment of LACP. The involvement of other forms of materiality in transforming situations is an area that merits further exploration.

The second potential limitation of this study is the selectiveness of the situations followed. I began my fieldwork attending four separate meetings: the SMT and the Adult, Children's and Older People's Leadership Teams. Only the Adult Leadership Team met fortnightly (compared to monthly) therefore I was able to become more deeply involved in understanding their issues due to having greater exposure to them. Through observing these meetings, I recognised that there were tensions regarding the provision of services for adults with multiple and complex needs and in terms of the need for strategic direction for future mental health services, which would provide me with two situations to follow. Therefore, my choice of situations was opportunistic and, given that both arose from the same meetings, there was some overlap in participants of the two. In hindsight, it might have been interesting to have shadowed a situation relating to one of the other care groups (Children's and Older People's). However, given the time-consuming nature of conducting processual research, and that my engagement with these care groups had not yet surfaced any tensional situations, I deemed this to be impractical.

The third limitation of this study is the nature of the empirical material created during my fieldwork. Due to discomfort with the meetings being audio recorded, the empirical material consisted of the broad flow of conversations and those detailed exchanges within the ongoing conversations that I could capture in writing. As many of the meetings I attended lasted for between 3 and 6 hours, I was aware that as each meeting progressed, I became tired, my arm ached after pages of writing, and I was less able to capture the details of the dialogue. The absence of detailed transcripts made it difficult to delve into the linguistic details of the individual speech acts and to

analyse the non-verbal and paralinguistic attributes of talk. Therefore, rather than a deep dive into the intricacies of how speech accomplished movement, my focus was on the holistic unfolding of the process by which leadership produced direction and transformed situations. Instead of conversation analysis, necessity led me to adopt alternative analytic lenses that enabled me to focus on what was accomplished over time, through the entwining of conversation and documents. Detailed audio or video recordings would have provided different empirical material that would have allowed for alternative analysis and potentially further or different insights into performing leadership.

A fourth challenge of doing performative process research is in the writing itself. The act of writing serves to abstract the dynamics of leadership from the situation in which it emerges, to stabilise and reify the phenomenon (Abdallah et al., forthcoming) . Moreover, the messiness of continual becoming is difficult to capture in words without some form of overarching structure to enable the reader to follow the story being told. Throughout this thesis, I have tried to choose words that align with the underpinning process ontology, using expressions such as 'the work of leadership', 'accomplishing', 'performing', 'dynamic' and 'unfolding'. As Abdallah et al. (forthcoming:21) observe, "the use of gerunds in concept development is ubiquitous to provide the sense of a permanent state of becoming assumed by this type of research" although arguably there is a risk that this is becoming overused as a linguistic strategy. Therefore, the writing of a performative, processual leadership story has required careful crafting of the text; and despite my best efforts, no doubt there will be limitations as to how well this has been achieved.

8.3 Future research trajectories

The insights offered in this study open several potentially fruitful areas for future research. The notion of LACP could be further developed by conducting further situational shadowing studies that allow for the supporting, refining or refuting of the

warranted assertions made here. Being able to video or audio-record communication events within the unfolding situation would also open opportunities to capture more detailed empirical material about the recursive relationship between talk and documents and thus the possibility of different analytic tools. Moreover, whilst I chose to use the theories of Inquiry and co-orientation to trace movement and inform my analysis, drawing on alternative theoretically informed lenses might provide innovative ways of zooming out and in on the unfolding of LACP.

Another possible research stream would be to explore further the improvised nature of leadership conversations and the use of documents and other materialities in improvisation. The conceptual framing of this thesis focused on the emergence of leadership in response to a need (or want) to do something different in a dynamic, unknown future. The building on existing habits, or practices, as a resource to enable us to adapt to our ever-changing social and material environment, is key to a Deweyan view of practice and implicitly supports the notion of communicative practice as improvisational. The insights gathered through shadowing the two situations suggested that much of the talk that constitutes leadership takes place 'on the hoof' (Chia & Holt, 2006:643) and involved 'skilled, improvised in-situ coping' (Chia, 2004:33). However, within this research project, there was insufficient scope to engage with the body of work on improvisation in organization studies. An interesting trajectory resulting from my work would be to empirically examine how improvisation contributes to creating movement and to explore the act + supplement dynamic in leadership practice (Ramsey, 2016).

The focus of this study was on understanding how the conversation-text dynamic generated leadership movements. However, another aspect of co-orientation theory that was not explored was the use of narrative and storytelling as people made sense of their experiences. Taylor and Cooren (2006) maintain that it is through narratives that we negotiate meaning and they draw on the work of little-known semiotician,

Algirdas Greimas (cf. Greimas, 1993), to develop this aspect of their thinking. In the broader organization studies literature, narrative as both theory and method has seen a resurgence with the work of scholars such as David Boje (cf. 2001). Therefore, there is scope to develop our understanding of the role of narrative in the process of co-orientation and in creating strings of association by developing and carrying forward stories that linked past and present communication events.

Another aspect of this study that was not explored in depth was the use of spaces in accomplishing the work of leadership. At the first Adults with Multiple and Complex Needs focus group meeting, instead of the traditional meeting set up of tables laid out in conference room style, the Head of OD removed all the tables and created a circle of chairs in the centre of the room. Immediately, this caused comment among the participants, ranging from amusement to irritation, and encouraged one of the participants to acknowledge, "*it feels slightly strange as we don't have any tables but this is so we can have a different kind of meeting*". After some initial discomfort with the failure to conform with the 'normal' approach to meetings, the forum style set up seemed to promote an atmosphere of trust that led to a free-flowing, open and generative conversation. Moreover, during the Mental Health Services situation, discussions about reducing beds were more emotionally charged when they took place in one of the city's Mental Health hospitals rather than in a meeting room in the HSCP Head Office.

Due to the constraints of attempting to physically capture the dialogue that generated movement within these two situations, opportunities to learn more about the effects of place and space were missed. Crevani (2018) explored the spatial aspects of producing direction and proposed that 'clearing for action' may offer a better understanding of the work of leadership than producing direction as it reflected the role of space as well as time in the process. Due to my inability to capture spatial

features of the situations, I continued to adopt 'producing direction' as the basis for my understanding of the work of leadership.

A final area for future research would be to engage more deeply with the literature on leadership (rather than leader) development and to further advance the nascent ideas of LAP development. As I conclude this thesis, much of the thinking around development within LAP is theoretical with scholars recognising the need to move away from the 'deficit' model of leader development, to challenge pre-existing leadership concepts and to design more relational and contextual interventions. In terms of designing leadership development programmes, there are many suggested approaches with Raelin (2008) encouraging greater focus on collaborative learning and developing dialogic skills, Turnbull James and Ladkin (2008) proposing emphasising collaborative and co-operative inquiry processes, Denyer and Turnbull James (2016) advocating greater use of collaborative leadership learning groups whilst Harrison's (2017) article calls for a move towards collective improvisation. More recently, Simpson and Buchan (2018) proposed that studio techniques might offer an alternative for developing collaborative leadership. However, there is little empirical research exploring such ideas. This provides an exciting opportunity for action research studies to deliver a new approach to developing leadership that decentres the individual and instead engages with leadership as a dynamic communicative process.

8.4 Concluding remarks

Inquiring into how leadership can be conceptualised as both process and practice have opened new vistas on an old topic. This thesis adds a supportive voice to those scholars committed to developing an ontologically processual understanding of leadership as a dynamic, unfolding phenomenon and to exploring how the difficult to see movements of leadership are performed (Crevani, 2018; Sergi, 2016; Simpson, 2016; Simpson et al., 2018). *Leadership-as-communicative-practice* offers one perspective on how the work of leadership is accomplished through the entwinement of talk and texts and responds

specifically to calls to deepen our understanding of the constitutive role of communication in doing leadership (Fairhurst & Connaughton, 2014; Tourish & Jackson, 2008). The insights offered in this thesis will hopefully encourage a future research agenda to further explicate the communicative constitution of leadership. Exploring leadership through the lens of LACP also offers a new way to both conceptualise and develop leadership. My hope is that this may go some way to enabling the leadership performances required to transform the challenging and complex situations that characterise modern organizational life.

Appendix 1 – Participant Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet

Leadership Work in Health and Social Care Partnership

Researcher: Linda Buchan, PhD Student, MA (Cantab)

Dear participant

I am currently undertaking doctoral research within the Department of Strategy & Organisation at Strathclyde Business School and would like to invite you to participate in my research project.

My research aims to draw on a very new approach to leadership research, 'Leadership-as-Practice' which sees leadership as a social and collective process, focuses on the 'how' of leadership, and aims to extend our understanding of what actually generates the movements and directions associated with leadership work. The aim of my fieldwork is to observe, analyse and then explain, how leadership is accomplished within the context of the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) with particular focus on the role that everyday talk and conversation plays in the emergence of leadership.

If you are willing to participate in this research, it will involve being observed during the leadership team meetings within HSCP over a 6 to 9-month period and taking part in semi-structured interviews and informal conversations with me to reflect on the creation of leadership during these meetings. I will take notes during these meetings and discussions and will seek your consent to record these meetings on an individual basis.

All data collected will be kept in password protected documents which only I will have access to and will be anonymised to ensure confidentiality. These documents will then be stored in a secure location. The University of Strathclyde is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office who implements the Data Protection Act 1998.

You would have the ability to withdraw your consent at any time up to October 2017 after which I will be writing up my thesis and therefore unable to remove any quotes which you may have made during the meetings.

This investigation was granted ethical approval by the University of Strathclyde Ethics Committee and your participation is entirely voluntary. I hope you will be willing to participate in this piece of research and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have. My contact details are linda.buchan@strath.ac.uk.

Many thanks in anticipation of your support.

Linda Buchan

Doctoral Researcher

Participant Consent Form

Leadership Work in Health and Social Care Partnership

Researcher: Linda Buchan, PhD Student, MA (Cantab)

I confirm that I have read and understood the participant information sheet for the above project and the researcher has answered any queries to my satisfaction.

- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time, up to October 2017, without having to give a reason and without any consequences. If I exercise my right to withdraw and I don't want my data to be used, any data collected from me will be destroyed.
- I understand that I can withdraw from the study any personal data (i.e. data which identify me personally) at any time.
- I understand that anonymised data (i.e. data which do not identify me personally) cannot be withdrawn once they have been included in the study.
- I understand that any information recorded in the investigation will remain confidential and no information that identifies me will be made publicly available.
- I consent to be a participant in the project.

Name of Participant:

Signature of Participant:

Date:

Appendix 3 – Situation One: Sources of empirical material

Meetings	30th November 2016	Adult LT	3 hours
	21st December 2016	Adult LT	3 hours
	8th February 2017	SMT	5 hours
	1st March 2017	Adult LT	4 hours
	29th March 2017	Adult LT	3.5 hours
	20th April 2017	Focus group 1	2 hours
	3rd May 2017	Focus group 2	2 hours
	8th June 2017	Focus group 3	2 hours
Individual conversations	30th November 2016	Charles, Head of Adult Services	15 minutes
	8th May 2017	Tom, Head of Homelessness Services	10 minutes (telephone)
	8th June 2017	Andy, Service Manager	30 minutes
	27th June 2017	Chloe, Head of OD	1 hour
	29th June 2017	Natalie, Chief Officer (Strategy & Planning)	1 hour
	15th August 2017	Chloe, Head of OD	30 minutes (telephone)
Documents	August 2016	Strategic Review: Responding Effectively to Adults with Multiple and Complex Needs	
	September 2016	Report to SMT	
	November 2016	Overview of literature on Adults with Multiple and Complex Needs	
	November 2016	Notes from Complex Needs Development Session	
	February 2017	Terms of Reference	
	April 2017	Agenda for Focus Group 1	
	April 2017	Case study slides	
	April 2017	Minutes of Focus Group 1	
	May 2017	Multiagency Hub Discussion Paper	
	May 2017	Minutes of Focus Group 2	
	June 2017	Agenda for Focus Group 3	
	June 2017	Complex Needs Case Review	
	June 2017	Report on Trauma-informed Approach	
	June 2017	Minutes of Focus Group 3	
	July 2017	Agenda for Focus Group 4	
	July 2017	Minutes of Focus Group 4	
	September 2017	Report to SMT	

Appendix 4 – Situation Two: Sources of empirical material

Meetings	16th November 2016	Adult LT	3 hours
	30th November 2016	Adult LT	3 hours
	21st December 2016	Adult LT	3 hours
	11th January 2017	SMT	3.5 hours
	18th January 2017	Adult LT	3 hours
	25th January 2017	Stuart, Chloe and Chris	1 hour
	1st February 2017	Adult LT	3 hours
	8th February 2017	SMT	5 hours
	23rd February 2017	Mental Health Strategy Group 1	3 hours
	1st March 2017	Adult LT	4 hours
	29th March 2017	Adult LT	3.5 hours
	30th March 2017	Mental Health Strategy Group 2	3 hours
	26th May 2017	Mental Health Strategy Group 3	2.5 hours
	28th June 2017	Mental Health Strategy Group 4	1.5 hours
Individual conversations	25th October 2016	Stuart	1 hour
	24th November 2016	Chloe	1 hour
	5th December 2016	Chris	1.25 hours
	25th January 2017	Stuart	1 hour
	1st February 2017	Jane	1.75 hours
	6th February 2017	Chloe	1 hour
	23rd February 2017	Jane	10 minutes
	8th March 2017	Charles	1.25 hours
	30th March 2017	James	50 minutes
Documents	November 2016	Five-Year Forward View v.3	
	December 2016	Five-Year Forward View v.4	
	January 2017	Slides from Staff Event	
	January 2017	Email notes from Staff Event	
	January 2017	Slides for SMT on emerging strategy	
	January 2017	TOR Programme Board v.1	
	February 2017	Five-Year Forward View v.5	
	February 2017	TOR Programme Board v 0.1i	
	February 2017	Minutes of MHSG 1	
	March 2017	TOR Programme Board v.0.4	
	April 2017	Minutes of MHSG 2	
	May 2017	Report to HSCP Chief Officers with TOR for Programme Board	
	May 2017	Agenda of MHSG 3	
	May 2017	Minutes of MHSG 3	
	May 2017	TOR – Unscheduled Care	
	May 2017	TOR – Unscheduled Care Crisis subgroup	

	May 2017	TOR – Bed Modelling	
	May 2017	TOR – Community Mental Health Teams	
	May 2017	TOR - Rehabilitation Service	
	June 2017	Agenda for MHSG 4	
	June 2017	Paper outlining engagement strategy	
	June 2017	Minutes of MHSG 4	
	January 2018	Covering report to IJB for Five-Year Forward View	
	January 2018	Five-Year Forward View v.6 Five-Year Forward View v.7	

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