Investigating the Impact of Leadership Development on the Formation of Public Sector Leader Identities.

by

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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September 2021

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research has been the culmination of much-valued support, guidance and knowledge from several outstanding individuals who parted generously with their time and energy to enrich this research. I would like to take the opportunity to recognize their role in this research and extend my gratitude because, without them, my thesis journey would have remained incomplete and meaningless.

First and foremost, to my exceptional supervisors, Dr Karl Löfgren and Professor Brad Jackson, for their unrelenting encouragement in my thesis journey. Thank you, Karl, for sowing the research seed as my Master's thesis supervisor in a not-so-distant past and then as my PhD supervisor for teaching me the craft, as it were. Many thanks, Brad, for selflessly standing by me with utmost conviction and always believing in me, even when I doubted myself. You have been the voice of reason and wisdom in my research journey and will always inspire me in my future research endeavours. Karl and Brad, I cannot thank you both enough.

To the senior public service officials and leadership development experts at the Leadership Development Centre, I thank you for generously contributing your valuable time and energy to inform this case study. It has been immensely invigorating and insightful to work with you all. Most importantly, I sincerely thank you for the highest level of integrity and honesty you extended towards this research.

To my research participants, I am obliged and honoured by the trust and credence you entrusted me with as a researcher. This research would not have been possible without the rich information and data you freely shared during interviews and discussions. I am deeply humbled by the highest professionalism and spirit of public service you displayed during our meetings.

On a more personal level, your stories have deeply influenced me and stirred a more profound respect for you as leaders.

Thank you also to Madeleine Collinge for providing editing services for this dissertation.

Last but not least, to my beloved husband − I am grateful for your kindness and understanding at all times. It is only your unconditional love and unquestionable support during all these long and trying years that has made my research endeavour a positive reality. To my two wonderful boys − looking at you growing up into sensible, bright kids, full of energy, curiosity, laughter, and a real passion for fun and sports has made my research journey ever so enjoyable. It has made it all so worthwhile in the end.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the role of leadership development in forming a leader identity in public sector leaders. It investigates the perceived impacts on public sector leaders attending a leadership development program resulting in identity work practices. The main focus of this case study was the leadership development experiences and interpretations of public sector leaders. A leadership development program called Leadership in Practice delivered by New Zealand's Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission to senior public sector leaders was used as a background and context for grounding my investigations. Research participants comprised 16 senior leaders from across the New Zealand public sector. This research was conducted using semi-structured interviews as the qualitative research method. The research data was collected, coded, analysed and thematically grouped using interpretive interactionism. By taking an interpretive approach, I give voice to the experiences and interpretations of these research participants.

Leadership development and its various forms of interpretations in organisational studies continue to command attention about senior officials' leadership performance outcomes in leadership roles across both the public and private sectors. However, empirical research exploring the perceived impacts of this organizationally driven socialisation process on leaders remains sparse across mainstream leadership research, particularly within public sector leadership research.

This study follows the tradition of organisation studies which theorise identity formation as a continuous process of becoming rather than being. It presents a view of leader identity formation as a self-regulated process undertaken by public sector leaders over an extended period. It argues that undertaking leadership development training is vital for public sector leaders; however, it becomes more relevant during specific critical periods throughout their

career trajectory across the public sector. I contribute to leadership development and broader leadership research by proposing a new framework called 'leader identity formation framework' comprising four distinct phases – Inception, Initiation, Recognition and Rebellion. In conclusion, I offer a range of theoretical and practical implications for leadership development and leader identity research, which could help inform future research in public sector leadership.

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Identifying emerging organisational leaders and facilitating their leader development is paramount for maintaining sound organisational leadership across time (Groves, 2007). Leader development and leadership development and its various forms of interpretations in organisational studies continue to command attention as a central influencing medium to address senior officials' leadership performance outcomes in leadership roles across both the public and private sectors. However, empirical research exploring the perceived impacts of this organizationally driven socialisation process on leaders, with its strong undertones of power, politics, control, conformity and legitimacy, has received limited attention in mainstream leadership research, and in particular within public sector leadership research (Avolio, Richard, Hannah, Walumba, & Chan, 2009; Mabey, 2013; Bolden & Gosling, 2006; Jackson and Parry, 2008; Mabey & Finch-Lees, 2008).

Arguably, recent public leadership studies indicate that attendance at leadership development programmes does affect a variety of outcomes such as knowledge and skills, organisational outcomes, and benefits on-the-job behaviours (Hartley, 2018; Jackson, Firtko, & Edenborough, 2007). However, there is very little insight into the leader identity formation processes for leaders attending these leadership development programmes. In other words, the experiences of participants undertaking leadership development are seldom recorded or analysed about the undertaken identity work. Also, not all individuals attending the leadership development training develop into leaders uniformly so that other characteristics could predict leader efficacy and identity. Responding to these ideas, this thesis investigates the role of leader development for public sector leaders about the identity work undertaken. Secondly, it explores the leader identity formation processes relevant to public sector leaders to form their leader identity.

1.2 Public sector organisations

The unique features of public sector organizations have been largely explored (Parikh & Bhatnagar, 2017), including significant differences in the ownership and funding model with greater reliance of managers in the public sector on political control mechanisms (Perry & Rainey, 1988). Second, in some instances, the public sector has been associated with nonprofit services, given its aim of social amelioration and the absence of profits as a performance measure (Rainey, 2003). However, public sector organizations stand out because of the far lesser flexibility and much greater public scrutiny and a stronger relationship with political or government authorities (Lachman, 1985). Despite the differences, the public sector is not immune to the new imperatives, which mandate a growing need to improve technology, improve quality of outputs and reduce costs.

Parikh and Bhatnagar (2017) note that this "trend" brings political influence, public scrutiny, and market dynamics all together as control mechanisms for the public sector organizations, creating a significant need for exploring their implications. Especially, on the public sector leaders. These conditions lead to several contradictory concerns experienced more commonly within the public sector organizations − responding to both stable and turbulent environments; exploring and exploiting knowledge; being tightly and loosely coupled; avoiding decision failures and learning from their mistakes; making radical changes and making routine changes (Bryson, Boal & Rainey, 2008).

1.3 Public sector leaders

Public sector leaders are first and foremost public servants. Public service leaders − senior civil servants who lead and improve primary government functions and are at the heart of government effectiveness, are the focus of this thesis. The word senior is used across the thesis to denote rank and does not refer to age or seniority in terms of career or tenure length. They

translate political directions into policies and programmes that keep citizens healthy, safe and economically productive. To do so, they need to have both the right skills and the institutional support to deploy them effectively.

Public servants seldom receive the opportunity to fulfil their development need by undertaking leadership development training − providing them with the relevant tools and techniques to assist them in their role as a leader. Public servants in these roles often remain unaware of the need to undertake good leadership development, and primarily appear driven by an intrinsic need to conform. Yet, conformity and its effects are arguably significant as resistance in contemporary organisations (Collinson, 2017). Contemporary public sector leadership practice appears to continue to uphold an image of leaders, which in the past has elevated the stature of public sector leaders over public servants and downplays the role of leadership development for public servants in senior leadership roles.

A higher level of complexity associated with the public sector and the relatively lower numbers of experienced public sector leaders who could easily be mobilised to replenish the small resource pool of senior public sector leaders paints a problematic picture for public service overall. A common approach adopted by organisations to address these problems is to refocus their attention towards formal leadership development programmes in a concerted effort to enhance leaders' knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) (Day, 2000). However, the prescriptive nature of the leadership development discourses synthesised by consulting firms specialising in providing popular leadership development training courses aimed at up-skilling leaders presents an interesting impression but, more importantly, little empirical evidence to address the case.

Responsibilities and accountabilities associated with public sector leadership roles remain grounded in an outcome and performance-based (Holton & Naquin, 2000) functionalist discourse (Swanson, 2001), which only touches lightly on the emotional and physical well-being of public servants transitioning into leadership roles. These organisational expectations sometimes contradict leadership development outcomes, resulting in failures. In saying so, the proximity of this transition point for a non-leader to become a leader (Ibarra, 1999) across their entire development trajectory becomes critical. This is mainly because individuals in these leadership roles might be less furnished to withstand the leadership challenges and pressures. Therefore, they could become targets of often perceived ill-effects of their organisation's poor judgment and a presumptive stance taken towards leadership outcomes within the public sector.

One set of difficulties proposed has to do with what Brunner (1997) calls "contextual complexity" (p. 219). Similarly, Van Wart (2003) suggests that while there are significant similarities among leaders that are generally agreed upon (for instance, they have followers and affect the group's direction), the differences among public sector leaders are from a research perspective far more significant and more challenging. For example, the leader of paid employees and volunteers have very different jobs (Van Wart, 2003). Issues of contextual complexity apply to a mission, organisational and environmental culture, structure, types of problems, types of opportunities, levels of discretion (Baliga & Hunt, 1988), and a host of other critically important areas.

Attention towards public servants' emotional and physical well-being in these public sector leadership roles becomes essential, especially within a constantly shifting landscape − new government, new priorities, and new outcomes. Within the broader leadership development literature, these two constructs − leader efficacy (Hannah, Avolio, Walumbwa, & Chan, 2012) and leader identity (Day & Harrison, 2007) − therefore stand as essential drivers

to subsequent leadership outcomes because they are proposed to predict leadership performance and effectiveness, respectively, in leadership development contexts. Carroll and Levy (2010) have noted the difficulty faced by leadership development participants to move from their default identity as a manager to an emergent leader identity, noting particularly the perceived ambiguous qualities of the latter concept.

The conceptualisation of public sector leadership in this thesis focuses on public officials working for the government and public services (Hartley, 2018). Many current accounts of leadership studies appear to take too lightly, if they treat it at all, the insecurity, anxiety and ambiguity in managers' lives. Cooper (1999), for example, argues that the social worlds in which leaders work is too complex and leaders themselves too multifarious. The result is texts, lectures and training courses replete with 'standard accounts' of leadership, models, characteristics, standards and competencies that do not reflect the huge diversity of 'lived experience' of managerial life in all its settings. These so-called 'standard accounts' appear to help construct worlds, present norms of managerial behaviour that overlook the extent to which the world leaders inhabit is a human one, "whose structure, articulation and very existence are functions of human agency" (Cooper, 1999, p. 58).

Mainstream leadership theory appears dense and clouded with personality and behaviour-based approaches towards leadership development, making little contribution to leadership development theory and research (Day, Fleenor, Atwater, Sturm, & McKee, 2014). First, linking personality to leadership, which is conceptualised in terms of traits (House, 1996) as enduring dispositional tendencies, is questioned for its relevance for studying development as change. Secondly, the behavioural approach that stems from learning certain leadership behaviours involves providing training in proven methods to solve known problems.

A juxtaposition of leadership development versus leader development outcomes about role occupancy for public servants creates a need to delineate the differences and distinctness within the broader organisational development context. There is, at best, a recognition of the developmental needs associated with these about the creation of social capital versus human capital (Iles and Preece, 2006). Although this helps to underscore the differences between leader and leadership roles, there seems to be little insight into how public servants in these roles associate leadership role occupancy with leader identity processes.

Challenges facing contemporary leaders tend to be too complex and ill-defined to be addressed through short-term training interventions. Therefore, understanding the leadership development outcomes becomes critical to informing our understanding of the processes that could affect leadership development training (Day et al., 2014). Further, the perceived impacts of this prescriptive discourse on leaders remain less identifiable. There remains much debate about how identities come to be formed from being socially constructed (Carroll & Levy, 2008) and crafted (Alvesson, 2003) to being multiple selves (Kondo, 1990). What role does leader development play in the process of leader identity formation for public sector leaders? How is a leader identity formed for a public sector leader?

1.4 The formal statement of the research question

My primary research question investigates the role of leader development in helping public sector leaders form their leader identity. In this case study, I am not evaluating a particular leadership development programme or training course. Mainly, I wish to understand how public sector leaders within New Zealand form a leader identity by attending a leadership development programme. The primary focus here is the relationship between leader development and leader identity formation processes for leaders. For instance, what does undertaking leader development mean for leaders regarding affecting their leader identity

within a public sector context? Which leader development experiences might become particularly pertinent to these leaders in forming a leader identity?

PRIMARY RESEARCH QUESTION

RQb: What is the role of leader development in forming a leader identity?

The secondary research question investigates the core processes, contingent factors and relevant antecedent conditions that may need consideration in leader identity formation for public sector leaders. What does forming a leader identity mean for public sector leaders? What aspects of forming a leader identity are relevant for public sector leaders?

SECONDARY RESEARCH QUESTION

RQa: How do public sector leaders form a leader identity?

To a certain degree, the secondary research questions aim to test the theoretical assumptions that identity work results in positive identity transitions, reducing identity conflict and protecting against negative emotions (Humphreys & Brown, 2002; Thornborrow & Brown, 2009; Wright, Nyberg, & Grant, 2012).

In this case study, I have pursued three lines of inquiry to answer the research questions. I have called these Leader Identity Query (LIQ) as below:

1. LIQ1: Public sector leadership career pathways
2. LIQ2: Leader development within the public service
3. LIQ3: Role of leader development towards identity formation

I propose to answer the above stated primary and secondary research questions by linking these to three lines of enquiry that I have used in my investigations as outlined below.

Table 1. 1: Research questions and Leader Identity Query

Research questions	**Leader Identity Query (LIQ)**
Primary research question: What is the role of leader development in forming a leader identity?	LIQ1: Public sector leadership career pathways. LIQ2: Leader development within the public service
Secondary research question: What is the role of leader development in forming a leader identity?	LIQ3: Role of leader development towards leader identity formation

1.5 Research aim, purpose and justification

Despite the significant advances in understanding leadership development made over the past 25 years, the leader development field is relatively immature (Day et al., 2014). A plausible explanation for this state of affairs remains elusive. Researchers have called attention to a lack of empirical nature in the field that adequately accounts for leader development's longitudinal nature (Day, 2011; Riggio & Mumford, 2011). Although leader identity has generated much

interest among leadership researchers (e.g. Day & Dragoni, 2015; Miscenko et al., 2017; Van Knippenberg, 2011a), few studies have attempted to undertake a processual view of leader identity development programmes using qualitative methods, the exception being studies by Andersson (2012) and Nicholson and Carroll (2013). Another study by Day and Sin (2011) has assessed leader identity's conceptualisation as a time-varying covariate of effectiveness as a leader. In my case study, I respond to this research call to more fully account for the role of leader development in developing leaders, which is more commonly referred to as leadership development within the public sector. As a starting reference, I use Kondo's (1990) identity definition, which contends that actors should be seen as multiple selves whose lives are shot through with contradictions and creative tensions, suggesting that selves are never fixed, coherent, seamless, bounded or whole; instead, they have crafted selves not least through paradox and irony. In this case study, I investigate the influence of leader development on leader identity formation for public sector leaders focusing on the relationship between leader development with identity regulation and identity work, which are the central tenets of my research. Secondly, I consider the processes that are relevant to public sector leaders to form a leader identity.

Leadership development has emerged as an active field of theory building and research. It provides a more scientific and evidence-based foundation to augment the topic's long-standing practitioner interest (Day et al., 2014). There is widespread acceptance of leadership development as different from the broader field of leadership theory and research, spans more than a century (Avolio et al., 2009). However, as noted by Day et al. (2014), there is a relatively short history of rigorous scholarly theory and research on leader and leadership development topics. It is also critical to understand the differences between leader development and leadership development because there appears to be a "widespread misperception that if the field could just identify and agree on the correct leadership theory, then the development piece

would inevitably follow" (Day et al. 2014, p. 64). Leader development focuses on developing individual leaders, whereas leadership development focuses on a process of growth that inherently involves multiple individuals (e.g., leaders and followers or among peers in a self-managed work team) (Day et al., 2014).

Recent research on leadership development suggests the prescriptive nature of leadership development practices can, in some cases, have unexpected effects on leaders, triggering a paradigm shift in their subjective positions, resulting in ambiguities, internal struggles and dissonance (Carroll & Levy, 2010). This presents a case to suggest that the leader development programme's content could prompt participants to engage in identity work (Alvesson & Wilmott, 2002). Others propose that leader development could also be a driver in such cases to motivate a leader identity change such that in some instances, it unfolds into a process. The resultant leader development programme could then present a new set of identity meanings, motivating participants to re-construct their currently held sense of leader identity. This then manifests in changing the strength of their leader identity or a complete identity change. Receiving opportunities to practice leadership skills further strengthens an individual's self-perception as a leader and further motivates leader identity change (Miscenko et al., 2017).

Bringing identity into leader development research becomes vital to gain insight into the leader development process (Day, Harrison, & Halpin, 2009). Leader identity, which is the product of the extent to which someone thinks of herself or himself as a leader (Miscenko et al., 2017), is subject to change in a dynamic manner under the influence of experiences and structured interventions across time as a result of changes in leadership skills. This research draws on self-perception theory (Bem, 1972), whereby individuals infer about their identity from perceptions of their behaviour. Identity is usually regarded as an individual's self-perception (e.g., ethnicity, subculture), while roles are the institutionalised attributes others

ascribe to the individual (such as job descriptions). And yet, they both share the feature that they are based on 'differences' to other roles and identities. This represents the theoretical underpinnings for my case study in getting to the core leader identity formation processes for public sector leaders attending a leader development programme.

Recently, there has been a shift in focus associated with leadership development broadly defined away from leadership research and understanding and enhancing developmental processes (Day et al., 2009). My research thesis follows this tradition by focusing on leader development in the context of ongoing adult development; it draws from public sector leadership development theory and research and infers from the dominant public sector leadership literature only where relevant. Secondly, by undertaking a case study approach, I focus on the processual view presented in this thesis by bringing attention to how leaders initiate a change, transition and finally form a stable and complete leader identity over time. In my case study, I focus on the possible processes associated with leader identity formation for public sector leaders, which could be inferred as a direct outcome of leader development. I present antecedents that are more likely to predict leader identity formation processes in public sector leaders. A within-person design used in the thesis helps advance our understanding of leader identity formation's underlying processes, given the dynamic nature of leader development (Shipp & Cole, 2015).

1.6 Research context

Extant literature has debunked the leader-centric narrative to shift focus towards a shared or distributed leadership model. Jackson (2019) makes a most persuasive case for a place-based approach which inevitably “opens up critically important and complex governance questions” that have to be considered alongside leadership issues (Imperial et al. 2019). This supports and informs my research stance placing context “centre-stage”, given that researching leadership is

an inherently contextual performance (Iszatt-White, 2011). In this respect, I align with these proposed views that place can act as an important strategic resource for leadership in building collective identity, purpose and strategy and so is foregrounded as a primary concern for my research. But also recognising its "intractable and confused qualities", I would like to consider place in my research as a "incorrigible philosophical problem" because it fundamentally structures human experience (Jackson, 2019).

Although this research was primarily undertaken from 2016 to 2019, recent uncertain events in 2020 associated with COVID-19 have brought into greater relevance my research topic. These trying times have brought about a tsunami of changes in New Zealand, including within the public service, suggesting there is room to believe that even in the existing model, there continue to emerge signs of collaborative innovation directed towards outcomes. For instance, in New Zealand, it resurfaced the continued attention on leaders as key in enacting sudden changes to the policy by effectively mobilising readiness and execution even before formal changes to policy can be implemented. Therefore, it has become even more important to focus on the leader development and training resources for these civil servants to be furnished in their leadership roles to implement swift action and adapt to changing unstable circumstances. While important differences remain between public and private sector organizations, in New Zealand in particular, significant changes have swept the management of public sector organizations, apparently to narrow down the divide (such as the NPM model).

1.6.1 New Zealand public sector reforms and New Public Management (NPM)

Since the 1970s and 1980s, New Zealand, Australia, Britain, Canada and the United States have devoted enormous resources to a 'wave of reform' called 'new public management' (NPM) (Ryan, 2012), aimed at reforming their public sectors and the creation of new systems of governing. This was a collection of reformative ideas and theories primarily based on

economic and private sector management theories (Hood, 1991). New Zealand received much attention and was regarded as a world leader in constructing NPM. New Zealand, public sector reforms have been widely seen as sector reforms (Lodge & Gill, 2011) in terms of their content and their extent (Aberbach and Christensen, 2001; Boston, 1987, 1992a, 1992b; Boston, Martin, Pallot, & Walsh, 1996; Goldfinch, 1998; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017). Prominent examples cited include the contractual arrangements between department chief executives and the State Services Commission (SSC), now renamed Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission (2020), the adoption of an output/outcome split in performance management, as well as the extensive disaggregation of activities (including the split between policy and delivery) to allow for focus and specialisation. More recent research on agency autonomy has brought attention to the multifaceted concept in the New Zealand agency context, which does not necessarily mean a vertical connection to the responsible ministry of the board (Löfgren, Macaulay, Berman & Plimmer, 2018).

It is noted that New Zealand's vibrant and radical government restructuring culture has received much attention from national and international observers. However, this characteristic habit of "ongoing tinkering" with the machinery of government has also raised the stature of New Zealand as a "poster child" for the latest paradigm in administrative reforms, given its frequent churn in the machinery of government changes (Donadelli & Lodge, 2019). According to Yui and Gregory (2018), New Zealand witnessed approximately 259 departmental restructurings between the 1960s and 1997. In contrast, Davis and colleagues noted that there were 247 restructurings in Australia (involving 127 creations and 120 abolitions), 96 in Canada (46 creations and 50 abolitions) and 100 in the United Kingdom (55 creations and 45 abolitions) (Davis et al., 1999).

New Zealand's reform experience has been widely reviewed and noted in *The Schick Report* (Schick, 1998) on the extensive and coherent nature of the public sector reforms along with raising some concerns, namely, the need for more central direction and maintaining collaborative capacity in the light of government unbundling. In response to these concerns and criticisms regarding standards of behaviour in the public sector, the "Review of the Centre" was commissioned by the Labour Government in 2001. This review advocated better-integrated service delivery and a rethinking of organisational culture (Lodge & Gill, 2011). While on the one hand, economics was proposed by some as a significant influence for these reforms (Ryan, 2012), Dunleavy et al. (2006) suggest that New Zealand's initial reforms directly contributed to its poor relative economic performance (until the election of the Labour government in 1999).

Boston and Eichbaum (2007) suggest that the 1999 Labour manifesto marked a distinct shift from Phase 1 to Phase 2 public management reform, underpinned by a social-democratic rather than a neoliberal philosophy. The change was also noted towards a far more politically pragmatic line of justification as a move away from the initial coherent and consistent basis in which questions about Machinery of Government were discussed (Scott, 2001). These radical public sector reforms in New Zealand were driven not only by ministerial desires to control the bureaucracy (Boston, 1992b) but also as part of a solution to high fiscal deficits, significant debt (including substantial unfunded liabilities) and a highly protectionist economy with a long history of slow economic growth (Scott, Bushnell, & Sallee, 1990).

Focus on the competency dimension of the Public Service Bargain[1] (PSB) brought forward some critical differences in terms of the age of NPM and the age of post-NPM.

[1] Public Service Bargains (PSBs) are defined as the explicit and implicit rules and understandings regarding duties and expectations between public servants and the broader political system (Hood and Lodge, 2006).

Whereas an NPM-style PSB emphasises the importance of delivery within any organisation (justified by the idea of focus and specialisation), the underlying competency ideas represented in the post-NPM literature stress the importance of boundary-spanning collaboration. Public services were said to require complex solutions to complex problems by drawing on highly complex and quickly developing technology offerings. Therefore, competency became the knowledge to access and bring together expertise (Lodge & Gill, 2011). Similarly, there was a growing emphasis on ethics and rules, which replaced an NPM emphasis on setting managers free to manage (Lodge & Gill, 2011). More recently, it has been proposed that New Zealand could arguably be caught up in its own "policy frenzy of hyper-innovation" in which actors 'overcorrect' in view of perceived shortcomings and failures of existing arrangements (Donadelli & Lodge, 2019). What is less commonly understood is the impacts on public sector leaders of this machinery of government reforms which are such a constant feature in New Zealand politics.

The so-called 'New Zealand model of public management' (Boston et al., 1996), and its robust marketisation agenda with a heavy reliance on privatisation, corporatisation and contracting out, was shaped by the economic forces that were impacting New Zealand at the time (Ryan, 2012). Some managerial components were also included, but the model was primarily derived from public choice and principal/agent theories (Boston et al., 1996; cf. Ryan 2012; Scott, 2001). The New Zealand model was once praised for its intellectual coherence (Schick, 1998), but enacted public management during 2011 in New Zealand appeared to be less like a singular, universal system (Duncan & Chapman, 2010; Lodge and Gill, 2011). Ryan (2012) argues that it instead comprised an eclectic range of practices, some of which had arrived through disjointed and ad hoc incrementalism, even if the formal framework embedded in the governing legislation seemed to assume a universal reality.

Practices of governing and public management that are constituted in any jurisdiction are a product of the particular mix of conditions and factors applying at the time (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2004). One example is the dynamic relationship between politics and public management, the impact on the latter being an illustration of the introduction in New Zealand from 1996 of the Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) electoral system (Ryan, 2012). Previously used to dealing with single ministers, public officials needed to find new ways of dealing with increased levels of complexity and ambiguity in their relationships with the executive's political arm.

As the first decade of the 21st century has come to a close, some argue that it was not quite the “pure” NPM most assumed (Lodge & Gill, 2011, p. 149) and yet the New Zealand model of public management (Boston et al., 1996) did bring several benefits that could and should be retained (Ryan, 2012). Even though public management in theory and practice tends to think in singular, universal models, it has been argued that multiple realities and mixed methods ontological and methodological pluralism (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2009; Blaikie, 1993) may be more appropriate to governing in Aotearoa/New Zealand in the 21st century (Ryan, 2012).

Lodge and Gill (2011) note that the diverse arguments put forward by the then State Services Commission (Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission), the events that led to changed understandings across PSBs, as well as the ideas underpinning the Crown Entities Act 2004, did not constitute a reversal of earlier reforms; instead, they built on existing reforms and moderated and diversified particular aspects of these reforms, leading to a more complex and diversified Machinery of Government that hardly constituted a paradigm. Therefore, they refute a new post-NPM paradigm's claims, suggesting that no one set of coherent and consistent administrative doctrines reigns in New Zealand (Lodge & Gill, 2011).

New Zealand prides itself on the extent of devolution of operational authority to chief executives. Still, significant reforms or new sector-wide initiatives are almost always introduced top-down and driven by the central agencies. However, it is noted that official discourse, measured by the contents of major agency discussion and guidance documents and websites, contains very little on the socio-political approaches to public management (Ryan, 2012). As a result, there are pockets of innovation found in many places in the New Zealand state sector (Ryan et al., 2008). Innovation in work organisations and practice could depend on an organisation's culture and how managers manage (Ryan, 2012). It has been commonly perceived that a 'culture of busyness' runs through many public service organisations in New Zealand and that in the truest sense possible many middle and senior managers seem to work under conditions of high work intensity and constant disruption with little space or appetite for innovation in such settings.

The original designers hoped their public management model would free up and enable public managers while making them accountable, but it has not turned out that way (Ryan, 2012). As noted by Lodge & Gill (2011), elements of its design and implementation in the past few years have emphasised the control components of the model to the point where it is claimed that compliance now plays a massive role in an everyday organisational practice that has stifled innovation in all but the most exceptional cases in New Zealand as well as the issue of vertical, single-organisation accountability (see Boston and Gill, 2018).

Outcomes in New Zealand's central government have had a chequered history (Ryan, 2012). 'Managing for outcomes', introduced in 2001, went missing in action as far as central agencies were concerned (Gill, 2008). Nonetheless, some agencies – Ministries of Social Development, Health, Education and Justice, the Departments of Corrections and Conservation, and Te Puni Kokiri, continued to develop the idea and showed definite signs of

outcome-oriented internal cultures (Lodge & Gill, 2011; Ryan, 2012). Another initiative from the centre – Performance Improvement Framework – could not provide enough clarity to suggest whether its focus on outcomes and outcomes themselves is embedded in the culture of the public sector. It was, however, noted that central leadership was needed to "scale up significantly" (Ryan, 2012).

Not surprisingly, it was noted (see Ryan, 2012), management styles tend towards command and control more than enablement, facilitation and transformation. Questions raised about this state of affairs have also enquired whether individual managers or chief executives have failed to manage themselves and their context. However, these have been discounted based on the explanation found in relationships public managers have with ministers. It is proposed, as Westminster officials, that senior managers are obliged to be responsive to their ministers, sometimes more than one. This creates a need for senior managers to manage upwards. However, the obligation to be responsive could shape the minister's officials' workload and the cultures of the organisation they manage. Sometimes, this could transpire into a working relationship of obedience rather than in a Westminster-defined partnership driving managers back to the rules and not conducive to building the capability required to serving beyond the predictable that Bourgon (2009) calls for (cf. Ryan, 2012).

The recently proposed 2019 reforms show a close connection to post-New Public Management (Donadelli & Lodge, 2019), more specifically, a reorganisation of accountability lines and operational activities; the extent of political control; the relationship between citizens and the public sector; and the nature of 'public service bargains.' A most noteworthy theme that emanates relates to political control over public sector organizations suggesting a movement towards a 're-politicization of public service delivery' (Reiter and Klenk, 2018,

p.10). The implications of this move on New Zealand public sector leaders are therefore even more worthy of exploration.

1.6.2 The leadership development program

I have used for my case study a leadership development programme for senior public sector leaders called Leadership in Practice (LiP), run by the Leadership Development Centre (LDC) in Wellington, New Zealand. I commenced empirical research work on 20 March 2018 by selecting LDC's Leadership in Practice (LiP) training programme as my case study. At the start of this research, the LiP programme 2018 was in its 13th year in the running, designed for the 56th cohort of senior leaders and had over 800 alumni across the New Zealand public service. LiP is a nine-month development programme for senior New Zealand public sector leaders, run by the Leadership Development Centre (LDC). LiP is mainly a facilitator-led program. This research's substantive focus is on 16 senior public sector leaders who attended a leadership development programme called Leadership in Practice (LiP) in different cohorts. LiP presented a unique vantage point to study the impact of leadership development on senior public sector leaders. This study offers views, interpretations and experiences of these 16 public service leaders about leader development during the nine months of their attendance at LiP. The leader development programme's role in reinforcing and supporting leader identity formation for these public sector leaders is also critically investigated. This study's relevance from an academic and practitioner perspective is that this case study uses a centrally led leader development programme in New Zealand to investigate leader identity formation for senior public service leaders employed within the New Zealand public service.

In undertaking this research, much consideration was given to the participant selection process and the organisation setting of the agency or group delivering the leadership development programme, in this case, the LDC. The critical criteria for selecting an LDC-led

leadership development programme was LDC's close alliance with the Commission to share the intentions and drivers for developing leaders for New Zealand public service and its ability to maintain a purposeful distinctness, a branded business unit. The primary rationale for selecting LiP was its design which was structured to support senior public sector leaders whose managers have identified to develop more significant cognitive and behavioural self-awareness and a better understanding of how this impacts leadership effectiveness. The programme is recommended for progressing leadership development planning and learning how to put knowledge into action. Coaches on the programme support and challenge attendees to reflect on their leadership style and consider the behaviours and attitudes hindering their success as leaders. There is also a strong focus on development planning, including individual coaching and peer learning to help develop and action development goals. LiP is broken up into four parts: a two-hour kick-off session, a four-day residential (line-in); nine months of action learning; and one-on-one coaching. All these aspects contributed to selecting LiP for this case study.

The Leadership Development Centre (LDC) is a branded business unit within Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission, New Zealand. LDC is the primary delivery vehicle for sector-wide leadership development. As part of the Commission, LDC has a strong focus on progressing the public services reform programme by ensuring that future public service leaders are skilled in working together towards making New Zealanders' lives better.[2] It is also worth mentioning here briefly the Public Services Commission's role as the central lead agency responsible for developing leadership and talent within the New Zealand public service. It leads

[2] Http:www.ldc.govt.nz/about-us/

and champions the leadership and talent programme for New Zealand's Public Service. As a business unit within Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission, LDC is the primary delivery vehicle for sector-wide leadership development in New Zealand.

When this research commenced in 2015, the LDC was going through an organisational change because it was subsumed within the Commission. Before this period, it operated as an independent agency with an appointed CE and senior leaders supported by HR practitioners, qualified coaches and facilitators, health professionals and academics. Different types of leadership development training courses that the LDC imparted were closely examined to help select the most suitable training programme that would help answer the research question.

In its efforts to develop leaders within the public service, the LDC provides learning and development to chief executives and senior leadership teams, the HR/OD community, LDC's provider panel of experts, and the local and international academic community. Their work focuses on establishing a partnership role across agencies in the system to deliver a range of products, programmes and services, including research, assessments, programmes, workshops, masterclasses, toolkits, online resources, evaluation and assurance, and expert leadership advice. The LDC collaborates with agencies to build a common approach to leadership development, connect and share best practices, reduce duplication of effort and resources, and ensure consistent high quality.

The LDC delivers some core programmes and events to agencies across the sector that focus on developing leadership skills and future public service capabilities. This research focused on the LiP programme, and the participants interviewed were all attendees of this training programme. LiP is a nine-month development programme[3] for experienced senior

[3] https://www.ldc.govt.nz/programmes-and-events/leadership-in-practice/

leaders within the public service. The programme is run to support expert facilitators who work with the attendees in imparting the training course. The focus throughout the nine months is on developing self-awareness among the attendees to develop their "mindset and skills" to enhance their "personal leadership effectiveness and impacts".

1.6.3 New Zealand public service leadership model

In 2005, the State Services Commission (before its name change in 2020 to Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission) initiated a set of Development Goals for the State Services as part of its responsibilities for strengthening the centre. These were applied to departments, offices of Parliament and Crown entities and were revised annually. The overarching goal was to develop a system of world-class professional state services serving the government of the day and meeting the needs of New Zealanders, while the specific goals emphasised, among other things, networking through new technologies, system-wide coordination, responsiveness, service and trust[4]. These goals seem to provide a different set of considerations than the NPM model. These new goals referred to the spirit of service, while the public-choice theory-driven NPM reforms tended to emphasise competitiveness and utility-maximisation (Boston et al., 1996). Some noted this as a move towards Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission's strengthened coordination role within the state sector, thus contrasting with the back-seat position that it took in the reform era of the late 1980s and early 1990s (Chapman & Duncan, 2007).

Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission continues to be more proactive in developing the workforce, especially regarding the next generation of chief executives' development. To that effect, it instituted the Leadership Development Centre (LDC) as a

[4] https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/resources/sscer-speech-ipanz-30july13/

branded business unit within Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission, with LDC being the primary delivery vehicle for sector-wide leadership development. With its new statutory mandate, Duncan and Chapman (2010) note, Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission takes a much stronger role in promoting good employment practices in the state services, enhancing outcome-focused coordination among agencies, seeking to raise public trust in public services, and advancing standards of conduct and integrity based on a unifying sense of values. This has also been suggested to represent a shift away from a 'blind faith in the market' to supply the necessary skills, away from individualism and competition as drivers of accountability, and more substantial notions of collective ethics and quality service to the public; the goal being to raise trust in state services, which is implied, as it may have presumably been eroded by the competitive, market-driven model of earlier years (cf. Duncan & Chapman, 2010).

1.6.4 Better Public Services

Public sector performance in New Zealand is managed and coordinated by three core agencies: Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission, Treasury and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC). Of these three, Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission plays a critical role in appointing the agency and sector chief executives. The Better Public Services programme (BPS), which was launched in 2012, had been a crucial priority for the government to reform the public sector: delivering improved services and better results for New Zealanders while at the same time reducing cost and increasing efficiency. Under the BPS reform agenda, the legislative changes resulted in amendments to the State Sector Act 1988, Crown Entities Act 2004 and the Public Finance Act 1980. Attention to a shift in changing the thinking, culture and performance within the sector was a central theme. The legislative changes, especially those made under the State Sector Act 1988, were aided to strengthen the

leadership role for the Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commissioner and the chief executives of individual agencies.

Since its launch in 2012, the Better Public Services programme (BPS) has sought to provide an anchor for the public sector; the prescribed leadership model and associated language that has been presented in support of it has been seen to fluctuate, having evolved through often conflicting discursive practices by actors both within the public sector practice and broader academia. Since its implementation, the BPS programme provided a steady undercurrent for the New Zealand public sector with a clear and precise articulation of its goals and mission. By contrast, the definition of its authoritarian leadership model seems continuously proposed as managerialism for managing people to a top-down process contingent on senior leaders to one that seems to gather increasing momentum recently around leadership development by growing leadership and talent for building capability at the top. Some have tried to explain this position using an identity lens (Jog et al., 2016). While this identity paradox is perplexing to me, it needs further consideration and exploration in future research.

1.7 Research contribution

Overall, this thesis contributes to the existing literature in several important ways. First, it tracks the developmental processes associated with leader identity formation over nine months by empirically mapping the participants' narratives with the changes they experienced during their attendance at the leadership development programme. Although leader identity has generated much interest among leadership researchers (e.g. Day & Dragoni, 2015; Miscenko et al. 2017; Van Knippenberg, 2011), few studies have attempted to undertake a processual view of leader identity development programmes using qualitative methods, with the exception being studied by Andersson (2012) and Nicholson & Carroll (2013). Another study by Day and

Sin (2011) has assessed leader identity's conceptualisation as a time-varying covariate of effectiveness as a leader.

This thesis critically examines a perceived presumptive treatment of leader development, arguing the salience of leader development and public servants' training throughout their career trajectory across the public service. Secondly, it proposes a new theoretical framework − leader identity formation, which outlines the four phases that become relevant for public sector leaders as they form their leader identity: Inception, Initiation, Recognition and Rebellion. Arguably, the process of forming a leader identity as represented in this thesis neither follows a linear path nor does it map a steady, systematic growth pattern in leaders' performance outcomes. A leader could start and finish from and within any of these four phases throughout their leader development trajectory. There are several emergent contingent factors, supporting processes and incremental antecedent conditions that take relevance and, therefore, become critical in our understanding during each of these four phases of leader identity formation, none occurring in any specific order or priority. Therefore, based on this case study, I propose that only after completing all four phases does a leader form a distinct and stable leader identity.

1.8 Thesis outline

This thesis is divided into eight chapters. The logical sequencing of these chapters is structured across two main parts − Part 1 and Part 2. In Part 1, I contextualise the research question I propose to answer using this case study. It consists of three main chapters − Chapter 1 − Introduction, Chapter 2 − Literature review, and Chapter 3 − Analytical strategy. Chapter 1 introduces the reader to the research context and justifies undertaking this study. I also discuss the research question proposed, along with the aim and purpose of this study. Finally, I provide a brief outline of my contribution using this case study to the body of research in leadership and specifically to the topic of leader identity formation within the public service. Next, in

Chapter 2, I discuss the literature review I have undertaken to inform this study. Considering the rather vast body of knowledge comprising the extant literature in the leadership field, I have split this chapter into two four main areas: public sector leadership development, Adult learning, Identity construct, and Self-perception theory.

First, I surface studies relevant to the scope of public sector leadership development and leader development. Here, I am attentive to the treatment of leader development within the broader research area of leadership development and public sector leadership. Following this, I bring attention to the current state of research in adult learning and identity. Particularly in the case of the latter, a correlation is made between leader identity formation processes and studies in social psychology to help comprehend some of the perceived gaps, grey zones and deficit areas in the leadership development literature, which this case study recognises as critical to addressing to answer the research question. Chapter 3 identifies and outlines the analytical strategy employed in this case study. I begin first by explaining the theoretical framework in detail, emphasising the key drivers and reasons that make its use more suitable in my case study. Next, I clarify my ontological and epistemological stance, which informs the research paradigm I have chosen. Further, I discuss my research methodology and approach exercised in formulating my research project, including the research site, research context, sampling method, data collection, data analysis and coding technique, along with the ethical considerations that have been stringently followed throughout the case study.

Part 2 of this thesis comprises four chapters: Chapter 4 − Findings: Leader development, perceptions about public sector leader development are discussed; Chapter 5 − Findings: Leader identity formation and role of leader development; Chapter 6 − Discussion: Leader identity formation framework; Chapter 7 − Discussion: Leader identity and role occupancy; and Chapter 8 − Conclusion. Chapter 4 presents the findings that help understand the common

perceptions and connotations that research participants have assigned in this case study to leader development processes within the public sector. This view provides a powerful insight into public sector leaders' current approach and thinking about the state of affairs about leader development in New Zealand public service. In Chapter 5, I outline the primary influences of leader development on leaders that were perceived as most poignant to them in forming leader identities. This helps our understanding of the relevance of leader development approaches and methods in informing and supporting a leader to develop their leader identity. In Chapter 6, I propose a new framework called leader identity formation using this case study. Here, using a processual view, I outline the four main phases that were perceived as instrumental in informing the formation of a leader identity for research participants. The identity formation framework proposed in this study comprises four phases or quadrants: Inception, Initiation, Recognition and Rebellion. Each of these phases is further made up of specific key processes, which are discussed in detail.

Chapter 7 discusses the implications of the leader identity framework outlined in the previous chapter in understanding the leader identity construct for leaders within the New Zealand public sector. Finally, in the last chapter, Chapter 8, I provide the implied impacts of some of the findings from this case study in the area of leader development and the field of leadership, particularly the less-researched area of public sector leader identity. I note the main contributions and limitations of this case study, which might find some use to inform future research undertaken within a specialist area of leadership development and leader development against the broader context of the leadership literature, and in studies about leader identity formation mainly relevant to the public sector.

1.9 Summary

In this research, I focus on leader identity formation for public sector leaders in New Zealand and its relationship to leadership development, a relatively underexplored area in public sector organisations and leadership studies. I have conducted a qualitative analysis using interpretive interactionism to interview, code and analyse the data to understand the influence of a nine-month leadership development programme on the leader identity formation process for participants and the dynamic relationship between key antecedent conditions and the leader identity formation process. The present study employs a critically reflexive stance using self-perception theory (Bem, 1972).

In this thesis, I argue that skills-based approaches have deficits because they lack in capturing the complex nature of leader identity formation. Thus, I follow and position my view in recent theoretical work that conceptualises leader development as changes in leadership skills, behaviours and leader identity (Day et al., 2009; Lord & Hall, 2005; Miscenko et al., 2017). Unlike these authors, I investigate how leader identity formation occurs among participants in a leadership development programme. I propose that leader identity formation is a step towards becoming a leader, which depends on certain antecedent conditions that could be recreated and contextualised. One of the primary aims of this research is to understand that relationship better. I have based this approach on self-perception theory (Bem, 1972), which proposes that individuals draw inferences about their identity from perceptions of their behaviour. This theoretical framework is especially relevant to studying leader identity formation (Miscenko et al., 2017) because we cannot know who we are until we see what we do (Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016). Overall, this thesis contributes to the existing literature. It tracks the developmental processes associated with leader identity formation over nine months

by empirically mapping the participants' narratives with the changes they experienced due to their attendance at a leadership development programme.

In the next chapter, Chapter 2, I present relevant extant literature in public sector leadership, explicitly focusing on leader development, leadership development, adult learning and identity. I also bring to attention theoretical approaches in the context of the New Zealand public service.

CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this study, leader identity formation presents a useful theoretical lens to explore leader development in public sector leaders and provides the basis for organizing this chapter. First, I discuss the public sector leadership development research and the associated leader development approaches commonly in use. Here, the conceptualization and treatment which is predominantly adopted to address the development needs in leaders are discussed – training programmes, development techniques, competency frameworks, and coaching and mentoring. Next, the relevance of adult learning in informing leader development is examined. Although traditional forms of learning continue to dominate the learning activity and growth patterns in leaders, I examine whether these address the varied development needs of public sector leaders.

Extant literature in the field of adult education and adult learning suggests that learning takes form as a personal development process that is inter-linked to an individual's self-perception and informed by their self-identity; more likely to take place in informal settings on a continuum, encompassing a whole spectrum of learning and developmental stages and activities. Some of these could be most complex types of learning given the multitude of factors – context, intentional, or incidental as a result of accidental learning – which could be a secondary learning outcome encountered through a retrospective recognition that might occur at a later stage in the overall lifecycle stages of leader identity formation. In recent years, identity research has started to receive attention within the wider leadership field with linkages to social psychology theories and methods. Taking into consideration these theoretical frameworks, therefore, become relevant to my research because they help explore leader development for public sector leaders using an identity lens. Finally, I discuss this in the remaining sections of this chapter.

2.2 Public leadership

Scholarship on public leadership is fragmented (Vogel & Werkmeister, 2021) and has not yet arrived at a state of theoretical and conceptual coherence and integration (Crosby and Bryson 2018). For instance, other definitions of public leadership refer more generally to leadership in the public sector, which is distinguishable from other types of leadership by the purpose to create public value (Crosby and Bryson 2018). As such, public leadership is a "boundary-crossing process" (Getha-Taylor et al. 2011, i84) and also encompasses leadership in other, sometimes less formalized forms and structures of organizations and networks, such as political leadership, non-profit leadership, or network leadership (Getha-Taylor et al. 2011). In the debate on public leadership, the focus has been chiefly on different types of leadership behaviour such as transactional or transformational leadership (Vogel and Masal 2015; Jensen et al. 2019), distributed leadership (Bolden 2011; Jønsson et al. 2016), or leadership roles (Tummers and Knies 2016).

The fundamental question acknowledges as to whether, and if so how, researchers should account for the "public" in public leadership by developing specific theories, concepts, and measurements, or if they should instead draw on generic leadership approaches as applicable in any sector (Vogel & Werkmeister, 2021). Is public leadership genuine to the public sector, or does it merge into leadership as a generic concept? Vogel & Werkmeister (2021) argue that this issue has important implications for the field: If scholars insist that public leadership is conceptually and empirically distinct, they run the risk of succumbing to "public idiosyncrasy" and of being trapped in a disciplinary silo (Ospina 2017; Perry 2016). This would impede cross-fertilization with general leadership studies and decrease opportunities to learn from sector comparisons. However, if researchers lump together public and generic leadership, their theories, concepts, and measurements may fall short of grasping essential aspects, or even the

true nature, of public leadership (Getha-Taylor et al., 2011). Beyond fragmentation, the field also offers some points of agreement, such as public leadership is about social construction (t'Hart and Tummers 2019; Van Wart 2013a); more collective forms of leadership, such as shared or distributed leadership (Crosby and Bryson 2018; Ospina 2017; t'Hart and Tummers 2019).

Previous research provides evidence on how public leaders gradually differ from leaders in other sectors in their traits, behaviours, and roles (Andersen 2010; Hansen and Villadsen 2010; Hooijberg and Choi 2001). However, Vogel & Werkmeister (2021) argue that there is no prior knowledge on how public leaders differ from leaders in general at the more fundamental level of mental representations. Vogel & Werkmeister (2021) shed new light on this debate by proposing Implicit Leadership Theories (ILT); they "roam more freely through the disciplines" (Crosby and Bryson 2018, 1265), as has recently been called for.

Public leadership has often been about public sector leadership or public services leadership (Hartley, 2018). The finer differences between the two are critical to understanding, firstly, the framing of the research question, and, secondly, to understand the foundation for these fundamental differences. Research has been conducted to date in exploring how leadership can contribute to the wider public interest, for example, the common good (Crosby & Bryson, 2005) or the public realm (Kellerman & Webster, 2001), or its role in the creation of public value in wider society (Crosby & Bryson, 2018; Getha-Taylor, Holmes, Jacobson, Morse, & Sowa, 2011). There is a widespread view that public managers as policy experts have a duty to be involved in policy deliberation by placing their expertise in the service of the elected government - and by implication, the citizenry (Moore, 1995; Wilson, 1989). At the same time, other scholars see the separation as a useful fiction (Peters, 2001) and suggests it plays a legitimizing role. This perceived demarcation has been referred to as the "purple zone"

(Alford, Hartley, Yates and Hughes, 2016), representing where the 'red' of political activity overlaps with the 'blue' of administration (p. 752). However, Jackson (2019) argues that "questions of agency" are generally given lip service to and are quickly pushed aside by a persuasive pre-occupation with policy protocols and governance frameworks, as a consequence lending towards being "governance-heavy and leadership-light", with the reverse being the case for community organisation leaders

Much of the literature on public leadership focuses on those who have formal authority in government and public services (e.g. Brookes and Grint, 2010; Van Wart, 2013), such as the elected and appointed politicians at all government levels and public officials working for the government and public services (Hartley, 2018). Public leadership now includes administrative, political and civil leadership ('t Hart, 2014). Public leadership, therefore, is not solely about public-office holders (Hartley, 2018) but the wider public sphere (Habermas, 1962/1989). It is about the debate and the people who shape public matters and challenge values, decisions and activities in the market, the state and the civil society, and is relevant and open to all citizens (Benington, 2015; Bryson, Crosby, & Bloomberg, 2014; Sennett, 1977). Therefore, leadership may be in, with or against the state, and public leadership may come from the state, market and/or civil society (Hartley, 2018). In a related attempt, Vogel and Masal (2015) distinguished four generic approaches to public leadership: functionalist, behavioural, biographical and reformist.

In the burgeoning field of public leadership research, some scholars suggest that leadership in the public sector should account more for today's competing, ambiguous, and vague work environments and shift to more dynamic approaches by applying a paradoxical or ambidextrous lens (e.g., Murphy et al. 2017; Trong Tuan 2017). The ability to deal with paradoxes, ambiguity, and change is crucial for public leaders to meet the expectations and

requirements of both political and administrative leadership (Tripathi and Dixon, 2008). Backhaus et al. (2021) insist that it is critical to acknowledge the paradoxes inherent in public leadership roles (Murphy et al. 2017).

2.3 Public sector leadership

Public sector leadership emerged as an autonomous domain in the 1980s since its inception as a subfield within public administration. The definition of public sector leadership is therefore synonymous with administrative leadership defined by Van Wart & O'Farrell (2007) as "administrative leadership" in the public sector (p. 440). There are different theoretical schools of administrative leadership with particular foci: the main focus of management theory has been on leading for results; transactional leadership theory has been mainly concerned with leading followers; transformational leadership theory has focused on leading organizations; horizontal and collaborative leadership theory have centred on leading systems; finally ethical leadership theory has been devoted to leading with values (Helm, 2017; Van Wart & Dicke, 2008).

The new leadership dialogues took issue with traditional leadership theory as it was seen to be too hierarchical, heroic and power-centric; too disconnected from systems; too disconnected from ethical values; and too biased towards logical positivist methods (Van Wart, 2013). Finally, attention was needed for the internal distribution of power (Lawler, 2008) and for a more relational approach (Uhl-Bien, 2006). Within public sector leadership, while the political executive has experienced much centralization over the past decades, with leadership resources increasingly being concentrated with the chief executive, the 21st-century developments within the bureaucracies of many developed countries have rather been marked by dispersion of leadership roles. Another major development in the study of public sector leadership relates to the discovery of leaders and leadership among members of the front-line

public service, resulting in the ongoing paradigmatic shift toward dispersed leadership but not necessarily close to conceptions of shared leadership, while many conceptions of street-level leadership explicitly acknowledge that individual behaviour can make quite a difference, in terms of leadership and beyond (Helms, 2017).

Public agencies need to manage multiple tensions and competing demands from diverse stakeholders that need to be kept happy, ensuring political approval and effectiveness (Head & Alford, 2015). Secondly, job complexity coupled with traditions of hierarchical management and accountability is a serious issue (Zeier et al., 2018). Many organizational decisions rely on leaders working with and from diverse viewpoints with technical workers and organizational leaders across conflicting contexts. Therefore, concentrating leadership competencies within a single person seems limiting (Galli & Müller-Stewens, 2012). But, conversely, research also proposes that such leadership is likely to require skills and knowledge both individually and collectively (Ramthun & Matkin, 2012).

Public sector leadership is strongly collective in nature (Crosby and Bryson, 2018; Ospina, 2017), as leaders are required to work across agencies to model 'joined-up thinking' and provide 'end-to-end' service delivery to citizens and other stakeholders (Tomlin et al., 2020). Arguably, new collective and individual capabilities are sought that are likely to complement, rather than replace, the traditional, individual approaches to leading that are common in public sector studies (Ospina, 2017). Leadership within the public sector has long been primarily framed on three core pillars – shared, distributed and collective leadership. The nuanced differences between each of these help to understand why these continue to have relevance within the public sector.

In the public sector, the suitability of traditional centralized command and control leadership is increasingly questioned (Howieson & Hodges, 2014). However, without a doubt, this form of 'vertical leadership' (Zeier et al., 2018) model continues its dominance in the field. More complex and dynamic demands on public organizations and the accordant need for innovation, problem-solving, collaboration and service delivery require a more decentralized, adaptive and networked approach (Zeier et al., 2018). However, little is known about how to do it in bureaucracies, which often have competing goals and stakeholders (Crosby & Bryson, 2005; Currie, Grubnic, & Hodges, 2011; Denhardt & Denhardt, 2007; Howieson & Hodges, 2014; Ospina, 2017).

Shared leadership is coordinated through the behavioural components of accountability, partnership, equity and ownership (Jackson, 2000); it is a team-level construct that is also just as well likely to work at the organizational level, where efforts are coordinated both within and between teams and units (Carson, Tesluk, & Marrone, 2007); and describes shared influence aligned to common organizational goals and has been termed as the most established definition within the public sector leadership field (Bolden, 2011). Distributed leadership is the aggregation of individual efforts that may or may not align with those shared by the collective (Gronn, 2002; Harris, 2009).

Inherent tensions between shared and vertical leadership could lead to a risk of dysfunction and chaos (Zeier et al., 2018). The organization goals (Ospina, 2017) may be unclear or contested. And the shared purpose could be tied to public value, which is typically defined by external stakeholders rather than vertical leaders or their employees, and when seen as contradicting, such organizational goals could be ineffective (Cox, Pearce, & Perry, 2003). Perhaps this forms the driver to rethink and reinstate our attention towards individuals in leadership roles and how they redefine their leader identity in order to manage paradoxes,

defined as contradictory yet integrated elements that exist simultaneously and persist over time (Smith & Lewis, 2011), which is likely to be an issue in shifting a complex hierarchical government organization to shared leadership.

2.4 Public service leaders

Public service leaders − senior civil servants who lead and improve major government functions − are at the heart of government effectiveness. They translate political directions into policies and programmes that keep citizens healthy, safe and economically productive. To do so, they need to have both the right skills and the institutional support to deploy them effectively. In a recent report, the OECD has recommended that government organizations take a systematic approach to the management and development of their public service leaders (Gerson, 2020). While the leadership of elected officials often steals the limelight, professional public service leaders work tirelessly in the background to make sure that the vast and complex machinery of government can keep populations healthy, safe and economically supported. These public service leaders − senior civil servants who lead and improve major government functions − are the focus of this case study.

The word senior denotes rank and is not a reference to age or seniority in terms of length of career or tenure. In most countries, this group includes the top two levels of the administration under the Minister, but in some countries, this group includes additional layers beneath. Senior civil servants can be younger and have fewer years of experience than middle managers if they are, in fact, their superiors in terms of hierarchy. There is general agreement across the academic research community that good leadership in the public sector results in better organizational performance, efficiency and productivity (e.g., Fernandez, Cho, & Perry, 2010; Orazi, Turrini, & Valotti, 2013; Park & Rainey, 2008; Van Wart, 2013).

Bryson, Crosby, and Bloomberg (2014) chart the changing role of public managers through three paradigms of public management: traditional public administration, new public management and a new approach. The following excerpts illustrate the scholarship around this phenomenon and how perceptions around the role of senior civil servants vis-à-vis elected officials are shifting in this new paradigm (cf. Gerson, 2020):

> In traditional public administration, elected officials set goals, and implementation is up to public servants, overseen by elected officials and senior administrators …In contrast, in the new approach, both elected officials and senior public managers are charged with creating public value so that what the public cares about most is addressed effectively…
>
> ….Policy makers and public managers are also encouraged to consider the full array of alternative delivery mechanisms and choose among them based on pragmatic criteria. This often means helping build cross-sector collaborations and engaging citizens to achieve mutually agreed objectives. Public managers' role thus goes well beyond that in traditional public administration or New Public Management; they are presumed able to help create and guide networks of deliberation and delivery and help maintain and enhance the overall effectiveness, capacity, and accountability of the system...
>
> …In traditional public administration, public managers have limited discretion; … In the emerging approach, discretion is needed, but it is constrained by law, democratic and constitutional values, and a broad approach to accountability. Accountability becomes multifaceted and not just hierarchical (as in traditional public administration) or more market-driven (as in New Public Management), as public servants must attend to law, community values, political norms, professional standards, and citizen interests (p. 10).

The challenge senior civil servants face is to manage tensions, conflicts, and trade-offs among competing values. Jørgensen and Bozeman (2007) identify 72 different common public values. Tensions between democracy and bureaucracy; efficiency and equality; consistency, change and innovation; and accountability and risk-taking are common. Values conflicts also exist in cases of collaboration between different organizations with different values. In this kind of decision-making, there is rarely one clear path or single right answer − each option

has its trade-offs with its own impacts on outcomes. One of the complexities of leadership in the public sector is that all senior civil servants report upwards to a (or multiple) political authority. Nevertheless, the case studies collected in this project illustrate a great deal of authority and discretion exerted by professional senior civil servants while serving their elected government.

The division between political and administrative leadership is often unclear, prompting an acceptance that "the politics/administrative dichotomy is not a line but a zone in some contexts" (Alford et al., 2016, p. 245). One set of difficulties proposed has to do with what Brunner (1997) calls "contextual complexity" (p. 219). According to Van Wart (2003), while there are significant similarities among leaders that are generally agreed upon (for instance, they have followers and affect the direction of the group), from a research perspective, the differences among leaders are far greater and more challenging. For example, the leader of paid employees and the leader of volunteers have very different jobs (Van Wart, 2003). Issues of contextual complexity apply to the mission, organizational and environmental culture, structure, types of problems, types of opportunities, levels of discretion (Baliga, Rajaram, & Hunt 1988), and a host of other critically important areas.

Many current accounts of leadership studies appear to take too lightly, if they treat it at all, the insecurity, anxiety and ambiguity in the lives of managers. Hartley & Manzie (2020) argue that developing political astuteness alongside integrity and ethics in civil servants working closely with politicians is essential to the leadership and management of complex policy and implementation issues involving multiple stakeholders in a political environment. These 'capabilities' or 'skills' are seen as very important in Westminster systems of government. The complexity associated with the role of civil servants in these settings is characterised by them having to work with elected politicians as well as other actors,

stakeholders and institutions. They need to exercise "dual leadership" internally by exercising management authority within their own organization and staff and "harmonize" their own leadership with elected politicians.

Civil servants are always caught in the midst of media and parliamentary committees and enquiries to provide explanations for policies, events or incidents seldom under their direct control; navigating through both formal and informal politics by recognizing the diverse interests but are not "party political" (Hartley & Manzie, 2020). Cooper (1999), for example, argues that the social worlds in which leaders work is too complex, and leaders themselves are too multifarious. The result is texts, lectures and training courses replete with 'standard accounts' of leadership, of models, characteristics, standards and competencies that do not reflect the huge diversity of 'lived experience' of managerial life in all its settings. These so-called 'standard accounts', which appear to help construct worlds, present norms of managerial behaviour that overlook the extent to which the world leaders inhabit is a human one, "whose structure, articulation and very existence are functions of human agency" (Cooper, 1999, p. 58).

2.5 Public sector leadership development

It is incredibly surprising and inspiring to find leadership development and leader development is still under-researched compared to leadership studies (Galli & Muller-Stewens, 2012; Chami-Malaeb & Garavan, 2013). For instance, a quick search of research published in peer-reviewed journals from 2019 to 2020 with the word 'leadership' revealed 124,295 records, but only 88,385 records for 'leadership development'. The record count drops even further to 57,798 for the word 'leader development'.

Brungardt (1997) defines the development of leaders broadly as the very form of growth or stage of development in the life cycle that promotes, encourages and assists the expansion of knowledge and expertise required to optimise the collective capabilities of multiple individuals and groups rather than just individual leaders. Given leadership development emphasizes the collective capabilities of multiple individuals and groups rather than just individual leaders, and also the dyadic relations of leaders and followers (Day et al., 2014), the argument quickly shifts bilaterally in increasing our understanding of how leader development contributes and creates in-roads in developing leadership in general. Distinguishing between leader development and leadership development becomes central not only to understand the organizational impacts but also how systemic improvements can be measured.

In the past, traditional forms of leadership learning were undertaken in manager training courses in a classroom setting at a leadership training course centre or in university classrooms, at weekend retreats, or at other off-site events. This has presented some clear areas of deficit for leadership development. For instance, first, although being away from the workplace resulted in renewed and energizing experiences for most leaders, rarely did these learnings transition into their day jobs. The organization's cultural norms and practices could not be slighted and held an unceasingly strong bearing for the leaders in their leadership role. Second, a one-size-fits-all training module insufficiently addressed leaders' varied development needs.

Third, classroom-based learning undertaken in the absence of actively working on a real-life wicked problem or challenge only provided so much benefit to leaders, and learnings acquired swiftly came unstuck. And, finally, management modules rarely touched on the public sector context and realities associated with being a public servant, including the scathing personal effects of the emotional strain from dealing with difficult situations on a daily basis such as staff-related matters, exposure to media scrutiny, working alongside government and

independent enquiries, and navigating through organizational change and uncertainty. Therefore, in future, attention needs to shift from an isolated perspective drawn from a training course-based learning for leaders to a more rounded appraisal of their personal and professional growth and leadership development chart over a longer period of time.

In an age of collaborative governance, public sector leaders are expected to lead effectively across multiple fronts and cross-functional boundaries. Consequently, an autocratic model of leadership rooted in command-and-control and a top-down approach falls apart in this climate. Covey and Long's (1989) and Covey's (1991) simple yet profound approach to leadership development called 'inside-out' thus invites attention for facilitative and collaborative leadership within the public sector. It states that "to start first with self – to start with the most inside part of self – with your paradigms, your character, and your motives" (Covey, 1991, p. 63). Public leadership, therefore, begins with personal leadership and, when enacted at that level, influences one's leadership at the organizational level (Morse, 2008).

Over the years, the design and deployment of leadership development activities have undergone refinement to accommodate the changing needs and expectations to develop leaders within the public sector. This has resulted in sophisticated methods of delivery and evaluation processes for assessing the relevance of learnings acquired by leaders. However, organisational cultural diversity and swiftly shifting priorities across the public service means that only moderately integrated inferences can be drawn. Even so, commonly accepted assumptions, approaches and development strategies continue to underpin the leadership development effort within the public sector.

The part that is fundamentally missing is an in-depth understanding of public sector leaders' views on leadership development processes. Often, a focus on leadership development

approaches and techniques may completely sidestep or ignore much of what the public servants in leadership roles may wish to say about their leadership development experience. This insight is critical not only for the people who design and deliver leadership development training but also for the senior executives and chief executives of agencies whose senior public managers attend these training courses and programmes.

Contrary to the common belief that developing leaders is the primary focus of leadership development effort for most organizations, recent research has shown that there are numerous other drivers at play that might use leadership development as a lever to enact a transformational change. For instance, a leadership development programme can be critical for the delivery of an organization-wide effort to embed the transformational change needed to alter every aspect of the organization (McInnes & Meaklim, 2012). However, in tracing a connection between leadership development and sustainable system-wide improvement in quality, the evidence to date is still slender (Walmsley & Miller, 2007). To some extent, this is because large scale systemic improvement is a lengthy process partly because instability makes it more than usually challenging to trace impact and partly because of the lack of the right tools to enable us to make the connections.

Public servants or leaders, like their private sector counterparts, live in what Vaill (1996) describes as an era of permanent white water, with leaders being put under constant internal and external organizational pressures. Leaders are expected to lead creatively in turbulent times exemplified by uncertainty, chaos, fast-paced action and limited resources, and where the only constants are a surprise, pain and confusion. Learning how to learn in such a fluid environment is perhaps the single most important requirement for leading others to perform effectively in public service (Kee, Newcomer, & Davis, 2008). Therefore, this creates an imperative need to reframe leadership development as a critical component of the public service. Taking this view

further would translate into an operating environment for leaders symbolizing a stronger commitment towards continuous learning and growth.

2.5.1 Leader development approach

Leader development focuses on developing individual leaders, whereas leadership development focuses on a process of development that inherently involves multiple individuals (e.g., leaders and followers or among peers in a self-managed work team) (Day et al., 2014). What is commonly called 'leadership development' programmes are often in fact 'leader development' programmes, usually involving a mix of competency models, psychometric assessment of personality, emotional intelligence, team management profiles, 360-degree feedback, communication skills training, coaching, mentoring, motivational speeches and outdoor development (Iles & Macaulay, 2007).

Leader development as a concept and its treatment in recent leadership development research brings to attention some key implications. An important argument here is that public leadership academics still remain too shackled to the legal-rational basis of authority and of action, but with very little focus on the leader's feelings and emotions and other psychological and social processes, a leader may be subjected to (Hartley, 2018). This manifests a greater need to foster personal resilience and adaptive learning in public sector leaders. There is recognition in pockets for a shift from a prescribed management course to a longitudinal programme that applies theory to practice (Stoll, Swanwick, Foster-Turner, & Moss, 2011).

Further, the information that leaders gain during participation in a leadership development programme, while useful, may not nearly be as important as the transformation that might come with interacting with individuals who are different from them because they begin to see themselves differently and, therefore, understand the world in new and energizing ways

(Steffensmeier, McBride, & Dove, 2016). Finally, the coaching requirements on technical processes and background information for leaders and executives because they are new or inexperienced or encountering a new or special problem, is in most cases put down on the individual to assess and resolve. This means that they must recognize the need, identify a competent source and follow through on their own. Because most managers have frenetic jobs with dozens of issues swirling about them at any given time (Mintzberg, 1973, 2013), it is easy to see why managers often fail to seek out coaching even when they clearly recognize the need to do so (Van Wart, 2011).

2.5.2 Leadership development approach

Leadership development involves attention to collective and contextual processes (Alban-Metcalfe, Alban-Metcalfe, & Alimo-Metcalfe, 2009). Just as leader development is based on human capital, leadership development is based on social capital (Day, 2000). Hartley et al (2015) further advocate the role of leadership development to "revolve around acknowledgement of the paradoxes of power, focusing on flexibility, resilience and political astuteness", and not as "Machiavellian machination", but as "skilful understanding" of what power cannot achieve as well as what it can (Tomlins et al., 2020). Similarly, Iles and Preece (2006, p. 325) suggest that "leader development refers to developing individual-level intrapersonal competencies and human capital (cognitive, emotional, and self-awareness skills for example), while leadership development refers to the development of collective leadership processes and social capital in the organization and beyond, involving relationships, networking, trust, and commitments, as well as an appreciation of the social and political context and its implications for leadership styles and actions".

Leadership development for leaders could be informed by evaluative and assessment tools such as 360-degree diagnostics but equally relevant is the provision of opportunities for leaders

to participate in a combination of individual and shared context-related learning activities that could be essential for success. Therefore, Action Learning group activities among leaders within a network or closely defined group settings within a leadership development programme, working on 'real' problems while focusing on context-related learning activities and relational processes, are likely to provide better outcomes both for the leaders as well as the organization as a collective (Alban-Metcalfe et al., 2009; Iles and Macaulay 2007).

Secondly, although leadership development programmes and activities are proliferating, few are inclusive because the majority are delivered within organizations as part of senior management development or within specific sectors. Very few are explicitly delivered inter-professionally, across organizational and professional boundaries and with a focus on collaboration and joined-up working and a shift from the development of an individual to that of a group with a shared purpose (McKimm et al., 2008; Stoll et al., 2011).

Leadership development is proposed to be facilitated when teams are exposed to specific experiences or formal interventions (Salas, Goodwin, & Burke, 2009; Salas, Stagl, & Burke, 2004b) that may enhance a team's leadership capacity, including having team members work together for an extended period of time (e.g., Reagans, Argote, & Brookes, 2005) and team coordination (Salas, Burke, & Stagl, 2004a), and having leader orient the team towards learning (e.g., Kozlowski, Gully, Salas, & Cannon-Bowers, 1996). However, the efficacy of such experiences and interventions in building a team's overall capacity for leadership has yet to be proven by research. There is also evidence that suggests that shared, distributed, and organizational leadership needs interpersonal interactions as central (Day & Dragoni, 2015) to help the expansion of a collective leadership capacity over time (e.g., Ancona, Backman, & Isaacs, 2015; DeRue, 2011; Klein, Ziegert, Knight, & Xiao, 2006).

2.5.3 Management and Leadership Development (MLD) approach

Management and leadership development (MLD) has often been used not just to build skills but to change attitudes as part of a wider attempt to shift culture (Mabey & Finch-Lees, 2008). The different strategies adopted by organizations seeking their culture change include an indoctrination approach, one that relies heavily upon training and development; a softer communal approach that relies on democracy and consultation rather than the prescriptive, aggressive approach; and the subterfuge or the corrosive approach (Bate, 1995). Irrespective of the approach taken, the aim is the same – to fit the participating individuals into a pre-formulated definition of the situation (Bate, 1995). Bate (1995) contends that cultural learning can only occur in routine, continuous, experiential and interactive settings, which he notes the 'taught courses' do not provide because they do not presuppose the existence of any kind of reciprocal interaction or mutual learning. The impacts of these forms of socialization programmes (Mabey & Finch-Lees, 2008) on the recipients are only lightly understood.

The part that is less understood is the nature of learning and developmental experiences of participating individuals undertaking these courses within a perceived politicized process (Mabey & Finch-Lees, 2008), where new knowledge, systems and techniques could be viewed suspiciously, possibly opposed and even rejected. Some research suggests that while management have become more sophisticated in their attempts to change cultures, participants in associated training also tend to become shrewder in their accommodation and/or resistance tactics (Ogbonna and Harris, 1998). By far, where these forms of socialization processes are more commonly legitimized and, therefore, less questionable (e.g., Code of Conduct, Statement of Intent) needs further attention. A critical theoretical approach aims to give voice to these performative outcomes for leaders with attention to the emancipatory and subjective aspects of the leadership practice, which typically is seen to harbour insecurities, ambiguities and

multiplicities of selves as has been critically noted by few leadership and organizational studies (see Carroll & Levy, 2010; Collinson, 1992, 1994, 2003; Ford, 2006; Ford & Harding, 2004; Ford & Lawler, 2007; Kondo, 1990).

A critical approach to management and leadership development (MLD) views the organizations as composed of multiple, shifting, and conflicting coalitions of interest. It seeks to expose how this facet of organization is typically obscured by dominant yet taken-for-granted managerial ideologies (Mabey & Finch-Lees, 2008). Research in this area has investigated the ways in which MLD can either support or disrupt interests of power and control, provoking responses ranging from outright resistance to unthinking acquiescence (Rusaw, 2000; Kamoche, 2000). Embedding programmes that simultaneously determine career advancement along with a means of socialization and enculturation for managers are effectively emasculated by potentially deviant and non-conformist individual interests (Mabey & Finch-Lees, 2008). Arguably, this could be the reason behind the relatively scarce research accounts of overt participant resistance to MLD (Mabey & Finch-Lees, 2008).

Researchers taking a critical stance have long since argued that managers are told they should be confident, secure and very clear about what they are doing, and why they are doing it, in all circumstances (Ford and Harding, 2004; Ford, 2006; Ford, Harding, & Learmonth, 2008) and that the manager must not step outside the narrow confines dictated by these implicit presumptions (Ford, Harding, & Learmonth, 2008). Harding (2003) refers to the ubiquity of this account in management literature and in development programmes as adding to the considerable dissonance and tension felt by managers, for no one can live up to such idealisations.

It is perceived that conformance as advocated through these programmes could sometimes nurture and drive hegemonic processes that 'deflect attention' from political and structural barriers to organizational change (Bell & Taylor, 2004) and old conflicts such as those between capital and labour (Contu, Grey, & Ortenblad, 2003) are rendered invisible, rather than meeting any authentic learning and growth needs in participants. Some argue, the problem lies with the functionalist assumptions approach, which is mainly positivist and tries to link management and leadership development activities to increased effectiveness and performance, enshrined in terms of cultural capital or human capital (Mabey & Finch-Lees, 2008). Functionalism, therefore, presents a case where a range of issues tend to be ignored, including the multiple meanings MLD can take on for participants, sponsors and other stakeholders; the ways in which MLD can shape the identities/subjectivities of organizational actors; and the ways in which MLD can be implicated in repressive forms of coercion and control (Mabey & Finch-Lees, 2008).

In spite of the vast and rich body of research in the field of management and leadership studies that have employed a critical approach to leader development, it appears empirical research is still slim in the area of public sector leader development. Especially, there seems to be limited understanding about the impact of these forms of 'socialisation' on senior public sector leaders 'encouraged' to attend a centrally led, sector-wide 'elite' leadership development programme. For instance, because the leaders within large public sector organizations follow a linear pathway, they by and large have been "formed" by conservative education processes and have conformed to normative practices (Western, 2013). Therefore, while the leadership rhetoric may claim to want innovative, creative leaders who can 'think outside the box', outside the underlying culture, selection and development work in the opposite direction by rewarding familiarity and sameness and creating dissonance for anyone thinking innovatively (Western, 2013). What are the interpretations of these public sector leaders regarding any perceived

impacts of leadership development within the public sector? Secondly, performative outcomes are often seen to be ignored; that is, what are the different types of managerial identities that are constructed through immersion in such leadership development courses?

2.5.4 Leadership development evaluation

Another contention that has been raised is regarding how little evaluation exists on the leadership training courses, and those evaluations that have been published tend to be descriptive and do not question the assumptions upon which the courses are built (Edmonstone & Western, 2002). The more informed evaluations, such as Blackler and Kennedy (2004), show that participants are enabled to cope better with the demands of their stressful jobs, but their managerialist perspective of such evaluations focuses only upon what goes in (the content of the programme) and what comes out (whether or not participants become better skilled at their work). On similar lines, Ford, Harding, and Learmonth (2008) reported in their empirical study that much like academics, organisations in the UK still cannot agree on a definition of leadership and use a multitude of definitions. Despite this, they note, the practice of sending staff on leadership development courses is widespread; so, numerous managers are trained in practising something highly nebulous, a floating signifier (Ford et al., 2008).

Researchers in the field of leadership development have adopted diverse theoretical approaches, informed through their varied interpretations, and resulting in conflicting findings that require attention. First, there appears to be a growing concern among leadership and organization studies researchers about the lack of quality research conducted on Leadership Development Programmes (LDP). For example, Gagnon and Collinson (2014) argue that much extant research on LDPs is prescriptive in tone, focusing on competency creation and tending to be context-free, disregarding the social, organizational and political settings in which LDPs are embedded.

LDPs are perceived as a highly visible and politically contested topic for both internal organizational leaders participating in the training programme as well as to external stakeholders. It is perceived in some cases that firms restrict Leadership Development training programmes to only senior or elite staff, typically seen to involve high-potential employees, current executives or mid-level managers (Hughes & Grant, 2007; Mabey, 2013). This approach seems to comprise of a potent and high-profile human resources activity involving some of the organization's key players, attracting high investment both in terms of corporate budgets and expectations and consuming a significant amount of time and proportion of budget (Fulmer and Goldsmith, 2001; Lamoureux, 2007; Mabey and Finch-Lees, 2008).

2.5.5 Development tools and techniques

The next section of this chapter discusses the fundamental building blocks and key principles that underpin the leadership development process. These include concepts such as leader competency models, performance improvement, succession management, coaching, evaluation and assessment. Some of the commonly commissioned and most often overly prescribed leadership development and training practices within the public service are described in detail. A universal view is presented on the models, frameworks, tools and techniques put in use by organizations towards leadership development more recently.

Table 2. 2 Commonly commissioned leadership development tools and techniques.

Competency models	Competency frameworks or models summarise the knowledge, skills, and perspectives that distinguish superior leadership performance and, hence, are used to point to areas that leaders need to be developed in.	Berke, Kossler, and Wakefield, 2008; Lucia and Lepsinger, 1999
360-degrees	The primary contribution of a 360-degree assessment is on developing interpersonal competence associated with enhanced human capital.	Day, 2001

Coaching	Leadership coaching is usually used in the mix of other development tools, especially for public servants in senior leadership roles in order to prepare them for increased responsibilities, accelerating their adaptation to a new challenge, and widening their ability to address complex challenges.	Frankovelgia and Riddle, 2010
	The results of an assessment can be culturally specific.	DeLay and Dalton, 2006
	A common problem faced by organizations is a generic lack of valid qualification and professional credentials available for coaches in the marketplace.	Frankovelgia and Riddle, 2010
	Linking coaching to critical success factors that can be measured could sometimes be a better approach.	Anderson and Anderson, 2005
	Coaching effectiveness is enhanced to the degree that individuals are carefully selected for coaching, matched with a compatible coach, and are willing to change.	Day, 2001
	Public managers must be motivated to coach their team, but they admit that they do not spend enough time coaching and see coaching as an addition to their daily work.	Blessing and White, 2008
Mentoring	Mentoring is seen as an especially effective component of development in a context wherein formal mentoring programmes are assigned, maintained and monitored by the organization.	Kram and Bragar, 1992
	What constitutes effective mentoring can sometimes be context-driven and manifest differently through racial and cultural norms.	Cohen, Steel, and Ross, 1999
Goal setting	Participatively set goals lead to significantly higher performance than either assigned goals or instructions.	Latham, Saari, and Campbell, 1979

Structured experience	Successful experiences in leadership roles, whether in family, educational or social settings, convince the individual that they are perceived by others as a leader, and therefore, strengthen the individual's self-efficacy as a leader.	Akin, 1987; Avolio 2005; Bandura 1977; Bennis, 1989; Kotter, 1988, 1990
	Not only is the actual experience alone important; its timing has been found to have developmental importance as well because early exposure to leadership experiences are found to act as the most formative for leaders in creating their self-identity as leaders.	Akin, 1987; Kotter, 1988; McCall, Lombardo, and Morrison, 1988; Zakay and Scheinfeld, 1993
	When the process of methodical reflection takes place in a group, it can stimulate the discovery and formulation of principles (of leadership, in this case) beyond the individual's experience. The group, therefore, can serve as a tool both for the generalization of principles and for their empirical verification based on the repertoire of experiences that are exposed in the group.	Janson, Popper, Markwick, Blyde, and Ronatunga, 2008
Action learning	Leaders embarking on action learning need to first change or be willing to transform their own mindsets – their own taken-for-granted assumptions, beliefs and attitudes. Only then can they change their surrounding environmental conditions.	Argyris and Schön, 1978, 1996; Kramer, 2008
Supporting environment	Necessary skills and perspectives of leading people through a process of transition can hardly be taught in business school, nor can it be perfected in the absence of organisational turmoil.	Bunker and Wakefield, 2004

2.5.6 Leadership journey approach

Research in the area suggests that individuals begin their respective leadership journeys with predisposed levels of leadership ability (Arvey, Zhang, Avolio, & Krueger, 2007) based on personality traits (e.g., extroversion, conscientiousness) and intelligence (Judge, Bono, Ilies, &

Gerhardt, 2002). Moreover, studying leader development over an extended period of time becomes critical (Day et al., 2009) as individuals can enhance their leader capabilities through experiences and specific interventions, mainly challenging work assignments (Dragoni, Tesluk, Russell, & Oh, 2009), mentoring (Lester, Hannah, Harms, Vogelgesang, & Avolio, 2011) and training experiences (Dvir, Eden, Avolio, & Shamir, 2002).

Measuring these development outcomes over time can be challenging; however, it is proposed a change in individuals' 'self-views' (i.e., leadership self-efficacy, self-awareness and leader identity) provide an indication of an enhancement of specific leadership-related knowledge and competencies over time and with practice (Day et al., 2009). For instance, very little is known about mapping and measuring leader identity change. There has been limited empirical research to unpack the process involving identity change (except see Day and Sin, 2011).

The developmental 'proximal' outcomes manifest into changes either in how a leader views himself or herself or in specific competencies, which may or may not represent a dramatic shift in leaders' worldviews. Theories of human and adult development also suggest more 'distal' outcomes such as growth in dynamic skills and abstraction, and development of more complex meaning-making structures and processes. Finally, the possibility for these initial signs of development to actualize into more distal and fundamental changes depends on the availability of support for the individual (dynamic skill theory[5]), and whether the individual is able to meaningfully practise different ways of being and interacting with others (Day et al., 2009).

[5] The core concept of the theory is skill, which is defined as "the capacity to act in an organized way in a specific context" (Fischer & Bidell, 2006, p. 321).

Leadership development is proposed to be facilitated when teams are exposed to specific experiences or formal interventions (Salas et al., 2004b, 2009) that may enhance a team′s leadership capacity, including having team members work together for an extended period of time (e.g., Reagans et al., 2005) and team coordination (Salas et al., 2004a), and having leader orient the team towards learning (e.g., Kozlowski et al., 1996). However, the efficacy of such experiences and interventions in building a team's overall capacity for leadership has yet to be proven by research. There is also evidence that suggests that shared, distributed, and organizational leadership need interpersonal interactions as central (Day & Dragoni, 2015) to help the expansion of a collective leadership capacity over time (e.g., Ancona et al., 2015; DeRue 2011; Klein et al., 2006).

Next, I discuss the provenance of adult learning as a core aspect for consideration in any form of leadership development undertaken for leaders. Adult learning and adult education are often times perceived as a personal and self-motivated activity, more so than it appears to be in the case of children. Extant literature on the topic has covered different facets and complexities associated with this type of learning. These concepts are discussed in more detail in the subsequent sections of this chapter.

2.6 Adult learning

The development of leaders has been linked to learning and leadership (Brown & Posner, 2001) within the remit of adult learning and education studies. The conceptualization of learning by Jarvis (2009) focuses on the whole person who learns within a social situation such that this learning occurs because of a primary experience. Therefore, it is the person who learns and the changed person who is the outcome of the learning (Jarvis, 2009). For instance, to facilitate the process of adult learning, it is especially important to know who the adult learner is, how the social context shapes the learning that adults are engaged in, why adults are involved in learning

activities, how adults learn and how ageing effects learning abilities (Merriam, Cafarella, & Baumgartner, 2007).

Many dimensions of experience could inform learning in adults. These can constitute as a direct embodied experience that engages an individually mentally, physically and emotionally in a single moment; simulated experience or reliving a past experience; experiences that establish collaboration with others in a community; or introspective experiences such as meditation or dreaming (Merriam et al., 2007). Further, the focus is on the learner's meaning-making processes as a result of one or more experiences, given adults reflect on their experiences which leads to the generation of new knowledge as a result of interpreting and reflecting on the experiences (Merriam et al., 2007). Another perspective takes a phenomenological stance (Jarvis, 2009): learning is defined as the combination of processes throughout a lifetime whereby the whole person – body (genetic, physical, biological) and mind (knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, emotions, beliefs, and senses) – experiences social situations, the perceived content of which is then transformed cognitively, emotively or practically (or through any combination) and integrated into the individual person's biography resulting in a continually changing (or more experienced) person. In essence, learning becomes a multi-disciplinary phenomenon that involves the whole person and takes into account the existential nature such that the process of transforming experience into knowledge and skills results in a changed person. Noting here that KSA – Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes – only form part of the picture in informing a learning process for individuals.

2.6.1 Learning as a personal activity

Adult learning has been claimed as an intensely personal activity for individuals (Merriam et al., 2007); however, here, the life context of adults is central to understanding the adult learning processes. This fundamentally differentiates andragogy from pedagogy (Knowles, 1968). The

concept of andragogy dictates that to be an adult means to be self-directing − a child becomes an adult psychologically at the point at which their self-conceptualization changes from one of dependency to one of autonomy. At this point, the adult develops a deep psychological need to be perceived by themselves and by others as being self-directing − where humans tend to resent and resist being put into situations in which they feel that others are imposing their will on them. The concept of 'self-concept', therefore, is fundamental to andragogy, where it is based on the deepest insight, a deep need to be treated as an adult, and a need to be treated as a self-directing person.

Secondly, adults are considered richer resources for learning because adult experiences have a deeper impact on adults than on children. Thereby, Knowles (1968) proposed that adults' self-identity is derived from what they have done, in contrast with children, who associate their self-identity in terms of their family, school, community, and so on. Adult learning can occur through every opportunity made available by any social institution for, and every process by, which an individual can acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, emotions, beliefs and senses within a global society (Jarvis, 2009). Adult education is proposed to involve problem areas rather than subject categories; therefore, andragogy is student-centred and problem-oriented by applying learnings to problem-solving activities (Knowles, 1968).

2.6.2 Experiential and narrative learning

Research in the area of experiential learning identifies adult education not as the goal, per se, but rather as a continuous process that combines formal education and life experiences to achieve a higher dual purpose, that which enables individual growth and sustains societies (Lindeman, 1926/1989). Learning has been proposed as contextual and inseparable to the extent that it can 'modulate' a learner's outlook, attitudes and skills (Dewey, 1938); and is the production of the relationship or transaction between subject and the world (Finger & Asun,

2001). Further expanding on the concept of experiential learning, Fenwick (2000) proposes five contemporary perceptions of human cognition: reflective, interference, participation, resistance and co-emergence. Lindeman (1961) drew on Dewey's (1938) work to claim experience is the adult's living textbook to advocate for adult education structured around the life of the adult learner because this was the source of the adult's motivation to learn.

In a similar vein, narrative learning (Clark & Rossiter, 2008) is argued to be another constructive form of adult learning because narratives constructed from individuals' experiences form the basis of informing their sense of self or identity. Therefore, informal learning (Merriam et al., 2007) undertaken outside of educational institutions is as relevant as formal learning and education. Learning from and through experiences then becomes a central feature of informal and incidental learning because the learner is highly influenced by the context (Marsick & Watkins, 1990). The concept of experiences, therefore, plays a central role within adult learning theory based on the tenet that learning in adulthood is integrally related to the lived experience.

2.6.3 Transformative and informal learning

Recent research in the area of adult learning suggests that a meaning-making process in individuals could trigger 'transformation' during certain key phases (Mezirow, 2000) – a disorientating dilemma; a self-examination trigger by feelings of anger, fear, guilt or shame; a critical assessment of assumptions; a recognition that personal discontent is shared with a transformational process; exploring options for new roles, relationships and actions; planning a new course of action; acquiring new skills and knowledge for implementing a plan of action; provisional testing out new roles or opportunities; building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships; and reintegration of the learning into one's life driven by the antecedent conditions that might be dictated by one's new perspective. Therefore,

transformative learning is defined by Sutherland and Crowther (2006) as the process by which individuals transform problematic frames of reference (mindsets, habits, meaning-making) – sets of assumptions and expectations – to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective and emotionally able to change.

Informal learning refers to the experiences of everyday living from which we learn (Merriam et al., 2007). Marsick and Watkins (1990) have argued in favour of mistakes as important to informal learning, because individuals feel brittle about making them and are more likely to reflect on the act of committing a mistake in their efforts to determine its cause and, where possible, prevent it from happening again. However, there is another important angle to note here, which they suggest stems from past experiences and can have a reinforcing effect on individuals, causing distortions as these are channelled and interpreted through an individual's personal construct, which subjectively filters how they might perceive themselves. Informal learning is proposed as taking three forms (Schugurensky, 2000): self-directed (an intentional and conscious activity), incidental (an accidental by-product of another activity undertaken), and socialization and tacit learning (an outcome of a 'retrospective recognition' which takes place at a later stage)(p. 5).

Throughout leadership and leadership development literature, there remains a strong emphasis on learning and development through the use of competency models, frameworks and training techniques (Berke et al., 2008; Iles & Macaulay 2007; Iles & Preece, 2006; Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999). Research has advanced in linking an individual's self-perception as a leader by gaining successful experiences in leadership roles to others' perceptions who may perceive them as a leader, in turn strengthening the individual's self-efficacy as a leader (Akin, 1987; Avolio 2005; Bandura 1977; Bennis, 1989; Kotter, 1988, 1990). The hybrid state of 'leaderism' and incongruence of desired identities (Blomgren, 2003; Kippist & Fitzgerald,

2009; Noordegraaf & De Wit, 2012), and identity spiral (Day et al., 2009) has provided valuable insight into leader identity construction processes for leaders.

In the generic management literature, the concept of leadership identity is high on the research agenda (see Epitropaki et al. 2017 for a review). Studies in this literature have shown that leadership identity increases leadership effectiveness (Day and Sin 2011), but the applicability of these findings to a public sector context has been demonstrated to a limited degree. And so, we do not fully understand in enough detail various antecedent conditions and influential factors that could be contingent to a lesser or more degree in framing a leader identity for a leader throughout their career span within the public service.

In the next few sections, the identity research with respect to the identity construct as associated with leader development is brought to attention. Conceptualising leader identity is important to leader development because it helps to surface the relationship between how leaders undertake identity work practices and leadership development. Identity research has only recently received increasing attention in the wider leadership field with some linkages to socio-psychological studies. This extant literature is discussed further in subsequent sections.

2.7 The identity construct

Scholars have argued that identity is a multilevel concept with the capacity to assist scholars' explorations of relations between multiple research domains at micro, meso and macro levels (Brown, 2001; Ravasi & van Rekom, 2003). This is evident from its usage extended to study varied phenomena associated with nearly everything: from mergers, motivation and meaning-making to ethnicity, entrepreneurship and emotions, to politics, participation and project teams. However, less common are empirical studies and theory pieces that investigate the relationships between identities and their interactions between individuals, dyads, groups, organizations,

professions and communities, mainly because identity is often employed as a descriptive category rather than as an analytical tool (Brown, 2015).

Freud (1930, 1965) was one of the first psychological theorists to address the fundamental questions of self-definition. Freud (1923/1961) posited identification and identity-like processes that focused on childhood identification and parental introjects. However, it was Erikson's (1950) classic work *Childhood and society* that moved identity formation forward. Erikson was one of several classic theorists to establish a tradition of identity theory (others include Blos, 1962; Cooley, 1902; James, 1892; Mead, 1934).

For Erikson (1968), identity synthesis represents a sense of self was one of several classic theories (p. 30). It was perceived that Erikson tended to straddle the conceptual fence between the intrapsychic focus adopted by psychology and the environmental focus adopted by sociology (Cames, 1892 Côté & Levine, 1987, 1988). Questions on identity have been debated in the social sciences literature for 50 years ever since Erikson (1950) published his first writings on identity: what exactly is identity, and how does it develop during different periods of the life course? To what extent is identity formed as an individual project, to what extent is it a function of interacting in social and cultural contexts, and to what extent is it a combination of the two? Finally, how exactly do these aspects of its formation take place psychologically and socially?

Numerous definitions and interpretations abound the identity literature with wide differences in the conceptualization of identity by leadership scholars. The identity research within the leadership field appears to be divided into two distinct areas – studies that conceptualize identity as a static signifier or point of reference (Abimbola & Vallaster, 2007; Abratt & Kleyn, 2012; Alsem & Kostelijk, 2008; Balmer and Gray, 2003; Keller, 2003) and

those that propose identities are multiple and fluid, socially constructed (see, for example, Bleakley, 2006; Kreber, 2010; Wenger 1998).

2.7.1 Identity as a static signifier

These studies demonstrate a technical, cognitive interest (Habermas, 1972), whereby they are interested in how identity and identification may hold an important key to a variety of managerial outcomes and thus the potential to improve organizational effectiveness. The mainstream business management research appears mainly dominated by this approach. For instance, scholars in this domain seem to associate an identity with an organization such that the company brand is perceived as a 'representative' of the resource-based view of the firm by customers where identity appears to represent the values the company brand aspires to stand for. Therefore, it becomes a cornerstone in the process of creating and maintaining a relationship with those customers attracted to these values (Alsem & Kostelijk, 2008; Keller, 2003). Others appear to attach distinct attributes of the organization to identity, allowing the alignment between the desired identity and how stakeholders 'see' the identity (Balmer & Gray, 2003). On a separate note, Abratt and Kleyn (2012) argue that organizational identity refers to the identity of people within the organization.

A notable theoretical stream in organizational studies of identity is the Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Haslam et al., 2004), which examines how people understand and position themselves and others in terms of social group categories (i.e., in-group/out-group). Ashforth and Mael (1989) define social identification as "perception of oneness with or belongingness to some human aggregate" (p. 135). Therefore, personal distinctiveness (other than one's degrees of perceived 'oneness') takes a back seat to social units as the major source of identity. An important characteristic of SIT is a move of

"depersonalization or seeing the self as an embodiment of the in-group prototype" (Stets & Burke, 2000, p. 231).

A sharp contradiction to SIT appears in some identity studies that tend to have demarcated objects of analysis as personal or social identities. Much of this research adopts a technical/functionalist stance, wherein one's degree of identification with the organization is assumed to yield important organizational outcomes, such as commitment, loyalty and motivation (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Elsbach, 1999; Haslam et al., 2004). However, notions of 'we' vary widely by person and context, ranging, for example, from generic company references to people embedded in specific spatial locations to subcultural tensions (e.g., Dahler-Larsen, 1997). These studies, therefore, appear to fundamentally destabilize social identities and challenge the common treatment of social identities set within SIT as already coherent, ready-made, or virtually self-evident objects or templates for affiliation.

However, recent developments have challenged such assumptions, sparking increased awareness of identification as a complex and fluid process. Several authors, for example, have studied multiple targets of identification, acknowledging that 'organization', as a formal, abstract entity, may not be the only interesting object or signifier of affiliation; factory, governance board, subsidiary, profession, product group, division, occupation, or gender and/or race subculture – to name a few – may instead or simultaneously serve as sources of identification (Kuhn & Nelson, 2002; Pratt, 2000; Pratt & Foreman, 2000; Scott, Corman, & Cheney, 1998). Alvesson et al. (2008) also contend that people do not simply step into pre-packaged selves; rather, they are always negotiating intersections with other simultaneously held identities and making individualized meaning in interactions with the people and systems around them, such that they imbue this depersonalized collective with diverse and personalized settings.

2.7.2 Multiple, fluid and crafted identities

A range of ideas about identity and how it might be formed or come into being arise from the various epistemological traditions that have informed theorizing about it (Kreber, 2010). Considering the fluidity of identities as proposed by some scholars, there remains much debate about how identities come to be formed from being 'socially constructed (Carroll & Levy, 2010) and crafted (Alvesson, 2003), to being multiple selves (Kondo, 1990). In a recent study, Grøn et al. (2020) argue that for all individuals, moving into a management position can mean a change in the basic understanding of who they are. Based on their first training in a given subject (e.g. nursing), norm-socialization, and membership in a group of 'like-minded people', many potential public managers have internalized strong occupational identities (Freidson 2001; Brehm and Gates 2010; Tummers 2013; Andersen and Pedersen 2012) that adhere to different logics than taking on a management position. The logic may be challenged by the demands made upon individuals who take on a formal leadership position, where logic may resemble a bureaucratic logic (Ouchi 1980) or a managerial logic (Hood 1991). In their formal leadership positions, public managers are thus subject to 'governmental public policy diffusing managerial thinking into public organizations to measurably improve organizational efficiency' (McGivern et al. 2015, 412).

Identity control theory (Burke, 2006) sheds light on the general process of identity change. It posits that people hold an identity standard that defines what it means to be a role occupant (e.g. a leader). Identity standards serve as a reference with which people compare their perceptions of ongoing self-relevant meanings in social interactions (Burke, 2006). When the perceived meanings match their identity standard, this identity is verified, and no change will happen. When there are discrepancies between the perceived meanings and the identity standard, people will change their behaviours to achieve a match between perceived meanings

and the identity standard (Burke, 2006). Kondo (1990), through her pioneering research, argues that actors should be seen as multiple selves whose lives are shot through with contradictions and creative tensions, suggesting that selves are never fixed, coherent, seamless, bounded or whole; they are crafted selves not least through contradiction and irony. There are three dominant identity concepts, as discussed below: identity work, identity regulation and identity control.

2.7.3 Identity work

Alvesson et al. (2008, p.15) define ‘identity work’ as the ongoing mental activity an individual undertakes in constructing an understanding of self that is coherent, distinct and positively valued. Identity work “is prompted by social interaction that raises questions of 'who am I?' and 'who are we?’”. In attempting to answer these questions, an individual “crafts a self-narrative” by drawing on cultural resources as well as memories and desires to reproduce or transform their sense of self (Knights & Willmott, 1989; Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003). This view is further strengthened through empirical research conducted by Carroll and Levy (2010), who explored the leadership development narratives of participants in an online, virtual learning programme over 18 months, and uncovered different identity strategies by which individuals craft a self that is ‘their own’; these are fluid, overlapping and at times contradictory and lead to the learners reframing, accommodating and/or rejecting to different degrees.

Influenced by poststructuralist accounts of identity, some studies conceptualize ‘identity work’ as a continuous process of ‘becoming’ rather than ‘being’. This came about through some studies that proposed that people can be seen to engage in identity work. Therefore, when the routinized reproduction of a self-identity in a stable setting is discontinued and may be triggered by uncertainty, anxiety, questioning or self-doubt (Collinson, 2003; Knights & Willmott, 1989). These scholarly perspectives followed the practical-hermeneutic approaches

(Habermas, 1972) to identity that focus on how people craft their identities through interaction, or how they weave 'narratives of self' in concert with others and out of the diverse contextual resources within their reach. Here there was little concern for the instrumental utility of such knowledge for organizational performance; rather, scholars in this category appear to seek enhanced understanding of human cultural experiences or how we communicate to generate and transform meaning.

Others consider the extent of identity flux to be an empirical question, where 'identity work' may be more continuous in chronically fragmented contexts, whereas in settings affording more stability, 'serious' (i.e., more conscious and concentrated) 'identity work' may be prompted or intensified by a crisis (Beech, 2008; Lutgen-Sandvik, 2008; Watson, 2008), or during radical transitions (Ibarra, 1999). A likely cause may be a mismatch between self-understandings and the social ideals promoted through discourse. Alternatively, suggesting it may arise from encounters with others that challenge understandings of self (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002). Alvesson and Willmott (2002) propose that managing continuity, including typical or familiar levels of emotional arousal, against a shifting discursive framework provided by socially established truths about what is normal, rational and sound is the basis for identity work. Such monitoring work – involving strains and identity uncertainties – is well documented in Watson's (2004) study of managers in a large UK company.

2.7.4 Identity regulation

The most notable in this respect is the identity framework proposed by Alvesson and Willmott (2002). According to them, identity regulation encompasses the more or less intentional effects of social practices upon processes of identity construction and reconstruction (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002). They contend that identity regulation is governed by six overlapping and

interrelated ways of constructing and exploring identity: central life interest, coherence, distinctiveness, direction, positive value and self-awareness.

2.7.5 Self-identity

Another concept that has surfaced in the literature review is the concept of 'self-identity' (Giddens, 1990), which usefully differentiates such concerns from those who 'personal' or 'social' identity as a comparatively conscious set of self-images, traits or social attributes, although the concepts overlap and share common elements. It is defined as "not a distinctive trait, or even a collection of traits, possessed by the individual. It is the self as reflexively understood by the person … self-identity is continuity (across time and space) as interpreted reflexively by the agent" (p. 53).

Alvesson and Willmott (2002, p. 626), on the other hand, argue that when an organization becomes a significant source of identification for individuals, corporate identity (the perceived core characteristics of the organization) then informs (self-identity work. They contend that the reflexive construction of self-identity is assembled out of "cultural raw material: language, symbols, sets of meanings, values, etc." that are derived from countless numbers of interactions with others and exposure to messages produced and distributed by agencies (schools, mass media), as well as early life experiences and unconscious processes. Secondly, it forms a complex mixture of conscious and unconscious elements, an interpretive and reflexive grid gradually shaped by processes of identity regulation and identity work. Lastly, in comparatively stable or routinized life situations, the narrative of self-identity runs smoothly.

2.7.6 Identity control

The studies using the concept of 'identity control' appear to overlap and assimilate in some areas the underlying assumptions associated with both identity regulation and self-identity.

They seem to challenge assumptions that individuals freely undertake processes of self-categorization and identification, mostly with efficacious outcomes for both individual and organization (Nkomo, 1992; Nkomo & Cox, 1996). Instead, the spotlight shifts to the role of organizational elites and discursive regimes in orchestrating the regulation of identities and the resulting political and material consequences. 'Identity control' within the literature thus affiliates itself to a more emancipatory or critical perspective (Habermas, 1972) where issues of power take centre stage.

There remains much-perceived debate on the positive and negative effects of 'identity control' among scholars. Researchers have focused on the managerial interest in regulating employees through appeals to self-image, feelings, values and identifications (Kunda, 1992; Willmott, 1993). Deetz (1995), following in this tradition, proposes that managers here are increasingly concerned with how organizational control is accomplished through the self-positioning of employees within managerially inspired discourses. Similarly, Ibarra (1999) observes that feedback that is clear, vivid and salient at an emotional level may play a critical role in helping the individual to narrow the search for an identity that suits the situation and can be incorporated into a more enduring sense of self. However, Alvesson et al. (2008) draw attention to the negative impacts leading to the creation of an invisible identity cage by interpreting it as a form of negative closure, wherein superiors seduce subordinates into calibrating their senses of self with a restricted catalogue of corporate-approved identities bearing strong imprints of managerial power.

So far, I have touched on the ongoing identity debate to highlight the various theoretical assumptions and perspectives of scholars. Carroll and Levy (2010) note in their empirical study the difficulty faced by leadership development participants to move from their 'default identity' as 'manager' to an emergent 'leader' identity, noting particularly perceived ambiguous

qualities of the latter concept. In the following paragraphs, I discuss research in this area that has explored the leader identity concept with questions such as 'What is a leader identity?' and 'How does leadership identity come about?'

2.8 Self-perception theory

Identities are distinct parts of self-concepts that 'include the internalized meaning of what to do, what to value, and how to behave in various roles and relationships' (Kwok et al. 2018, 2). Hence, identities play an important role when we want to understand behaviour. Individuals have multiple sub-identities (Day and Harrison 2007), and these identities can be more or less central. People with a central identity are 'more likely to demonstrate behavioral consistency in the particular domain of the identity; feel more certain about this self-view, see the self-view as important, and prefer being seen by others in this light' (Kwok et al. 2018, 2). In a recent study, Kragt and Day (2020) propose that participating in leadership experiences and acting like a leader strengthens leader identity (cf. Miscenko et al., 2017). Therefore, they propose this is consistent with the self-perception theory (Bem, 1972), which proposes that individuals draw inferences about their identity from perceptions of their own behaviour. I have been inspired by these studies and have employed Self-perception as the theoretical framework for this case study because it provides useful insights into the power of intrinsic motivation on behaviour. In this thesis, I have used three 'effects' that emerge from the self-perception explanatory framework that forms the central tenets informing leader identity formation for leaders - Misattribution effects, self-attribution of dispositional properties and overjustification effects.

Prominent adult development theories propose that identity develops in a non-linear manner and rarely towards more positive self-perception (Kegan, 1983; Levinson, 1978). Bem's (1972, p.3) self-perception theory is rooted in social psychological studies and stands

on two main tenets: “Individuals come to ‘know’ their own attitudes, emotions, and other intimal states partially by inferring them from observations of their own overt behaviour and/or the circumstances in which this behaviour occurs. Thus, to the extent that internal cues are weak, ambiguous, or uninterpretable, the individual is functionally in the same position as an outside observer, an observer who must necessarily rely upon those same external cues to infer the individual’s inner states”. For instance, Grøn et al.(2020) recently proposed that Public managers’ perception of their leadership identity is both important in itself and a necessary first step toward reaping the rewards of central leadership identity. However, it is also relevant to address the dynamic relationship between public managers’ and their followers’ perceptions and how the different aspects of leadership identity affect organizational performance.

Bem (1972) emphasizes that because self-perception theory is conceived as a ‘behaviourist’ theory, neither the interpersonal observer nor the individual was confined to inferences based upon overt actions only. A common critique, he notes, of the behavioural analyses are cited in cases in which identical behaviours may have different ‘meanings’, meanings which observers have no difficulty in discerning. He argues that the intention or meaning is inferred from the stimulus conditions that appear to be controlling the observed behaviour. Therefore, this as an interpersonal perception was the ability to respond not only to the overt behaviour of others but to respond as well to the controlling variables of which their behaviour appears to be a function. In addition to the cognitive dissonance experiments and the initial studies specifically designed to provide support for self-perception theory, there are a number of other effects that had begun to emerge and fitted to some extent into the self-perception explanatory framework. These include misattribution effects, self-attribution of dispositional properties and overjustification effects.

2.8.1 Core concepts

Self-perception theory was initially formulated, in part, to address empirically certain questions in the 'philosophy of mind' such as when an individual asserts, 'I am hungry', how do they know? Is it an observation? An inference? Direct knowledge? Can they be in error, or is that impossible by definition? How does the evidential basis for such a first-person statement (or self-attribution) differ from the evidential basis for the third-person attribution, 'she/he is hungry'? Originally, it was B. F. Skinner who treated such questions as substantive psychological problems and their role in the science of human behaviour (Skinner, 1945, 1953, 1957) to the extent that Bem (1972) credits Skinner's analysis to have inspired self-perception theory.

Self-perception theory proposes that self- and interpersonal perception are similar in two ways. First, the processes of inference involved in attribution are the same, and, second, both actors and observers share certain sources of evidence − overt behaviour and its apparent controlling variables upon which those attributions and interpersonal attributions can still differ (Bem, 1972). However, four key differences between self-perception and interpersonal perception are also proposed by Bem (1972). The first difference is called the Insider versus Outsider difference. This postulates that all of us have approximately 3−4 ft of potential stimuli inside of us, which are unavailable to others but which are available to us for self-attribution. It is therefore inferred that the Insider can often detect, for example, that she/he is 'trying hard' to solve a problem, and can infer that the problem is difficult, whereas an Outsider lacking such internal information might infer laziness and suppose the problem to be easy.

The second difference is called the Intimate versus Stranger distinction. Here it is proposed that knowledge of our past behaviour guides our attributions, whereas others typically lack such historical information. The difference between Intimate and Stranger is that the

Stranger does not have any past performance upon which to 'anchor' a dispositional attribution, and, hence, she/he is more likely to permit task performance to determine a dispositional attribution than the Intimate, for whom the present task is but a single datum point in a familiar history of intellectual competence. The third difference stems from the Self versus Other difference. It is proposed that motivational effects may enter as the Self seeks to protect her/his esteem or defend against a threat. The fourth and final difference is in perspective between Actor versus Observer, in which different features of the situation are differentially salient to them. For example, Jones and Nisbett (1972) suggest that an actor's attention is focused outward toward situational cues rather than inward on her/his behaviour. For the observer, however, the actor's behaviour is the figural stimulus against the ground of the situation.

2.8.2 Misattribution effects

Schachter's (1964) work on emotional states has proved that one can manipulate an individual's self-attribution by manipulating external factors of the situation. Research by Valins (1967) showed that an individual's self-attributions could also be influenced by giving them false feedback about their autonomic arousal. Further, misattribution was proposed to be created by manipulating not only the apparent degree of arousal but also the apparent sources or causes of arousal. Yet, these studies were considered special cases of the underlying assumptions of self-perception theory even though the source of cues for the self-attribution were not the individual's overt behaviour per se (Nisbett & Valins, 1972). However, this gap was closed by the study by Davison and Valins (1969), which showed that manipulating the subject's behaviour and its apparent controlling variables produced misattribution.

2.8.3 Self-attribution of dispositional properties

Studies discussed so far have confirmed the first postulate of the self-attribution theory – external stimuli can exercise control over an individual's attribution of her/his transitory states

or her/his attitudes. However, some studies also reported that it might be possible to change longer-standing attributions that the individual might have about themselves by manipulating their behaviour and apparent controlling variables appropriately. The first real clue that this might be possible was discovered accidentally by Freedman and Fraser (1966), who were investigating the so-called 'foot-in-the-door' phenomenon in which a person who can be induced to comply with an initial small request is then more likely to comply subsequently with a larger and more substantial demand. They arrived post hoc at a self-perception explanation suggesting that what may occur is a change in the person's feelings about getting involved or about taking action. Once they have agreed to a request, his attitude may change. They may become, in their own eyes, the kind of person who does this sort of thing, who agrees to requests made by strangers, who takes action on things he believes in, who cooperated with good cause (Freedman & Fraser, 1966). Lepper (1971) tested this hypothesis and came to the conclusion that the 'overjustification' effect was a more central finding in his experiment. Next, I discuss in more detail such overjustification effects in relation to self-perception theory.

2.8.4 Overjustification effects

Self-perception analysis of insufficient justification essentially states that a person will infer that she/he was intrinsically motivated to execute the induced behaviour to the extent that external contingencies of reinforcement appeared to be absent. Thus, she/he infers that she/he 'wanted' to do the activity, that she/he believes in it, or that it reflects her/his true opinions (Bem, 1972). An overjustification effect is predicted if one is willing to assume that to the extent those external contingencies of reinforcement are strongly apparent, the individual infers that she/he did not want to perform the activity, that she/he does not believe in it, or that it does not reflect her/his true opinion. Some writers (e.g. Nisbett & Valins, 1972) look to such effects as clearer instances of self-perception phenomena.

Bem (1972) argues that if overjustification effects do occur, then they provide a possible affirmative answer to the old question of whether or not extrinsic reinforcement for an activity reduces the intrinsic motivation to engage in that activity. It was found in other studies that performing the activity under strong contingencies of reinforcement leads to the attribution that the activity must not be enjoyable in itself and then perhaps to decreased motivation to engage in that activity (deCharms, 1968; Deci, 1971, 1972; Deci & Cascio, 1971; Lepper, Greene & Nisbett, 1971).

Intrinsic motivation means a desire to perform a given behaviour simply because it is inherently enjoyable. According to self-perception theory, strong external rewards for conducting a behaviour reduce the tendency to conclude that the behaviour is caused by an internal state. What this means is that when actors are highly rewarded for performing an intrinsically enjoyable behaviour, they tend to dismiss the role of internal states and conclude that their behaviour was caused by external rewards. This 'overjustification effect' can reduce the motivation in actors such as students and employees for their work. Self-perception processes also play a role in the experience of affective states to the extent that people can use their physical expressions as cues to how they feel about an object or stimulus and as cues for what type of information to use in their thinking.

Secondly, drawing inferences from behaviour can also determine how the influence of others can shape a new view of the self. Third, the act of influencing others can also engage self-perception processes that create new views of the self. And, finally, there are conditions under which people can draw conclusions about their own internal states from observing the behaviour of others. To the degree that people share an important social identity, watching others perform an act may be the same as when the self performs the behaviour. As a result, people can deduce what they think and feel from observing the behaviour of similar others.

(Bem, 2010). Therefore, could attributions mediate behaviours that reinforce the formation of a leader identity in leaders either partially or in full? What are the antecedent conditions that could trigger such overt behaviours in leaders? According to self-perception theory, altering the attributions can alter 'consistent' overt behaviour to follow. However, Bem (1972) contends that it appears not to be true, arguing that sometimes behavioural changes do not so much as fail to occur as predicted but occur more easily, more strongly, more reliably and more persuasively than the attribution changes that are, theoretically, supposed to be mediating them.

2.9 Theorizing leader identity

In this case study, I base the definition of leader identity on generic leadership literature, therefore, using it interchangeably with leadership identity and conceptualizing it as the extent to which an individual views himself or herself as a leader (e.g. Hiller 2005; Miscenko, Guenter, and Day 2017; Kwok et al. 2018, Grøn et al., 2020). Organization studies and leadership scholars have examined the concept of leader identity, with particular attention to the perceived identity conflict and the role context plays in influencing leader identity construction. Some view Occupations to shape and create an identity (Christiansen 1999), and Leavitt et al. (2012, 1317) argue that occupational identities are particularly influential sources of moral prescriptions. Inspired by this view, Grøn et al.(2020) propose that an occupational identity is a set of cognitive-affective structures related to identification with people with an educational background and task experience similar to one's own. The key point they make is that membership in a substantive occupation can make it more difficult for individuals to take on a leadership identity when promoted to a public management position because they already have a strong identity. Given strong public sector occupations, taking on a leadership identity may demand a big change in public managers' view of who they are.

There appear to be divergent views on the relationship between leadership and leader identity. Some researchers argue that leadership influence relies on the communication of desired leader identity to potential followers (DeRue & Ashford, 2010; Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010; Sveningsson & Larsson, 2006), such that leaders of social groups also need to maintain their desired group identity to remain influential (Petriglieri & Stein, 2012; Tee, Paulsen, & Ashkanasy, 2013). Others note the complicated nature of identity transition because the transition towards a leader identity can be emotionally challenging if it threatens their ability to communicate a desired group identity to others (Driver, 2012; Fineman, 1997; Vince & Broussine, 1996). In a public sector context, Grøn et al.(2020) propose that the balance between leadership identity and occupational identity is particularly relevant. Further concluding, focusing on the balance between leadership identity and occupational identity makes it relevant to include professional development leadership as a behaviour that is more likely to rely on occupational ties.

There also appear to be two distinct views among researchers about the contradictory emotional experience of leaders as they develop a leader identity. Some researchers acknowledge the potential emotional challenges of developing a leader identity alongside pre-existing social identities, concluding that the experience can be positive, encouraging individuals to engage in identity work to accommodate multiple identity demands (Kippist & Fitzgerald, 2009; Noordegraaf & De Wit, 2012). However, this view is debated by Croft et al. (2014), who argue that social group identity demands generate the potential for identity conflict, as leaders may, at times, be required to act in ways that are incongruent with their desired social group identity, triggering negative emotional responses and undermining their group influence.

Finally, the literature widely notes the challenges associated with the construction of desired identities, in particular the influence of institutional context. O'Reilly and Reed (2010) define managerial leadership as leaderism, a hybrid state between professionalism and managerialism, suggesting professionals may be more willing to take on hybrid roles when framed as leadership. It is suggested as a type of leadership framed by concern with efficiency and meeting targets (Currie & Lockett, 2007). Consequently, subordinate professionals constructing leader identities in the context of 'hybrid positions' appear to encounter difficulties, as they attempt to align the competing demands of two incongruent desired identities (Blomgren, 2003; Kippist & Fitzgerald, 2009; Noordegraaf & De Wit, 2012).

In the next section, I touch on the varied views in the literature on the perceived relationship between leadership development and leader identity. Further, the Conceptualisation of leadership as the building of a shared or collective identity among followers (Haslam et al., 2004), and theorizing a leader identity as being co-created through social interaction, is based on an individual claiming or being granted through cognition or behaviour a self-conception that matches his or her cognitive schema of a leader (DeRue & Ashford, 2010).

In the past two decades, research in the leader identity field has been noteworthy mainly because, rather than following a normative approach, researchers have explored its multi-dimensional nature across multiple research domains. For instance, mobilizing a shared leadership approach within the public sector has seen the rise of a multi-level or 'layers of identity' approach as being more enduring than teaching narrow skills or competencies. An identity approach to shared leadership is promoted as carrying with it the motivation to apply new skills and the schema to adapt behaviour to a diverse range of situations (Day & Harrison, 2007). It is proposed that at an individual level, identity is developed through self-awareness

and self-efficacy, the latter reducing reliance on vertical leaders and helping in establishing identity as a leader (Bligh, Pearce & Kohles, 2006). Establishing this initial level of 'oneself as a leader' is deemed important for shared leadership (Zeier et al., 2018); it allows individuals to transfer between a leader and follower roles (Jackson, 2000). Further development tools assisting self-evaluation such as 360-degree feedback and coaching or mentoring all help develop this self-awareness (Galli & Muller-Stewens, 2012).

Group experiences and techniques such as 'action learning' (Galli & Muller-Stewens, 2012) are proposed to allow individuals to test and strengthen individual leader identities, take on different roles and craft their jobs to align with their own interests (DeRue & Ashford, 2010; Van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003). As emergent leaders gain confidence and exercise voice, they may then be driven by collective goals and values (Van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003). Cross-functional learning groups could facilitate collaboration and a shared understanding (Galli & Muller-Stewens, 2012). Therefore, individual, relational and collective identities could act as both conditions for and outcomes of various stages of the shared leadership development process (Zeier et al., 2018).

A multi-layered view of personal, relational and collective leader identities is also proposed as relevant to different contexts that can activate identity at one level, which could reinforce or undermine identity at another (Vignoles, Regalia, Manzi, Golledge, & Scabini, 2006). Some argue that once developed, leader identities become static and fixed (Komives, Owen, Longerbeam, Mainella, & Osteen, 2005); others argue that leadership identities could be individual, relational, collective and state-like and so socially constructed and inherently related (DeRue & Ashford, 2010). However, there is a continued lack of research on the processes of identity construction and cognition residing in one's self-concept (DeRue, Ashford, & Cotton, 2009; Komives et al., 2005).

2.10 Leader identity development

Research around the development of a leader identity within the public sector from an emergent leader's perspective is a relatively underdeveloped field and has been called to attention (Houghton, Neck, & Manz, 2003), and there is increasing interest around how these identities might change organizations (Zeier et al., 2018). Recently leader identity development has been linked to developmental outcomes that are different from leadership effectiveness, which is a performance-based outcome rather than a developmental outcome, such that the development of a leader identity is proposed as a 'proximal' outcome of leader development (Day & Dragoni, 2015) that can co-vary with leader effectiveness across time. Further, findings from a recent study indicate a positive correlation between leadership identity and leadership training, emphasizing the importance of a better understanding of the effects of leadership training in a public sector context (Grøn et al., 2020). However, Kragt and Day (2020) propose an important distinction between leadership training and development initiatives. They argue that leadership training tends to be focused, structured, short-term interventions in which all participants are expected to acquire the same knowledge and skills. Leadership development tends to be longer-term, more individualized, and focused on senior leaders to expand individual and collective capacity for effective leadership (Day et al., under review).

Zheng & Muir (2015) propose a multi-faceted model of leader identity development such that two aspects (reframing oneself and redefining leadership) need to co-evolve and reinforce each other before one's confidence level can be raised and leader identity incorporated. Their work expands existing knowledge on leader identity development by answering the question of what specific changes are entailed when an individual constructs his or her identity as a leader: an expansion of personal boundaries, an emphasis on other people, and clarity of a

higher purpose for leading, together with changes in how they conceive leadership, and eventually changes in their confidence level.

Arguably, as a leader identity develops, it is likely that an individual will be motivated to attempt new leadership activities and practise the relevant leadership skills and further identity development (Lord & Hall, 2005). Similarly, Day et al. (2009) propose that positive and negative leader identity spirals develop over time, such that an individual could likely participate or not be able to participate in the effective leadership process, respectively. Leader identity serves as a time-varying covariate of development trajectories (Day & Sin, 2011) and leads to a gradual shift (Komives et al., 2005).

Extant literature portrays the influence of leadership development on leaders in a positive light. Kragt and Day (2020) argue that high-potential leaders will experience a positive change in the strength of their leader identity during a leadership development program. This is because the same identity development mechanisms operate across different age and experience groups (Bosma and Kunnen, 2001). However, in contrast to previous research that found a curvilinear, J-shaped developmental trajectory of leader identity among graduate students in a leader development program (Miscenko et al., 2017), they propose that with highly experienced executives there will not be any initial loss in the strength of leader identity. This is because their leader identity is likely to be stable given the breadth and the depth of leadership experience. For example, Kragt and Guenter (2018) found that the identity of inexperienced leaders was more affected by leadership training than that of experienced leaders. Thus, proposing to expect the developmental trajectory of leader identity to be linear and positive among highly experienced executives (Kragt and Day, 2020).

Therefore, experienced leaders participating in a leadership development program are likely to encounter new information that conflicts with their currently held identity. This view is shared by Grøn et al.(2020), who found that public managers with broader spans of control, higher hierarchical positions, longer tenure, and more leadership training will have more central leadership identities. However, their research was unable to conclusively identify in their research if public managers with an initial central leadership identity self-select into leadership development, whether they are recruited into the mentioned types of jobs, or if the identity develops in the process of climbing the hierarchical ladder. Therefore, they urge future research in this area, theoretically expecting a combination of these possibilities.

Studies advocating a processual view of leader identity formation within the context of leadership development have been found across the wider leadership literature. For instance, an emerging processual model to role transition and identity transformation proposed by Hartley (2012) identified three new types "professionalism" – Preparation/entry; Encounter and Adjustment, as an outcome of the leadership development program attended by medical professionals in the UK. This multi-staged model is based on the existing four-stage role transition model developed by Nicholson (1984) with some additions. Other studies describe linking the development of leadership to an individual's cultivation of a more sophisticated and non-self-oriented personal identity as part of the process of maturing as a leader (Lord & Hall, 2005). Others have tended to focus on individual cognitive processes or interpersonal interaction, almost uniformly side-stepping the role of an employer or organizational discourse and power in the shaping of leader identities (Gagnon & Collinson, 2014).

Prominent empirical studies in the field reveal similar results. First, evidently highlighting role tensions for managers and challenges undertaking leadership development as identity conflicts (Carden & Callahan, 2007) and addressing incongruities associated with participants'

work and non-work selves. Second, Carroll and Levy (2010) found how difficult it was for development participants to move from their 'default identity' as 'manager' to an emergent 'leader' identity, given the latter perceived ambiguous qualities. These empirical studies present a compelling case to closely examine the identity construct in gaining a deeper insight into terms such as 'default identities' and 'work and non-work selves.

2.11 Summary

Summarising the main findings, it is perceived from the literature review of the leadership development literature that, in spite of the successive studies, each providing insights that enhance our understanding of the field, there still remains a need to provide empirical evidence to further understand the role and relevance of leadership development in forming a leader identity in public sector leaders. Prior research that has explored this deficit from different angles, using one or more theoretical approaches, has taken us one step closer to understanding the processual nature of leader identity formation. Over time, some empirical research has revealed the complexity of the problem, which has encouraged researchers to employ new paradigms to continue finding answers to the perennial questions. Undoubtedly, forming a leader identity could be interlinked with the adult learning process as much as it could with formal leadership development and training.

CHAPTER 3 – ANALYTICAL STRATEGY

3.1 Introduction

In this study, I have taken a critically reflexive stance to draw inferences about leader identity formation for public sector leaders in a fuller and richer manner. Although, participants in this case study had undertaken the same leadership development course, the course in itself is not examined here. Rather, the experiences of participants, both within and after attending the course, are the focal point of my research. I adopt an interpretive approach to surface conflict, crucible moments and often invisible inter-subjectivities. I draw upon self-perception theory (Bem, 1972) to analyse these discursive states as perceived to trigger changes in participants attending a leadership development programme. In this chapter, I discuss the research paradigm chosen, followed by the preferred research approach. Finally, I bring the confidentiality associated with research participants and relevant ethical considerations that I have attended to in this study.

This study's primary source of inference has been through the analysis of data collected during interviews and insights gained in the field setting. Then there is the secondary information reflected in documentary sources, both published material in publicly available documents on public sector agency websites. Finally, unpublished hand-written notes that I recorded to capture my interactions with participants during interviews and discussions also contributed to the overarching data collected throughout this study. I transcribed all interviews and data coded and analysed them into relevant themes. The semi-structured interviews were the primary method of collecting participants' interpretations and experiences, which formed the core data set that I examined using self-perception theory. All ethical considerations were stringently managed and followed throughout this research.

The primary source of data included 20 interviews, each lasting between 60 to 90 minutes duration. This included 16 participants, two senior public service officials and two leadership development experts. The main focus of this case study is on the 16 participant interviews. All research participants were public service officials who, one way or another, were associated with the Leadership Development Centre (LDC), a branded business unit within New Zealand's Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission. The latter is one of the central New Zealand public service agencies, primarily that "leads and champions the leadership and talent program for New Zealand's public service" (State Services Commission, 2018). The following sections provide more detail about the research context, including the research site and all other analytical considerations I adopted in undertaking this research.

3.2 Researcher considerations

During interviews with participants and other senior public sector managers from LDC, my role as a researcher doubled as a co-participant. Having been employed in the New Zealand public service for close to 20 years, my propensity to being an astute public servant constrained me from being a passive observer in this research. Therefore, my position as a researcher surfaces a perceived bias where I am more interested and attentive to some discursive regions of the leadership development practice within the New Zealand public sector than others. Arguably, I dive head-first into the dominant debates, arguments and rifts, often 'silenced' within the field of public sector leadership development in New Zealand. I visualise myself in an amphitheatre, taking up a vantage point so that, rather than looking solely inwards, I also look sideways and outwards around me as I have actively exchanged, refute and formulate common concerns and ideas with the participants as actors within a shared system.

I have had the opportunity to report to leaders in tier 3 and 4 positions throughout my career. I have witnessed first-hand the dilemmas and strain these leaders face on a day-to-day

basis. On numerous occasions, it appeared to me that they were expected to perform and deliver as leaders within a constantly shifting landscape. Sometimes priorities were swiftly defined and re-defined or entirely changed to meet the senior public service executive decisions. Over the years, I have become curious about their perceptions of themselves as leaders as they constantly manage these perceived tensions and conflicts. What drives them as public sector leaders? What are their leadership development needs within their specific leadership role? Do older experienced leaders have different leadership development needs than younger and less experienced leaders in a senior public sector leadership role? How do they perceive these developmental leadership needs to be addressed by the Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission and their organisation? These perceived views have urged me to undertake this research.

The participants in my case study attended a leadership development programme called Leadership in Practice (LiP). LiP is run by Leadership Development Centre (LDC), which is a business unit within Te Kawa Mataaho. This leadership development programme is attended mainly by senior public sector leaders, such as the Tier three and four leaders. Therefore, the sole reason for inviting participants from this leadership course to take part in this study was this common leadership development experience that they all shared. Every year, LDC would run a total of four LiP programmes for different cohorts. At the time of writing this thesis, LiP had completed delivery for 63 cohorts. Due to ongoing COVID-19 limitations, on advice from Te Kawa Mataaho Public Services Commission and Ministry of Health, LDC cancelled LiP cohorts 64, 65 and 66. The following upcoming programme was resumed with LiP 67 on 23 September 2020.

Theoretical framework

In this thesis, I base my theoretical framework on self-perception theory (Bem, 1972) because it helps to provide valuable insights into the power of intrinsic motivation on behaviour; deduce how inferences from the influence of others and influencing behaviours can shape a view of self, and draw conclusions about their internal states by observing others. Perhaps a different way to approach this could be by taking a multi-dimensional discursive approach to leaders' interpretations of self to understand why they feel the way they think. This is even more critical as the former could provide insights without externalising the leader's emotions and by surfacing the core meaning-making processes that they might employ to imbibe such inferences in the first place. Do all leaders undertaking leader development infer from their learning experiences in the same way or differently? Can the same set of contextual conditions invoke different interpretations in leaders undertaking leader development? If we keep looking in the same places, we are likely to seek the same answers. This presents a need to look beyond the obvious and look more closely at identity formation processes that might inform the perceptions that leaders form and associate and disassociate with self and others.

3.3 Research paradigm

The positivist approach has dominated social science research and leadership studies since at least the last century. The scientific or positivist (Whitely, 2004) tradition developed in the 19th century is based on few tenets – independence (observer-independent of the research situation); value freedom (researcher's choice of study topic and research methods are determined objectively); causality (research aims to identify causal explanations and laws explaining social behaviour); hypothetico-deductive (research uses a process of hypothesising using fundamental laws and deducing what will demonstrate truth/falsity of hypotheses); generalisation (samples of sufficient size are needed to allow generalisation); and cross-section

analysis (regularities are most easily identified when comparing variations across samples) (cf. Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Lowe, 2002; Veal, 2005).

A sufficiently large number of researchers have challenged and rejected the positivist approach favouring the phenomenological or interpretive approach. Interpretivism has its roots in the German intellectual traditions of Hermeneutics and Phenomenology (see Blaikie, 2009). According to Denzin and Giardina (2011), interpretive interactionism asserts that meaningful interpretations of human experience can come only from those individuals who have thoroughly immersed themselves in the phenomena they wish to interpret and understand. Meanwhile, Goffman (1983) proposes that the interactional text is present whenever an individual is located in a social situation. It is ubiquitous. It is the interaction itself. According to Becker (1967), the interpretive approach can be used to locate the assumptions held by various interested parties – policymakers, leaders, leadership development providers – beliefs that are often belied by the facts of experience and show them to be correct or incorrect. It can also identify strategic points of intervention into social situations, thereby evaluating and improving the services of agencies and programmes. This further makes it possible to suggest alternative moral points of view from which the policy and the programme can be interpreted and assessed.

Patton (2002) suggests that decision making about research methods should be pragmatically driven, simply noting that "some questions lend themselves to numerical answers; some don't" (p. 13). The research questions in the present study deal with leader development, which is contextualised in leadership, a social phenomenon (Mumford et al., 2002; Parry, 2008) and leader identity formation, which is associated with perceptions of attributions about self and others. Leadership, in general, as a component of social reality, constitutes a perceived reality and continuously changing social processes and dynamics

(Pettigrew, 1997). Identity construct within the leadership field, on the other hand, is signified as a static or point of reference (Abratt & Kleyn, 2012; Alsem & Kostelijk, 2008; Keller, 2003) as well as multiple and fluid, socially constructed (Bleakley, 2006; Kreber, 2010). Therefore, although this research commenced through an inductive inquiry with engagement with research subjects, it became apparent in the later phases of the study and during data analysis that employment of self-perception theory, which has its roots in the positivistic tradition, was a practical and useful 'scientific tool' in unpacking the meaning-making processes for participants who were forming a leader identity as distinct and separate from their self-identity.

In this research, I have adopted an interpretive approach as the research paradigm, using interpretive interactionism as a mode of qualitative research. I have chosen an interpretive research paradigm because interpretive interactionism focuses on those life experiences that radically alter and shape the meanings persons give to themselves and their experiences. Using this evaluative approach was intentional in understanding the influence and role of leadership development on leader identity formation processes for programme participants. Therefore, this research is grounded in an interpretive interactionism research paradigm. Considering interactionist studies can be idiographic and emic,[6] This research paradigm supports my research endeavours to investigate the deeper meaning-making structures associated with leader identity development for individuals and the role of leadership development in supporting and nurturing these. Since an interpretive approach can be used to locate the assumptions that are held by various interested parties – policymakers, leaders, leadership development providers – beliefs that are often belied by the facts of experience and show them

[6] Interactionist studies can be idiographic and emic; emic investigations are particularising, and idiographic research assumes that each case is unique and always fitted to the historical moment surrounding the subject's life experiences (Denzin & Giardina, 2011).

to be correct or incorrect, it is ideally suited for its use as an evaluative tool for my research case study.

Interpretivism has its roots in the German intellectual traditions of Hermeneutics and Phenomenology (see Blaikie, 2009). According to Denzin and Giardina (2011), interpretive interactionism asserts that meaningful interpretations of human experience can come only from those individuals who have thoroughly immersed themselves in the phenomena they wish to interpret and understand. Meanwhile, Goffman (1983) proposes that the interactional text is present whenever an individual is located in a social situation. It is ubiquitous. It is the interaction itself. According to Becker (1967), the interpretive approach can also identify strategic points of intervention into social situations and, thereby, evaluate and improve the services of agencies and programmes. This further makes it possible to suggest alternative moral points of view from which the policy and the programme can be interpreted and assessed.

According to C. Wright Mills (1959), an interpretivist observes to understand “the larger historical scene in terms of its meanings for the inner life and the external career of a variety of individuals” (p. 5). The focus is on the ‘epiphany’. The epiphany occurs in those problematic situations where the individual confronts and experiences a crisis. The moment of crisis is illuminated. It propagates a point of view that confers meaning on problematic symbolic interaction. Often personal trouble erupts into a public issue. Thus, epiphanies erupt within the larger historical, institutional and cultural arenas surrounding an individual's life (Denzin & Giardina, 2011).

3.3.1 Locating the epiphany

Epiphanies are ritually structured liminal experiences connected to moments of the breach, crisis, redress and reintegration or schism (Denzin & Giardina, 2011). Victor Turner (1986) contends that the "theatre of social life" is often structured around a fourfold processual "ritual

model" involving "breach," "crisis," "redress," and "reintegration" or "schism" (p. 41). The redressive and life-crisis rituals "contain within themselves a liminal phase, which provides a stage…. for unique structures of experience" (Turner, 1986). Liminal phases of experience are detached from daily life. They are characterised by the presence of ambiguous and monstrous images, sacred symbols, ordeals, humiliation, gender reversal, tears, struggle, joy and remorse. The liminal phase of experiences is a kind of no person's land "between the structural past and the structural future" (p.41).

3.3.2 Interpretive evaluation

Using interpretive evaluation, this research articulates the participants' point of view, siding not with the policymakers but with the ‘underdogs’ for whom policymakers make policies (Becker, 1973). However, this does not mean that I do not consider the point of view of the policymakers. I firmly believe that value-free interpretive research is impossible since every researcher brings his or her preconceptions and interpretations for the problem being studied as per the hermeneutical circle or hermeneutical situation (Gadamer, 1975; Heidegger, 1962, 1972). In the next section, I clarify my a priori interpretations of the research problem I have investigated.

Using an interpretive discursive approach, I see leadership as socially constructed, co-created, and evolving, emphasising systemic context and inter-subjective appreciation. I work backwards to elucidate how development and learning are produced via a combination of variegated interests in the organisation. The focus is on a broader, more transformative conception and application of learning, spurred in part by the need for continuous learning in the workplace, requiring informal, embedded and incidental learning strategies (Marsick & Watkins, 1997; Raelin, 2000).

3.3.3 A priori interpretation

In recent years, critical studies of organisations have increasingly revealed how identities can be shaped by dominant organisational discourses and practices (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Kenny, Whittle, & Willmott, 2011; Thomas, 2009). Yet, these critical perspectives tend to concentrate on management to neglect leadership development as a field of analysis, viewing the latter area as more suited to work focused on practitioners and informed by functionalist and normative research orientations (Gagnon & Collinson, 2014). Second, given the political and moral underpinnings of my research focus on leader development, I base my research foundation within Foucauldian (Foucault, 1977; Foucault & Bennington, 1979) ideas on discourse analysis. By doing so, I engage in the power dynamics of truth in organisations without setting my research analytical framework up as the final arbitrator of truth claims or a new knowledge regime within the field of leadership development. Instead, as a researcher, I bring to the surface hidden and contestable experiences, such as getting to dialogue alternatives that undermine the apparent presumptions.

3.3.4 Role of language

In this research, I argue that language is key to processes in which leader identity as self, other and relations are formed as relational ontologies. Poststructuralism has long since seen language as the prime site of the person's construction, to the extent that identity, experience, and personality are all deemed the effects of language (Burr, 2003). Moreover, language appears capable of transcending the reality of everyday life altogether, for instance, by interpreting the ‘meaning’ of a dream through ‘symbolic language’ where it draws on concepts that are not only de facto but a priori unavailable to everyday experience (Berger & Luckman, 1967).

The constructive force of language in social interaction could result in fragmented, shifting and temporary identity. This view is an essential point of departure for my research. It beckons to explore leader identity as a multi-faceted, short, evolving and changing position rather than the traditional view in mainstream leadership studies where leader identity is seen as given or fixed. Therefore, I accept an anti-essentialist argument and reject the idea of one coherent, unified self by proposing that if self is a product of language and social interactions, then the leader identity or self, once formed, would constantly be in flux, always changing depending on the social context it is subjected to, rather than the personal experience (Burr, 2003). In doing so, I perceive language as not about constructing objective and subjective knowledge (see Falzon, 1998) of a singular, 'real' reality. Instead, I focus on the relational processes as they construct local relational realities (Hosking, 2008).

3.3.5 Research ontology

My ontological preference is rooted in interpretive interactionism, consequently demarcating it from the mainstream theory and leadership development, which primarily has a bend towards skills and competency acquisition (Carroll & Levy, 2010). I do not claim that interpretive interactionism is superior – only that it is different, that these differences open up new possibilities for action within the field of leadership development. Therefore, they should be given serious attention. It assumes that meaning must be captured in interpretation, is symbolic and operates at the surface and deep levels (Denzin & Giardina, 2011). My ontological position assumes power as a relational process where power is ongoing, relational construction, and able to open and close possibilities. And that all acts (texts) 'act into' processes that are already ongoing (contexts) and so may contribute to the ongoing (re)production of power relations (Hosking, 2008).

3.3.6 Research epistemology

My research epistemology believes that theory is a way of seeing and thinking about the world rather than an abstract representation of it (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000). As such, I see it as a 'lens' that I have used in observation than a 'mirror' of nature (Rorty, 1979). The lens metaphor has helped to make the research design choices I discuss in the subsequent sub-sections. Guided by Alvesson and Deetz (2000), I take up a position that proposes the treatment of observations as being preceded and comparable to theoretical accounts and hides the theoretical choice (whether through concept or instrumentation or both) implicit in the observation itself.

By following other researchers' tradition, I see organisations in general as social-historical creations, born in conditions of struggle and domination – domination that often hides and suppresses meaningful conflict. I have chosen this approach as it confronts other works of social explanation, analysing their strengths, weaknesses and blind spots. It demonstrates the capacity to incorporate their insights for a stronger foundation for new possibilities and positive implications for social action through a continuous re-examination of the historical and cultural conditions and the conceptual frameworks used, including the historical construction of these frameworks (Calhoun, 1995). I have grounded my research in the most explicit set of value commitments and have given the most direct attention to moral and ethical issues.

3.3.7 Research technique

Consistent with the epistemological approach, I have taken participants' accounts as retrospective explanations and justifications in shaping and constituting organisational practices (Gagnon & Collinson, 2014; Prasad & Prasad, 2000). While continuing to iterate between emerging findings and the literature, I used inductive reasoning to conduct detailed coding of emergent themes in the chosen site until I had reached a point of saturation and an understanding of the leading practices. The practices of leadership development within the

studied context were my main focus of analysis; I have worked to understand these as reconstructed by the participants and other informants through discourse. All empirical material has been critically evaluated before deciding what it could be used.

Further, I have taken a reflexive stance in the entire research characterised by the awareness of interpretative acts and consideration of the alternative ways of describing and interpreting the participants for empirical material (inferences, interview statements, and so on) (Alvesson, 1996). Reflexivity, therefore, entailed the self-critical consideration of my assumptions and the consistent consideration of alternative interpretative lines and the use of different research vocabularies (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009).

All empirical material, including interviews, has been called into careful critical reflection. I have interpreted data in terms of possible qualities going beyond script-following accounts and impression management. I have critically evaluated all empirical material before deciding where it could be used. I have given attention to statements that said something about norms for expression, ways of producing effects (e.g. identity work) or something else where accounts needed to be interpreted in terms of what they accomplished rather than what they mirror (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009). Using a situational focus (Alvesson, 1996), in which both participants and organisational context are present, I provide a structured approach to describing the empirical material to be open for other interpretations.

The interview has been regarded as a social situation – a kind of conversation –that is said to be far too context-dependent to be seen as a mirror of what goes on outside this specific situation in the interviewee's mind or the organisation 'out there. I have viewed participants put in an interview context as not just 'truth tellers' or 'informants', but as those who "use their language to do things, to order and request, persuade and accuse" (Potter & Wetherell, 1987,

p. 32). This has entailed me as the researcher to take up an open and accepting stance while interviewing because interviewees are often likely to speak according to norms of talk and interaction in a social situation. The metaphorical, constitutive, and performance-oriented aspects of talks have not been disregarded. I have thus used the research interview as the scene for a conversation rather than a simple tool for the collection of 'data' (Alvesson, 1996).

All empirical material, including written texts and data from interviews, field notes, inferences drawn from informal discussions, was collected within the remit of leadership development programme discourse. Discourse is, therefore, referred to in this research as a set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, stories, statements and so on that in some way together produce a particular version of the events (Burr, 2003).

This research focuses on the influence of leadership development on leaders within the New Zealand public service, mainly tier 3 and 4 leaders. I give voice to their experiences as a collective, studied and represented against the dominant administrative and political narrative. I demonstrate and critique forms of domination, asymmetry and distorted communication perceived as hidden within a leadership development programme by showing that the construction of specific interests is favoured, and alternative constructions could be obscured and misrecognised. Therefore, my research is grounded in the most explicit set of value commitments and most direct attention is given to moral and ethical issues.

Finally, I ground my research in an appreciative critique inviting possibilities that could help leaders as research participants learn how to improvise better and imagine new ways of working together. This shift to appreciation aims to recognise and bring forth the many ways of participation that facilitate ‘power to’ and ‘power with’ rather than ‘power over’ (Hosking, 2008) within ongoing relational processes.

3.3.8 Relational processes and local realities

The main aim of this thesis was to open up the ‘black box’ of relational processes (Latour, 1987) within the leadership development context by cantering multiple, simultaneous inter-textualities rather than on a singular object such as trait, skill or competency. Thereby, I have focused on how the ongoing processes take form and stay open to the possibility of multiple and changing constructions of leader identity. By using a critical relational discourse, I took up a stance emphasising that what I will validate or discredit as (not) real and (not) good is local to the ongoing perceived leadership development programme that (re)constructs a particular form of life. This assumption contrasts with the more common belief of a singular ‘real’ reality about which generalisable, trans-historical knowledge can be produced. Secondly, I viewed relational processes and facts within the ongoing leadership development context as local-historical, such that all acts (or texts) between leaders would potentially supplement other actions (or contexts) and can be readily (dis)credited. Because interactions, and particularly regularly repeated ones, ‘make history’ (Falzon, 1998; Foucault, 1977/1980), history then could take a local form and, therefore, as a possibility is constantly being made (Hermans et al., 1992).

As a researcher, I have brought to attention the relational processes, which will be theorised broadly to include conceptual language as it will be written and spoken and the simultaneously embodied, aesthetic and sensual, local-cultural and local-historical aspects of relating (Hosking, 2008). Further, I argue against an individualistic 'essential nature' that could refer to several things: personality traits, attitudes, etc. In conclusion, I moved away from a traditional viewpoint based on a stable active-passive binary between the leader as 'self' and 'other'. Instead, I viewed relating as an active ongoing process that constructs and reconstructs self/other and relations. I argue against the existence of a ‘knowing subject’ who relates to the

‘other as knowable object’ to ‘construct’ knowledge of an external reality. Thus, this opens the possibility of multiple relational realities, which Hosking (2008) refers to as local ontologies.

Further, rather than seeing questioning as finding out about pre-existing reality, I would like to theorise this as formative of relational realities. Additionally, I have paid careful attention to listening and speaking in its relational message and its role in openness and appreciation. I have heard in ways that are more open to other(ness), to multiple voices and to possibilities involved in listening in ways that are both ‘not knowing’ (Anderson, 1997) and not self-centred (Hosking, 2008). Since I focused on the ‘how’ rather than on the ‘what’ of formation, processes, in this case, study have been theorised as the ever-moving construction site in which the relational realities of leaders and their worlds are continuously (re)produced. This means that leader and world, self and other (including other people) are viewed as reciprocal co-construction that are always in the process of becoming. This view differs from most other ‘modernist’ views (Hosking, 2008) that treat leaders and the world as ontologically before processes and theorise the latter as receiving inputs (or information) from leaders and the world.

3.3.9 Research Site

Choosing one research site is not without limitation; however, I draw upon the seminal work of identity and constructionist researchers from organisation studies for this design (Carroll & Levy, 2010; Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2003a; Watson, 2008). These researchers argue that it enables the researcher to provide intensive and detailed explorations of identity processes while paying close attention and sensitivity to a specific context, reinforcing the meso-discourse approach I used. I concentrated my attention on 16 participants, comprising senior public-sector leaders from across the government agencies in New Zealand, resulting in a more holistic perspective of the identity work within the development experience within a given cohort.

While conducting this research, I have called into careful critical reflection all empirical material, including interviews. I interpreted these in terms of possible qualities beyond script-following accounts and impression management, and I critically evaluated all empirical material before deciding what it can be used. I also gave keen attention to statements that said something about norms for expression, ways of producing effects (e.g. identity work) or something else where accounts must be interpreted in terms of what they accomplish rather than what they mirror (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009). Using a situational focus (Alvesson, 1996), in which both participants and organisational context are present, I have provided a more structured approach to describing the empirical material so that it is open to other interpretations.

3.3.10 Research activities

Before commencing my research, I closely reviewed the training programmes that LDC offered from the information available on their website. The structure of the LiP programme was well suited for my research design because it incorporated core development techniques that have been widely researched within the leadership field. This included but was not exclusive to tools and techniques such as 360-degree feedback (Day, 2001), self-reflection (Janson et al., 2008), resilience training (Hartley, 2018), coaching (Anderson & Anderson, 2005; Blessing & White, 2008; Day, 2001; DeLay & Dalton, 2006; Frankovelgia & Riddle, 2010), mentoring (Cohen et al., 1999; Kram & Bragar, 1992), individual development plans for goal setting (Latham, Saari, & Campbell, 1979) and action learning (Argyris & Schön, 1978, 1996; Kramer, 2008). Later, during the participant interviews, it became clear that the coaches and facilitators also worked with participants to suit their individual training needs by using other development tools and techniques.

I approached officials at LDC to discuss my research and to gain their support and approval to use LiP as a case study. Once I received LDC's approval, I carefully selected the participant group from LDC's dataset comprising 50 participants who had attended the LiP programme between 2014–2016. This initial dataset consists of the participants' names, email addresses and agency details. However, I had restricted permission to access any private or confidential information about the training, development notes, or other related participant information. Therefore, in this case study, I have used the interviews as my primary source of data, and the secondary source of data includes other documentary sources available on the LDC website about the LiP course.

3.3.11 Familiarisation phase

This was the preliminary stage of my research with the driving intention to expand my understanding of the relevant aspects of the research topic. I selected five lead participants to provide an authoritative overview of the topic. These included informal discussions with past participants of the leadership development programme to gain an insight into topical ideas relevant to the research question. I also met with all research participants to provide them with an opportunity to ask questions through a medium (virtual or face-to-face meetings) they preferred. They were also informed about their right not to answer any questions, to choose not to be recorded by any device or to decline their participation entirely from the research. I communicated with the programme participants that their involvement (or withdrawal from) the study would not affect their status within the programme in any way.

3.3.12 Main phase

This was the main phase of my research starting from March 2018. This stage spanned nine months. This constituted the main stage of the study, whereas as a PhD student, I was attentive to capturing, analysing and interpreting the meso-discourse (Alvesson & Karreman, 2000).

Since I have taken an emancipatory stand in my research, I constantly attempted to understand participants' perspectives on how they framed the data, with critical attention to the context against which the data was gathered. In the next few sections, I provide an outline of the leadership development course attended by the participants.

3.4 Leadership development programme

Leadership in Practice (LiP) is broken up into four parts: a two-hour kick-off session; a four-day residential (line-in); nine months of action learning; and one-on-one coaching.

The four-day residential

The four-day residential marks the start of the learning and training acquired at LiP. The attendees are encouraged to focus on their leadership by immersing themselves in an environment away from their workplace. They are encouraged to spend time on self-reflection and plan the 'impact' they want to have as a public sector leader. The focus is also to enhance participants' ability to build trusted networks with colleagues on the cohort from other agencies who would support their ongoing learning and development and help develop cross-sector collaborations. Occasionally, chief executives and senior officials from across the public sector are invited as guest speakers to share their leadership learning and experiences with the participants.

Areas of development include improving knowledge of effective leadership, self-awareness and emotional intelligence as a leader; their impact on others as a leader; and adaptive leadership and resilience in practice. One of the critical criteria to attend the course is a nomination from a participant's manager to participate in the course and support from the agency, including providing funding for the course in its entirety.

Pre-programme

a. A kick-off session includes a two-hour session aimed at participants to learn more about LiP and meet the other participants and the wider LDC team. Other activities relevant to this learning stage include:
b. Pre-reading and reflection – The programme takes a 'blended learning approach, emphasising the content and theory being available online to participants before the workshop. As part of this learning stage, participants are encouraged to undertake reflective exercises and quizzes in advance of the workshops. The workshops are to be used to discuss and practise learnings with other members of the cohort.
c. Resilience diagnostic – The four-day residential programme provides detailed insights into participants' well-being, resilience and effectiveness. Participants receive personalised attention, recommendations and a comprehensive self-development toolkit to assist them in building and developing bounce, well-being and resilience.
d. Complete Leadership Circle assessment – The Leadership Circle assessment measures the two primary leadership domains – Creative Competencies and Reactive Tendencies – and integrates this information to highlight the key development opportunities for participants.
e. 1:190-minute coaching debriefs – The coaching debrief sessions provide the opportunity for participants to discuss the results of their 360-degree assessment with an experienced LDC coach. The intention here is to identify critical areas where development is needed and to reflect and plan.

1-8 month period

Over the next eight months, the programme is broken up into key areas to keep track of the participants' progress and support them once they are back in their work environment. Key activities relevant to this learning stage include:

a. 4-day residential workshop – LiP begins with the four-day residential that aims to focus on their leadership and themselves in an environment away from their workplace.
b. Three facilitator-led Action Learning Groups – Participants attend three sessions throughout the nine months, each three hours long. In each of these sessions, participants are encouraged to reflect on their own experiences and support each other to create solutions using Action Learning Methodology.
c. Three self-driven Action Learning Groups – Participants attend three sessions during the nine months, each for three hours, to talk about their workplace experiences and visit different public sector agencies represented in the group to understand other work settings better to help work together better.
d. 60-minute three-way conversations between participant, manager and coach – This session is geared to help participants discuss their development plan with their manager and their coach and agree on the best way to receive targeted ongoing support.
e. Complete Individual Development Plan – Participants are encouraged to develop an individual development plan as part of their attendance at LiP and track their progress against it.

f. Five 1:1 30-minute coaching sessions – Participants also receive five one-to-one coaching sessions from coaches on the programme who work with participants in helping them to achieve their individual development goals.

9th and final month

In the final month, a last action learning group and graduation session are held. This provides participants with an opportunity to meet their cohort to share their achievements since completing the programme. It is also an opportune time to discuss any other workplace challenges they might face, support each other and reflect on their own experiences to create solutions.

3.5 Participant selection process

Participants were selected based on their leadership role within their agency at the time they had attended LiP. Only senior public sector leaders, mainly the Tier three and four leaders are eligible to attend LiP. Therefore, this was the main reason for choosing LiP to study the leadership development experiences of these senior public sector leaders. Some participants had changed jobs during their attendance at LiP, while a few others had taken up new roles within the same agency or in another government department. Participants who were no longer employed within the public service were not considered during the sampling process, as the research focus was on public sector leaders only. I emailed all 50 individuals listed in the dataset about my research to request their voluntary participation in the case study.

As part of the invitation to participate, I provided a consent form, an information sheet with a brief research outline for their reference and my Victoria University of Wellington email for correspondence. Out of the 50 emails I sent out, I received email responses from 16 participants who showed interest in participating in the case study and were open to the

interview process. I followed up with participants with a second email to confirm a preferred date and time to organise interviews. Out of the 16 participant interviews, I conducted ten interviews face-to-face, one was using video-conferencing technology, and the remaining five were over the phone. Here, participants' location and availability determined the medium used to undertake all interviews. For instance, mainly telephone interviews, with one exception, were conducted with participants outside of Wellington.

3.6 Participants

All the research participants were full LDC members enrolled in the programme between 2015–2017 and did not avail themselves of the scholarship scheme. It was easiest to assume that all the participants, being senior leaders within the public service, belonged to a homogeneous group. However, this assumption I quickly discounted as this was not the case. The table below outlines the participant's profile in detail, with the pseudonyms included. I have used these pseudonyms throughout this thesis. All 16 participants had their individual unique stories to share. For example, because the age group of the participants varied significantly, many between 35−65 years, their interpretations and perspectives were also different.

Table 3. 1 Participant profile

Name	Age (Years)	Gender	Length of Service in the public sector (Years)	Tier	Professional Background
Peter	<40	Male	<20	3	Generalist
Victoria	<40	Female	<20	3	Technical expert
Anita	<40	Female	>20	4	Technical expert
Courtney	>40	Female	>20	3	Technical expert
Sara	>40	Female	>20	4	Generalist
Gabrielle	<40	Female	<20	3	Technical expert
Ella	<40	Female	<20	4	Technical expert
Felicity	>40	Female	>20	3	Generalist
John	>40	Male	<20	3	Generalist
Jack	>40	Male	<20	4	Generalist
Sonia	<40	Female	>20	3	Technical expert

Nicole	>40	Female	>20	3	Generalist
Bill	<40	Male	<20	4	Generalist
Arthur	<40	Male	<20	4	Technical expert
Tina	<40	Female	<20	3	Technical expert
Karen	>40	Female	>20	3	Generalist

The first differentiating factor was the level of seniority as a public sector leader. Some participants were experienced senior leaders, mainly tier 3 leaders, who had spent 20 plus years in the public service, both within their organisations and across the sector. A few others were senior public servants who had been in the public service for 15 plus years but were on their first 'major' tier 3 leadership role. Yet, some were tier 4 managers in their organisation and had been in the public service for 20 plus years.

Second, their overall career span within the public service varied considerably. A few participants had moved between the public and private sectors during their 25 years' service. Some had never worked in the private sector and had no intention to move out of the public service to seek a professional career outside it. These leaders had mainly worked in the same organisation throughout their career spanning 15–25 years or in various roles across the sector. Third, there was an uneven spread of technical and non-technical experts within the group. These leaders again had had a public sector career spanning fewer than ten years to over 15 years. Some of these leaders had a solid technical background and were qualified experts in their field of specialisation, having stepped into a senior leadership role. Meanwhile, others had moved up the ranks through various managerial positions across the public service and their agencies. These classed themselves as not being experts in any specific field but rather as generalists.

Finally, there appeared to be variations in the functional scope of their leadership role. Some participants functioned in a leadership role that focused solely within their organisation,

while others had cross-agency and, in some cases, cross-sector responsibilities. Few participants were in various senior leadership roles working across national and international domains; they had responsibilities to their respective managers and ministers.

3.7 Sampling technique

The sampling methods and processes used in this research align with Bryman's (2011) considerations when deciding how large a sample should be. The eight independent cohorts I studied (listed below) were part of the leadership development programme, LiP, run by the LDC over two years between 2014–2016. Each cohort comprised leaders from across the New Zealand public sector. The female participants outnumbered the male participants. All participant information has been kept confidential throughout the research as was conditional in the participant signed consent forms. Therefore, to avoid any direct reference to the participants or the organisations they are employed in, I have refrained from providing a detailed description of the participants to exempt a case for specificity.

I emailed 50 LiP programme leaders between 2013–2018 invitations to participate in the research. A total of 16 participants responded to participate in the study. I conducted interviews in two stages. The first or primary round of semi-structured interviews was undertaken between January–April 2018 and followed by second interviews between May–July 2018. I interviewed Wellington-based participants using face-to-face interviews, and participants outside of Wellington were interviewed over the phone and using video conferencing technology.

3.8 Data sources and data collection

The data collected from semi-structured interviews were the primary source of data. In addition, I also collected data from a broad range of secondary sources of information, including Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission's leadership policy and strategy papers, advisory group reports, online videos and other relevant information published on the

Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission and the LDC websites, the Leadership development course material to produce a 'first reading'.

I undertook informal discussions with the programme facilitators and senior staff from LDC to gather historical documentary sources and course material, including articles and videos provided to leaders attending the LiP programme. Also, I have used information retrieved from multiple data sources, various other forms of documentary evidence, including academic publications and online videos, and other material relevant to the research question.

3.9 Interviews

I used semi-structured interviews to get a better understanding of the meaning of events for the interviewees. These identified critical issues and concerns by conducting short scoping interviews with a small number of leaders participating in the programme. I based interview discussions on questions such as:

- How did they interpret a particular event?
- How did they approach the situation?
- What led to the particular approach?
- What aspects of the LiP programme did the participants recognise as influential to their leadership development?
- What learnings had led to a particular point of view?
- How was it related to the practice in which participants engaged?

I regarded an interview as a social situation – a kind of conversation – which is said to be far too context-dependent to be seen as a mirror of what goes on outside this specific situation – in the interviewee's mind or the organisation 'out there. I used Potter & Wetherell's (1987, p. 32) approach, which proposes that persons put in an interview context are not just "truth-tellers"

or "informants", but "use their language to do things, to order and request, persuade and accuse" (p. 32). I viewed the research interview as the scene for a conversation rather than a simple tool for the collection of 'data' (Alvesson, 1996).

Reassuring interviewees about anonymity was a vital part of my research. When I used a tape recorder during interviews, I offered to switch it off during specific aspects of the interview. I also offered to refrain from directly using certain pieces of information if this might encourage the interviewee to talk more openly. I have not cited this information in my research, even anonymously, but simply referred to a phenomenon without the support of a direct quote. This approach might be considered non-evidential in some respects. Still, I would follow the rule that it is better to listen to accounts about sensitive material within such constraints than to be ignorant about them altogether.

Interviews were semi-structured so that the participants were free to answer as much or as little as they believed was relevant to the discussions. I aimed to start a deep conversation with them to transcend rank, file, culture, race and gender issues that dichotomised us to seminal areas within the leadership field that have engaged and enthralled clever and astute minds time and again. I noticed that this technique allowed more humane, worldly discussions to flourish, emerge and unfold through the ebb and flow of emotions – laughter, tears, frustrations, elation, guilt and surprise.

Participants were interviewed in their offices or outside in meeting rooms at the university. All interviews were recorded with a digital recorder and transcribed. In a few rare instances, the participants requested that the recorder be switched off. Here, I switched off the recorder during the interview but have referred to the unrecorded material as discourse informing the overall interview data. Some interviews were also conducted over the phone and

using video conferencing technology. In every interview, I followed a consistent pattern. I provided participants with a consent form and information sheet before commencing the interview. I then introduced my role as a researcher and the focus of the research. I provided the participants with an opportunity to ask questions related to the study, further encouraging them to raise concepts and ideas relevant to the research topic. Each interview followed a strict protocol of confidentiality and a code of ethics.

I took field notes during the interviews, which formed a supplementary source of the data. All the interviews were transcribed manually, without the transcription tool used to transcribe the data digitally. This decision was a conscious one to pick up the emotional pattern of each interview, including close attention to the participant's tone and pace. I conducted the first round of interviews over 60-90 minutes, while the second round of interviews was from 20 to 30 minutes. I conducted an initial inductive analysis soon after the completion of the first interview round. This helped to confirm a pattern of emergent themes to develop, which was further retested and validated through the second round of interviews with participants.

Phase 1: First interview

I interviewed 16 LiP participants across eight different cohorts at the beginning of the data collection period. The semi-structured interviews yielded emergent themes. Then I recorded the first interview using a digital recorder. I then transcribed the interviews and conducted an initial inductive analysis of the data before proceeding to the second interview with participants.

Phase 2: Second interview

The second interview comprised six participants across five cohorts. I aimed with these interviews at clarifying answers to specific questions from the first interview that was either not clear or needed more explanation than that was provided by the participants in the previous instance. Therefore, I selected the participants for the second interview after conducting an initial analysis of the interview data from the first interviews. The second interviews were more informal and touched on aspects of the first interview discussion that were unclear or too concise to allow for any thematic description to emerge. This was also my opportunity to revisit the 'what if' questions with the participants by considering possible options for consideration. Finally, it was also a session where I validated my interpretations with the participants to allow their interpretation to reflect in mine so that I was not inadvertently doing the reverse. Some themes and concepts were validated and explored more deeply in the second interview with participants. Finally, as I quickly identified that no new themes were emerging from the second interview, no further interviews were conducted.

3.10 Data sources

The interviews became the primary source of data to generate more information on casual chains ('what led to what') that were always assumed core parts of the meeting with the interviewees. I pursued empirical work - interviewing, inferring - aiming to say something beyond language use (and deconstruction) but without leading to valid representations of reality. Instead, accessible and creative ideas, indicating multiple realities, and a plurality of possible ways of relating to these realities will be central to my research (Alvesson and Karreman, 2000). I made field notes throughout this period by recording hand-written notes and, in other cases using digital software such as OneNote. I have broken down this information based on the date, location and purpose of each note-taking session.

I was not permitted to participate in the leadership development programme LiP sessions and activities with the participants within their respective cohorts. As a result, my inferences are mainly restricted to the interview sessions with the participants. Throughout, I took field notes during and after interviews and penned memoirs, all of which contributed to building on thick descriptions of the events and experiences described by the participants during interviews.

The research data were coded and analysed using a thematic approach in Microsoft Excel. I used post-it notes to elucidate themes and sub-themes based on a common pattern emerging from the interview data once transcribed. I stuck the post-it notes on my office wall and moved them around into relevant categories based on the criteria they best fit in. I systematically analysed leadership development course material, including books, articles, and videos to structure concepts, ideas, categorisations, metaphors, and key storylines. This assisted me in outlining the process of events as well as the sites of discursive production.

3.11 Data collection documents

The data collected through the data collection method described above yielded much data. Even the early inferences made through the initial information and data gathering process were recorded and later catalogued into themes. This included views and interpretation of participants that surfaced multiple perspectives related to, but not constrained, to their perspectives and other perspectives that surfaced an a priori position. I categorised the data collected in the earliest phases of the research (in field notes, interview notes and research memos) and coded it into the relevant themes.

I collected data from a broad range of secondary sources of information, including SSC leadership policy and strategy papers, advisory group reports, online videos and other relevant information published on the Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission and LDC

websites, and the LDC material to produce a 'first reading'. I have used information retrieved from multiple data sources and various other forms of documentary evidence, including academic publications, online videos and others relevant to the research question. I engaged in discussions and meetings with the programme facilitators and the LDC for information on historical documentary sources and course material, including articles and videos provided to participants in the programme within a given cohort comprising up to 16 senior leaders and other materials.

3.12 Coding and data analysis

All interview transcripts were categorised, coded into themes and later analysed to inform the research findings, see fig 3.1. I assigned codes to a group of sentences rather than a single sentence that conveyed a key concept (Glaser, 2002). This resulted in some cases, in one or more paragraphs in the transcript rather than a single sentence being included within a single category. Relationships between one or more types began to emerge once I compared categories with other categories and data in a process called theoretical coding (Glaser & Holton, 2004). I drew out the central ideas and concepts developing from these codes using thematic analysis (Charmaz, 2014). Further, when concepts originating from participants narratives were mapped and compared with other concepts, some codes emerged as more important than others. This made some of the original research perceptions and assumptions void, and I replaced them with new research perceptions and beliefs that were more suited to the line of inquiry chosen.

I undertook full care and attention in handling the large amount of data generated through this process, resulting in an even more precise and rigorous technique for analysing the data as prescribed by Parry (1998). I avoided the use of any computer software for electronically organising and coding the data. Instead, hand-written notes and freehand concept maps led to

diagrammatic and graphics-oriented methods used for coding, reorganising and thematic analysis of the data. I used Microsoft PowerPoint Presentation software to draw the leader identity formation framework. I used post-it notes to capture concepts/ideas that I later placed on a large wall as this helped to group and re-group these into codes, which are listed below.

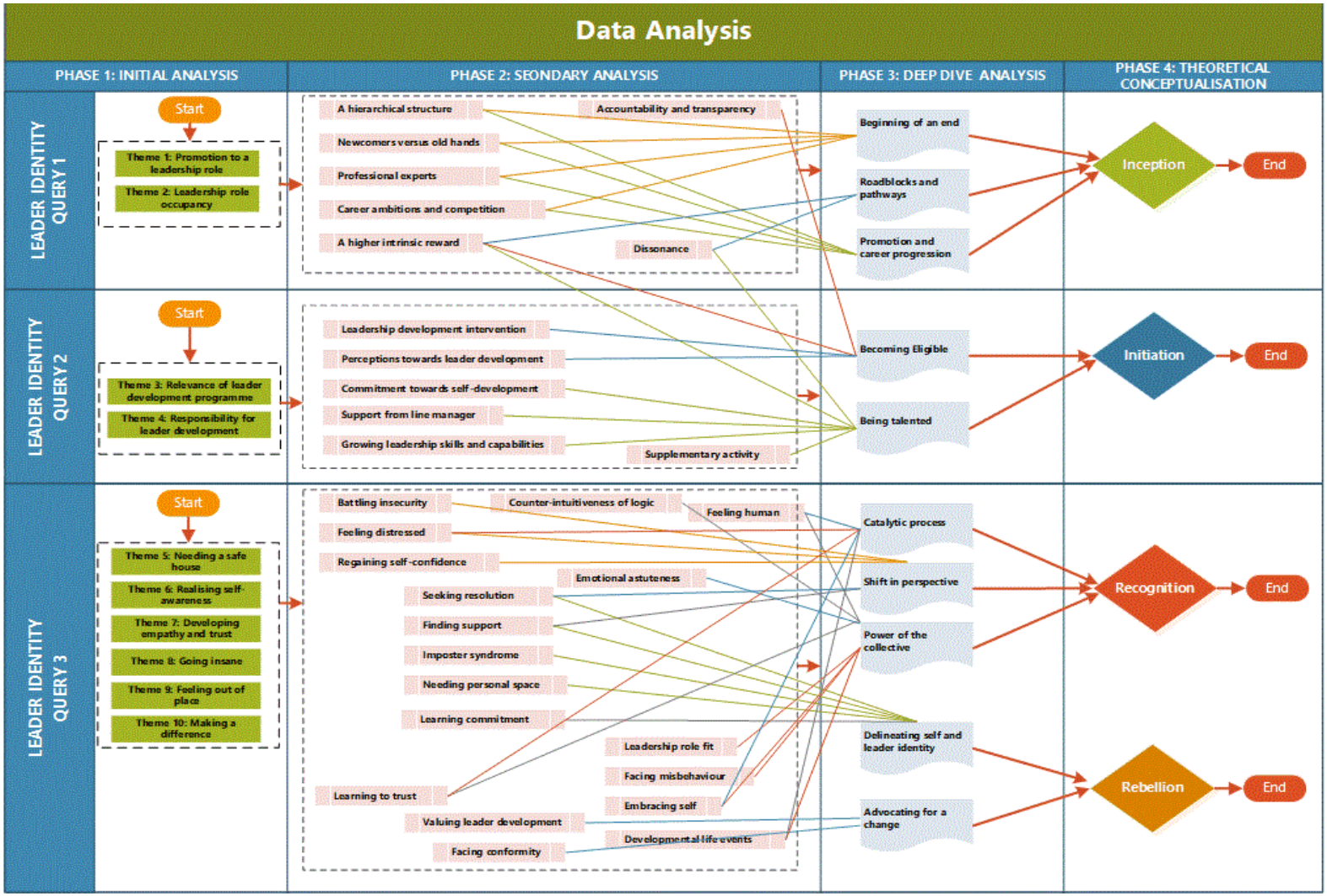


Figure 3. 1 Coding and data analysis

The themes presented in this section emerged from the analysis of interview transcripts recorded during interviews with participants. This included answers provided by participants to interview questions and discussions with participants during the interview process. I posed interview questions to participants in the form of relative terms (To what extent? How much? How little?). I undertook the coding and analysis process in four broad phases:

1. Phase 1 − Initial Analysis
2. Phase 2 − Secondary Analysis
3. Phase 3 − Deep Dive Analysis
4. Phase 4 − Theoretical Conceptualisation

In the next few sections, I explain each of these phases in detail to further explain the coding and analysis process.

Phase 1 – Initial Analysis

In phase 1 I developed interview questions to pursue three main lines of inquiry called Leader Identity Query (LIQ):

1. Leader Identity Query 1: Public sector leadership career pathways.
2. Leader Identity Query 2: Leader development within the public service.
3. Leader Identity Query 3: Role of leadership development towards leader identity formation.

Table 3. 2 Leader Identity Query (LIQ)

Public sector leadership career pathways

Leader Identity Query (LIQ): 1) To what extent do leaders rate leadership positions and promotions relevant to their leadersh experience? 1a) What aspects of their leadership experience were important to them? 1b) How did they rate their overall experience – positive or negative? 2) Why did senior leaders wish to be appointed to public service leadership roles? 2a) How relevant/important did they think their role as a public sector leader was? 2b) To what extent did they distinguish between their role identity and leader identity?
Leader development within the public service Leader Identity Query (LIQ): 3) To what extent were leaders responsible for their leadership development? 3a) How did they actively pursue development and training? 3b) What was the role of the agency in developing leaders? 4. Why did they choose LiP over other programmes or courses?
Role of leadership development towards leader identity formation Leader Identity Query (LIQ): 5. To what extent did leaders feel affected by LiP? 5a) What was their experience at LiP? 5b) What events/experiences impacted them emotionally? 5c) What was their experience in the workforce during the nine months while attending LiP? 6. To what extent did LiP inform their leader identity formation process? 6a) What was their experience after completion of LiP? 6b) How was their experience at LiP relevant to their development? 6c) What aspects of LiP created a lasting impression on them? 7. How did participants describe themselves as leaders?

7a) What description did they prefer? 7b) How did they perceive that their colleagues or peers described them as leaders? 8. To what extent did the leaders feel a sense of leader identity incongruence/struggle in their relationship with their managers or peers? 8a) What was their experience and interpretation of their leader identity struggle? 8b) How did they respond to their identity struggle? 9. What did they perceive to be the impacts of their leader identity struggle?

I derived research themes from participants' descriptions about episodes or events that had occurred either during their attendance at the LiP programme or leading up to or after attendance at LiP. Their recollection of these events was linked to specific experiences and interpretations they believed best to answer the interview questions posed. See examples presented in Chapters 4 and 5. The initial round of participant interviews provided ten main research themes for further analysis.

1. Theme1: Promotion to a leadership role
2. Theme 2: Leadership role occupancy
3. Theme 3: Relevance of leader development programme
4. Theme 4: Responsibility for leader development
5. Theme 5: Needing a safe house
6. Theme 6: Realising self-awareness
7. Theme 7: Developing empathy and trust
8. Theme 8: Going insane
9. Theme 9: Feeling out of place
10. Theme 10: Making a difference

Phase 2 – Secondary Analysis

I used the initial 10 research themes from phase 1 to develop in total 31 subthemes. Further analysis made it clear that one or more research themes lend more closely to some subthemes than others. This step helped to explain participants interpretations, experiences, perceptions, ideologies and views to allow for further data analysis. I grouped all subthemes into four main categories, one each under the four Leader identity Queries (LIQ), as it became apparent that they related to some research themes more than to others. Excerpts from the interview transcripts to represent this step are outlined in section 4.4, 4.5 and 5.3. The categorisation of these subthemes are outlined below table 3.1:

Table 3. 3: Categorisation of research themes and sub-themes

• Theme 1: Promotion to a leadership role – refer to section 4.2.1 • Theme 2: Leadership role occupancy – refer to section 4.2.2	1. A hierarchical structure – refer to section 4.2.1.1 2. Accountability and transparency – refer to section 4.2.2.2 3. Newcomers versus old hands – refer to section 4.2.1.2 4. Professional experts – refer to section 4.2.1.3 5. Career ambitions and competition – refer to section 4.2.1.4 6. A higher intrinsic reward – refer to section 4.2.2.1

	7. Dissonance – refer to section 4.2.2.3
• Theme 3: Relevance of leader development – refer to section 4.3.1 • Theme 4: Responsibility for leader development – refer to section 4.3.2	8. Leadership development intervention – refer to section 4.3.1.1 9. Perceptions towards leader development – refer to section 4.3.1.2 10. Commitment towards self-development – refer to section 4.3.2.1 11. Support from line manager – refer to section 4.3.2.2 12. Growing leadership skills and capabilities – refer to section 4.3.2.3 13. Supplementary activity – refer to section 4.3.2.4
• Theme 5: Needing a safe house – refer to section 5.2.1 • Theme 6: Realising self-awareness – refer to section 5.2.2 • Theme 7: Developing empathy and trust – refer to section 5.2.3	14. Battling insecurity – refer to section 5.2.1.1 15. Counter-intuitiveness of logic – refer to section 5.2.3.2 16. Feeling human – refer to section 5.2.3.4

• Theme 8: Going insane – refer to section 5.2.4 • Theme 9: Feeling out of place – refer to section 5.2.5 • Theme 10: Making a difference – refer to section 5.2.6	17. Feeling distressed refer to sectuib 5.2.1.2 18. Regaining self-confidence – refer to section 5.2.1.3 19. Emotional astuteness – refer to section 5.2.3.1 20. Seeking resolution – refer to section 5.2.4.1 21. Finding support – refer to section 5.2.4.2 22. Imposter syndrome – refer to section 5.2.5.1 23. Needing personal space – refer to section 5.2.5.2 24. Learning commitment – refer to section 5.2.5.3 25. Learning to trust – refer to section 5.2.3.3 26. Valuing leader development – refer to section 5.2.6.1 27. Leadership role fit – refer to section 5.2.2.1 28. Facing misbehaviours – refer to section 5.2.2.2

	29. Embracing self – refer to section 5.2.2.3 30. Developmental life events – refer to section 5.2.2.4 31. Facing conformity – refer to section 5.2.6.2

Phase 3 – Deep Dive Analysis

Phase 4 analysis took place much later in my data analysis phase. Through the coding process followed so far it became clear that some sub-themes derived into one process or many processes while some subthemes did not fit into any specific process (see figure 3.2). Using these inferences, I linked some sub-themes to one or more processes. The relationship was many-to-many. Using these linkages, I derived ten high level processes. These processes were most relevant in understanding the leader identity stages for participants from being a leader to becoming a leader because these processes highlighted the internal changes as experienced by participants. Excerpts from the interview transcripts to represent this step are outlined in chapter 6. These ten processes are as below:

1. Beginning of an end – refer to section 6.3.1
2. Roadblocks and pathways – refer to section 6.3.2
3. Promotion and career progression – refer to section 6.3.3
4. Becoming eligible – refer to section 6.4.1
5. Being talented – refer to section 6.4.2
6. Catalytic process – refer to section 6.5.1

7. Shift in perspective – refer to section 6.5.2
8. Power of the collective – refer to section 6.5.3
9. Delineating self and leader identity – refer to section 6.6.1
10. Advocating for a change – refer to section 6.6.2

Phase 4 – Theoretical Conceptualisation

In the final phase 4 I found a pattern was forming through the processes I had developed in phase 3. I further refined this pattern to inform the four phases of leader Identity Formation framework– Inception, Initiation, Recognition and Rebellion. For instance, the three processes – Beginning of an end, Roadblocks and pathways, Promotion and career progression occurred very early in most participants leadership career span. These were more relevant to the first phase Inception. The next two processes – Becoming eligible and Being talented highlighted the experiences of participants during the second phase of their leader identity formation process and so I grouped them under Initiation. Similarly, three processes – Catalytic process, Shift in perspective, Power of the collective reflected the summarised notion of internal shift in participants during the third phase which I labelled as Recognition. Finally, the last two processes – Delineating self and leader identity, Advocating for a change demonstrated further change in participants which became prominent in the last phase – Rebellion. See figure 3.2 outlining the relationships between the processes and the LiF framework phases.

3.13 Ethical consideration

This research has given due consideration to appropriate ethical protocol. I sought ethical approval from Victoria University's Human Ethical Committee (HEC) and Pipitea subcommittee before commencing the data collection phase. Secondly, participants were provided with research information sheets and consent forms clearly outlining the ethical measures taken into consideration by this research. Paramount for me was the informed consent

and confidentiality of the programme participants. Please see the approved certificate from the ethics committee and participant consent form in the Appendix section (see appendix 2).

I met with all participants to provide them with an opportunity to ask questions through a medium (virtual or face-to-face meetings) they preferred. They also had the right not to answer any questions, to choose not to be recorded by any device or decline their participation entirely from the research. I communicated with the programme participants that their involvement (or withdrawal from) the study would not affect their status within the programme in any way. I also sought approval from the Chief Executive of the Leadership Development Centre to access relevant programme material, supplementary information, participant details and my role as a researcher in this study.

I have ensured that the confidentiality of the programme participants has been maintained throughout the research and that this protocol centres on mitigating the likelihood of participants being identified. Therefore, I have used pseudonyms to disguise the identities of both the programme participants and convenors and any reference to their respective organisations. There is a distinct possibility that the data I have collected could be recognised in future publications either by the participants themselves or by the programme convenors due to their familiarity with each other. However, I have taken diligent care to make sure that readers who are not part of the participant cohort or convenors will not identify the programme participants.

3.14 Summary

This chapter has outlined the analytical strategy used in this case study in detail. The combined data sources of both primary and secondary data resulted in large amounts of data categorically recorded, themed and analysed. The pseudonyms used to refer to participants in this thesis have

helped maintain a strict code of confidentiality and ethical considerations as stated in the Consent form provided to the participants (see appendix 2). As discussed, this case study has adopted an interpretive research approach. However, taking a value-free interpretive research approach has not been possible in this study, given my role as a researcher, which I have stated in this chapter. Concluding, inferences made by analysing the data collected have primarily informed the findings from this study. The public sector reform and its prominence in shaping New Zealand public service have played a vital role in informing the analytical strategy I have chosen for this study. This has also led to the infinite efforts made in subsequent years towards shaping leadership development within the public service.

CHAPTER 4 – FINDINGS: LEADER DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Introduction

I present all findings arising from this case study in detail across this chapter and the next chapter. These findings were supported by the data obtained mainly from interviews and handwritten notes. Information from other documentary sources such as policy and strategy documents, advisory committee papers and New Zealand agency websites were also used as secondary data sources to inform the findings. In this case study, I have pursued three lines of inquiry to answer the research questions. I have called these Leader Identity Query (LIQ) as below:

4. LIQ1: Public sector leadership career pathways
5. LIQ2: Leader development within the public service
6. LIQ3: Role of leader development towards identity formation

I selected these lines of inquiry-based on their relevance and centrality for answering the two research questions posed by this research:

1. Primary research question (RQa): What is the role of leader development in forming a leader identity?
2. Secondary research question (RQb): How do public sector leaders form a leader identity?

In this chapter, findings from the data analysis from interview questions mainly about the first and second lines of inquiry - LIQ1 and LIQ2 are discussed. Using LIQ3, the relationship between leader development and leader identity formation is examined closely in the next chapter 5 by unpacking the leader identity formation process for leaders within the public sector. I have divided findings from this case study into ten broad themes that I perceived to influence participants' behaviours during their attendance at the leader development

programme – Leadership in Practice (LiP). I further organised all findings into themes that I perceived as relevant to one of the three LIQ's. This I have illustrated in the table below.

Table 4. 1 Leader Identity Query themes.

LIQ 1: Public sector leadership career pathways	**LIQ 2: Leader development within the public service**	**LIQ 3: Role of leader development towards identity formation**
Theme 1: Promotion to a leadership role	Theme 3: Relevance of leader development programme	Theme 5: Needing a safe house
Theme 2: Leadership role occupancy: affirmation and challenges	Theme 4: Responsibility towards leader development	Theme 6: Realising self-awareness
		Theme 7: Developing empathy and trust
		Theme 8: Going insane
		Theme 9: Feeling out of place
		Theme 10: Making a difference

First, I examine the themes about LIQ1 and LIQ2, including participants interpretations of leadership development and leader development within the public sector. I found during interviews that participants used varying facets of public sector leader development in their narratives. Participant narratives surfaced myriad and varied experiences, interpretations, intellectual dispositions and practical challenges, which appeared to be played out for a public sector leader on both professional and personal fronts. I further discovered that leader development within the public sector encapsulated a complex and incoherent socialisation process for many participants. But, most importantly, the interviews portrayed the disconnected nature of leadership role occupancy within the public sector and the processual nature of leader identity development encountered across the leader's entire lifespan, triggered through various episodes of experiences imploring a formal shift in their outlook and dispositions about self and others.

Next, I discuss the dominant public sector leadership narrative emanating from New Zealand central agencies advocating and encouraging specific leadership values, behaviours and styles as appropriate over others within the public sector. Therefore, the resulting leader development narrative emerging from participants' transcripts stood out thematically as quite distinct and separate from the dominant public sector leadership and leadership development dialogue reverberating from the official documents of central agencies. In addition, many participants made references to 'crucible moments' or an 'epiphany' that occurred in problematic situations, confronted in compounding moments of crisis, which they inter-linked to their leadership role occupancy within the public sector. These I discuss in detail in the subsequent sections.

4.2 LIQ1: Public sector leadership career pathways

This section focuses on the perceived views of research participants regarding career pathways available for leaders to pursue leadership roles within the New Zealand public service. Two key themes emerged after participants' interview transcripts were analysed. These are:

- Theme 1: Promotion to leadership roles.
- Theme 2: Leadership role occupancy: affirmations and challenges.

In the following subsections, I present a detailed account of how the participant data-informed these themes.

4.2.1 Theme 1: Promotion to a leadership role

First, I discuss participant views about promotion or career growth or career graph. All leaders interviewed had sought out promotional opportunities at some point during their careers. This was a surprising finding since all participants stressed or referred to themselves as leaders within the public service, considering the promotions they had either actively sought or received various times throughout their careers. However, it is interesting to note that their

responses regarding the nature or type of promotional activity for leaders perceived to be undertaken within the public service varied to a considerable degree. It became evident during interviews that leaders who had spent more than 20 years working in the same organisation within the public service actively, more often and regularly sought out a promotion into different roles. On average, these leaders had been promoted across three to six senior leadership roles throughout their career span. This theme consist of four sub-themes which I present in the following sections:

1. A hierarchical structure
2. Newcomers versus old hand
3. Professional experts
4. Career ambition and competition

4.2.1.1 A hierarchical structure

The contingency created by such a hierarchical structure within an organisation also resulted in discontent, especially for woman leaders such as Nicole, who expressed that "the concept of flexible, or part-time work just did not exist in this building". However, as the interview progressed, these gendered views were, in turn, justified and accepted by her as she remoulded them into a positive perspective during further discussions. For example, she spoke about her experience about being a woman in a leadership role and having small children as not necessarily a negative factor because it had "forced" in her a recognition of work-life balance and taking time out to "refresh perspective". But at the same time, she admitted that "it was a big mountain to climb". This is illustrated in her interview excerpt:

> Now that's how I see my root journey because … clearly, it's about the hierarchical structure – the way you move up through the various layers of jobs, I guess, and the progression through that.

Nicole explained, “key events were basically promotion”, and that promotion was “the next natural move in a traditional career”. Secondly, in her view, this was symbolic of the organisational hierarchy within which staff were encouraged to pursue varied roles and responsibilities. This seemed a critical requirement for career progression because she believed this was the only possible way a leader could achieve career progression in her organisation.

4.2.1.2 Newcomers versus old hands

In contrast, participants who had far less leadership experience in a leadership role within the public service often found themselves in conflict with traditional norms for promotion. This was particularly so when they found themselves employed in a highly structured hierarchical organisation within the public service. John, for example, did not perceive his "Gen Y" leadership style proved in any way a deterrent for him to seek out various leadership roles across the wider public sector. The excerpt below illustrates this point:

> I did eight years in local government, and now I am in my third year in central government, and I think that shift, because yes, they are quite different. That shift to work across both sectors, understand both sectors, understand how they are funded, plan and make decisions, I think it's given me a comprehensive understanding of the public service in New Zealand to be effective in the role in which I am at the moment which is working across sectors including both local and central government.

John believed that picking up varied leadership roles across the public sector rather than in the same organisation was categorically his stance to reject these traditional and rudimentary organisational hierarchies. Secondly, John's intent to seek out promotional opportunities across the public sector was fuelled by his ambition for career progression in leadership roles. Therefore, it was vital for him to gain a breadth of leadership experience by working in various leadership roles across the wider public sector.

4.2.1.3 Professional experts

Participants who were technical experts had been provided with no formal leadership training in their specialist fields before stepping into a leadership role in their organisation. For instance, Victoria and Gabrielle, both of whom had spent less than 20 years in the New Zealand public service, equated stepping into a tier 3 leadership role to "becoming" a leader, albeit without prior training or understanding of how best to do so. Interestingly, they emphasised during interviews the expertise and skills needed in specialists' roles such as teacher, clinician, scientist and so forth, which they thought were absent about a leadership role. Victoria's interview excerpt illustrates this:

> It was a surprise to me. I stepped a bit sideways from my expert role and into a more generic role. It was a kind of compliance role for the organisation. And started to explore some study that might help me more into the leadership space … it was sort of those leadership roles that don't have any authority but expectations that you will bring people together and make things happen.

Further, Gabrielle explained her experience from being promoted to a leadership role straight from the technical expert role she was accustomed to:

> Initially, I had no idea when I was training to be a clinician that there were opportunities to become a leader in the public sector. So, there was nothing in my career pathway that looked past being the best clinician that I could be and being an expert in my field. When this job came up, we thought it's financially and career-wise. That's the job to take. And, having those leadership year-long course opportunities was probably also significant. I think the real issue for people such as me without doing that sort of training is there is no focus on leadership within some of these specialist training. So, you can promote technical experts who may not be good leaders. And I think that's an issue with lots of specialist groups. We train to be specialist; we are not training to be leaders.

It is clear from the above interview excerpts that professional experts sometimes are unaware of the expectations and responsibilities associated with leadership roles within the

public sector. This is particularly pertinent because there might be little or no focus on leadership in specific specialist roles.

4.2.1.4 Career ambitions and competition

Finally, during the interview discussions, the participants expressed that they had been willing to accept senior positions within the public service and had deeply valued activities associated with promotion to leadership roles. But there was a wider discrepancy among the participants on how this view was presented in their interview excerpts. First, participants who followed a steady progression path in their careers were ambitious in seeking out managerial roles. For instance, Nicole, a career public servant, expressed that she "got opportunities for training along the way to step up into leadership roles". But often, where this was not the case, she had "identified and gone and looked" to fulfil her learning requirements to progress her career aspirations. As she explained in the following excerpt:

> So, for me, an important one was when I was promoted to manager level and promoted into a tier 4 position, I guess and had management responsibility. I guess that was a milestone in my leadership journey.

Second, some participants were not open towards legitimising and accepting their competitive behaviours in discussions, which they then justified by bringing into view other factors, such as the role of supporting agents or circumstances as influential. Felicity also held this view, who had spent more than 20 years working across the public service and had moved up the ranks in various organisations to senior leadership roles. She explained this as:

> I never deliberately intended to, but that was a logical career progression for me. And from there moved on to more significant leadership roles at each part of the process. So, I went in as a manager, spent about 18 months there. Then stepped into a position, and the purpose of that move was to go for a sizeable operational organisation and continue to have some staff management responsibilities. I suppose I have been a reluctant leader as I am not sure that's what my passion is, but I am not bad at it. So, sort of by accident, but people helped me along the way rather than events in or of

> themselves. I mean, in terms of my career development, I have been responsible for my career. I suppose there have been people along the way that have sent me down a particular path. And those people, I suppose, have led me to decide at some point in time to step into a leadership role.

This is not to undermine the fact that other individuals, such as the participants' managers or colleagues, past and present, could, in fact, likely have had a level of influence in their career progression. For instance, Sonia expressed this as an element of chance or "accident", that being recruited to leadership role happened "just because of right place, right time, the right experience."

What is insightful in these interview excerpts is the variegated form the act of being promoted to a leadership role takes for participants. Promotion into a leadership role was depicted as a challenging step by most participants, which contributed to various factors. Their interview excerpts show that younger leaders were more open to exploring career promotional opportunities outside of their own organisation, across the wider public sector. In comparison, older leaders seemed to have a preference to pursue internal organisational-led career promotion pathways for their next promotion into a leadership role. Further, participants who had a strong specialist or expert background were less acquainted with the leadership role expectations and management responsibilities often related to a public sector leadership role, which were perceived as quite different from those in the more formal specialist professional settings. Participants views about career promotion and progression also present some discrepancies about how they sometimes attributed other external factors more relevance over their ambition to become a public sector leader. In some cases, participants forthrightly credited themselves for their own career choices and were more reluctant to do so in other cases.

4.2.2 Theme 2: Leadership role occupancy: affirmations and challenges

In this section, I present participants views about leadership role occupancy. Most participants confirmed an overall favourable experience working within the public service. They

acknowledged that being in a senior leadership role meant that they could influence critical organisational policy matters, which was the most crucial aspect of being a leader. This theme consists of three sub-themes as presented in the following sections:

1. A higher intrinsic reward
2. Accountability and transparency
3. Dissonance

4.2.2.1 A higher intrinsic reward

Participants expressed it as a personal privilege during their interview to be appointed to a senior leadership role. They believed they were in a leadership position to impact areas across the wider public sector positively. For instance, Bill explained in his interview that:

> Being in the public service gives me a much higher intrinsic reward, just because of the immediate impact. It is being in the middle of things. But I mean working for New Zealand is really important to me, and I think for my staff. So, it means a lot for me to be able to serve in that way. And to work on things that really interest me.

Another participant, John, expressed that he was more aware of the impacts he could make as a leader because of the decisions he was driving in a tier 3 role. He only realised this once he was in this role and not in any other previous positions he may have held in his career. The interview excerpt taken from John's interview presents this view:

> In this role that I am doing now, there would be billions of dollars either saved in reality or avoided for the taxpayers of New Zealand, and there is always stuff we can do something else with. So, having spent a lot of time absorbing the influence you can have across the department now that I am at that level, what tier 3 level of that extensive department is something that works me up going "yeah. Cool. Okay. This is really good." And so, for me personally, it's really important. And even more so now since I have had the opportunity to operate at this level because of the bigger differences you can make.

It is seen from the above interview excerpts that participants connected at a personal level with their leadership role. There appears to be a cross over between their professional and personal preferences given the positive impact they could make through their work when in a leadership role within the public sector.

4.2.2.2 Accountability and transparency

In contrast, senior leaders like Nicole, who had been working within the public service for more than 20 years, emphasised their stewardship responsibilities as leaders. They were more acutely aware of the highly visible nature of their work as leaders within the public sphere and so refrained from drawing attention to themselves during interviews. This is a slight difference in opinion, as is illustrated in Nicole's interview:

> I think it's a great responsibility, you know, with young people coming to the public service to try and model, I guess, the values of our public service, integrity, neutrality, and training to serve the New Zealand public service well.

Discussion with participants during interviews also focused on relational aspects of their role when encountering difficulty in their dealings. The ability to make hard choices and act with resilience and empathy are traits that took precedence in their narratives in guiding an understanding of how they viewed themselves to act out and navigate as leaders through challenges and roadblocks. Finally, there were some negative sentiments expressed by participants about their leadership roles. Participants found negative experiences far more personally confronting, as these brought out in them a greater appreciation of challenges and struggles they faced in their role. In the following excerpt, taken from an interview with Sonia, I state the volatile nature of being a leader within the public service. But Sonia focuses solely on the toll this took on her from the personal rather than professional perspective of being a leader. Sonia explained this as:

> I think not to be able to control about 80 per cent of the elements, or resources or tools that I was a leader in. Eighty per cent of the environment was totally uncontrollable.

It can be perceived from the above interview excerpts that participants rarely made a delineation between their personal and professional roles. Their leadership role personally impacted them to a far greater extent than they had initially anticipated.

4.2.2.3 Dissonance

Participants acknowledged challenges associated with working in a tier 3 role. Still, issues pertained not to the ability to exercise as a senior public servant but about the personal impacts these resulted in, followed by an unusually high degree of dissonance. For instance, Victoria was resentful of observations made while working in a senior leadership role. She acknowledged that this impacted her less optimistically, leaving her demotivated with an innate sense of being ng her demotivated, as can be seen from the excerpt below:

> There was a lot of poor management around. There were lots of people who used bullying-type tactics, stand-over tactics, and ultimatums and underlying threats. There was a lot of hierarchy. It seemed to be that decisions made where people had been promoted that clearly didn't have that kinds of competencies, I wouldn't think would be valuable. So, I started to have a little bit of view of "am I a little bit alone here in my views? Are there others?"

The sense of being "alone" manifested in different forms in participants, as can be seen. The need to "fit in" was also expressed from another perspective by Victoria. It was interesting to note how deeply this impacted her at a personal level. It appears to have come across as an unexpected finding, considering the different interpretations of the varied negative experiences faced by the participants. For instance, the excerpt below is taken from Victoria's interview:

> I kind of grew an understanding of what was important to me; it became obvious that I didn't fit with the culture, and that wasn't what they valued, so by then, I was looking elsewhere. I went, "gosh! Not sure that my philosophy is aligned with that." But if my philosophies are really different

from what I am experiencing, I will struggle very much with that.

For instance, Nicole explained leading her team through an organisational change process, which put people through a lot of “stress and pressure”, made a “big shift” in her perspective about her role as a tier 3 leader. A similar view was expressed by Anita, who explained that “there are always frustrations and difficulties” she had to navigate in her leadership role. The below excerpt from Anita’s interview further provides evidence on this concept:

> We were losing people, and so that's always a hard thing to manage. So those are the biggest leadership things I believe that I had the most impact on myself and my people. When I am leading through a type of change where people's lives are affected, it is certainly hard as a human to lead people through that, where people are made redundant.

It was particularly interesting to note during interviews that participants claimed their negative views about leadership practices within the public service as a reality, presenting it as a factual account rather than their personal perspective.

It appears that participants rarely made a clear delineation between their personal and professional stature in a leadership role. The choices and decisions in their leadership role seemed to have a more profound personal impact on them. This was to the extent that some participants became quite strongly impacted by their leadership decisions and consequently by the outcomes of those decisions. There appears to be a stronger sense of personal accountability and commitment in these leaders towards their leadership role. Sometimes, the challenges and setbacks they seem to experience in their leadership roles create a sense of dissonance and distancing, which triggers negativity in them. Overall, this discussion also informs about how participants rarely separate or remove themselves (or self-identity) from their role. Both positive and negative outcomes seem to have a substantial impact on them.

4.3 LIQ2: Leader development within the public service

Out of 16 participants, the gender split was unequal, with 11 females and five males. It is also worth noting that one participant was also undertaking more than one leadership development training course at the time. All participants had secured funds and formal approval from their employer to undertake leadership development. However, there was a significant disparity in how they learned about the courses available on leadership development within the public service. Two key themes emerged after participants' interview transcripts were analysed:

- Theme 3: Relevance of leader development.
- Theme 4: Responsibility for leader development.

In the following subsections, I present a detailed account of how the participant data-informed these themes.

4.3.1 Theme 3: Relevance of leader development programme

First, all 16 participants formally sought their line managers' approval and sponsorship to attend the course. These participants upheld their managers' role in encouraging and, in some cases, guiding their leadership development efforts. However, there were other indirect influences that were responsible for encouraging participants to undertake leadership development. The interpretations presented by participants about their perceptions of undertaking leadership development also present their interesting, diverse views. This theme consists of two sub-themes which I discuss in the following sections:

1. Leadership development interventions
2. Perceptions towards leader development

4.3.1.1 Leadership development intervention

The line managers' role in agreeing and encouraging participants to undertake leader development comes across as a strong impetus in these discussions. For example, John decided that if it had not been for the insistence of his manager, he would never have taken the "quantum leap" to attend a leader development programme. This was mainly because he had undertaken no leadership training before or during his appointment to the tier 3 role. The excerpt below from his interview explains this:

> My manager said, "we want you to go on this." And I went, "okay." I didn't have any training, and I had been there for two and a half years. So, yeah, it wasn't some grand plan.

The remaining seven participants were not directly informed about leader development programmes by their line managers. They were told about the course offered by LDC through other unofficial channels such as friends and family members. For instance, Arthur was encouraged to undertake leader development by a family friend closely connected to the LDC. Before this interaction, Arthur had minimal awareness about leadership development courses conducted by the LDC for senior leaders across the sector. He pointed out that:

> She had been working a couple of years at that point in time, and who [sic] is a family friend. She said to me you "should have a look at LDC stuff because you might find it really effective." It wasn't LiP specifically. But she pointed me in the direction of what LDC did. Until that point, I didn't have huge visibility of what they were, what they had available.

In the latter case, participants had sourced information about the courses available through other channels, such as colleagues and peers who had undertaken leadership development training courses in the past; as well as family and friends who were in one way or another familiar either with the Leadership Development Centre (LDC) or specifically with the courses they offered.

4.3.1.2 Perceptions towards leader development

The drivers associated with participants' attendance at leader development courses varied considerably, as did the rationale behind them. It was interesting to note that participants' interpretations of the rationale to undertake leader development varied widely. These I categorised into three areas in the following paragraphs: Ambivalence, Leadership talent and Ineligibility.

Ambivalence

Some participants expressed ambivalence about attending the leader development course. Gabrielle, for instance, was informed about the course by her senior leadership team, which each year "picked" two tier-three leaders to attend leadership development training. She explained:

> They nominate people every year. I was nominated for it. So, I didn't know about it. I didn't know anything about it.

From the above interview excerpt, it appears that some participants were not fully informed about the leadership development practice within their organisation or within the more comprehensive public service, nor did this seem particularly relevant to them as leaders.

Leadership talent

Participants' findings of their perceptions about the relevance or need to undertake leadership development were mixed. The notion of being chosen or selected or being given preference over others within their organisation to undertake a leader development course was strongly relevant for most of the participants. For Tina, attendance at a leadership development training programme was equated to an elevated status symbol because of being " put forward" by her agency. The following excerpt taken from Arthur's interview outlines this as follows:

> I had just recently delivered on fairly significant pieces of work, and [sic] the profile was right at the time. So ultimately, I didn't have a hard sell.

This surfaced in a rather subtle manner a strongly intrinsic competitive edge, an egoistic tendency among participants during interviews that were hard to ignore. By being placed on a leader development programme, participants such as Gabrielle and Victoria believed they were being "offered the opportunity". Therefore, they attributed attendance at a leadership development programme as an achievement or reward rather than a necessity or need for a leader in a senior leadership role. The participant selection process for undertaking leader development was unclear to some participants. Sonia stated this in her interview excerpt as:

> So, lots of people in this building do it. It's quite competitive to get on to, and I think we have only one or two spots per session, so yeah. They now do it through talent mapping, and I don't know if they did it then. They sort of did abstract talent mapping, [and] that person should do that.

Sonia stressed that the selection criteria for undertaking leader development were competitively driven from within her organisation and that it was based on the use of a "talent mapping software".

Ineligibility

Third, I found conflicting evidence where her organisation repeatedly turned down one participant from attending a leader development training course on the grounds of ineligibility, even though she had proactively sought out the development opportunity, given the leadership role she was. Nicole, in her interview excerpt, stated:

> So, I was proactive in saying that I wanted to do that critical programme and because it was quite restricted in terms of it was offered to people within the Ministry. Initially, I wasn't eligible because I didn't manage people.

Participants perceptions about the relevance of leadership development present varying interpretations. Their personal experiences and historical events may infer these. But overall,

the above theme has surfaced the varied inferences they drew as senior public sector leaders about leadership development.

The above statements exemplify the myriad ways in which participants in leadership roles within the public sector interpreted the relevance of leadership development. The role of their line manager in introducing and encouraging them to undertake leadership development is presented. Also, noting that the personal drivers as interpreted by participants in attending a leadership development training course varied vastly. Some participants seemed to credit themselves for being presented with an opportunity to attend leadership development; others were uncertain about why they were presented with the prospect. Some others felt that the core requirement was to fulfil an internal organisation policy around specific eligibility criteria associated with a leadership role to attend leadership development. Next, we look at theme four and how participants perceived their responsibility to undertake leader development and training.

4.3.2 Theme 4: Responsibility for leader development

As interviews progressed, it became problematic to form a clear and singular view on whether participants perceived leader development as a professional necessity that was externally imposed on them or as an inner drive towards personal growth. It was evident from the interviews that there were varied reasons for participants to undertake leadership development training. This theme consists of four sub-themes as discussed in the following sections:

1. Commitment towards self-development
2. Support from line manager
3. Growing leadership skills and capabilities
4. Supplementary activity

4.3.2.1 Commitment towards self-development

I found that some participants undertook leader development because they were personally committed to their self-development as senior leaders. So they held themselves responsible for pursuing leader development opportunities. The organisation they were employed with played a central role in offering them appropriate leader development opportunities by undertaking leadership development courses and training programmes for other participants. The narrative below taken from John's interview outlines this viewpoint:

> Yes, and it was tricky because I went halfway through it between [agency 1] and [agency 2] on a secondment. So, yeah, I had no dramas at all about that. [Agency 1] people were saying do it, and when I transitioned in the process to [agency 2], I was saying, "cool, I'll come", but I really want to make sure I was putting effort into [LiP] and that they would support it too. Again, to be fair to them, it was just as for them utilising the development process, which back-fired a bit because I ended up at [agency 2] as it was at the end of it. So, but from a sector point of view, that particular course was totally fine. It took me from that level to that level in my thinking.

For example, John decided to resign from his role while undertaking leader development and seeking out other leadership roles across the public sector.

4.3.2.2 Support from line manager

Secondly, a leader's choice to undertake leader development was in some cases strongly contingent on their line manager supporting them to attend appropriate leader development courses so that they could spend a reasonable amount of time away from their day job. Victoria explained this in her interview:

> Well, it was through my manager here. We were talking about what next after I had been here six months to a year. And I guess what he could see is that I was doing some good things. But there was more learning to be done. But it was not the kind of go to a classroom but drove for that experiential kind of learning. So, when we talked about what next, it wasn't too hard because my manager was keen to have that development.

Interestingly, participants pointed out that the leader development training was put on the table for consideration by their line manager during performance review discussions.

4.3.2.3 Growing leadership skills and capabilities

Moreover, the critical drivers for most participants to undertake leader development from a personal reasonability standpoint were based on two factors: on the one hand, it was an opportunity to grow their leadership capabilities or skill-sets, as seen in earlier discussions. Some participants believed that because they were allowed to undertake leader development by their line managers, their work and personal contribution were recognised by their superiors within their organisation. Therefore, this brought to the forefront a need for participants to be recognised by their organisation for the "good work" they had been doing. They perceived this as positive reinforcement, as explained by Anita:

> I spoke to my boss. He was like, "why you don't do this" and I looked at it and thought, that's very expensive, you know. He said, "Nah, it will be really good for you. A lot of things will reinforce for you that you are doing the right thing. And it will also expand your contacts, just across the public sector. And he said that it would also challenge your thinking. It will give you confidence that you are on the right track. Doing the right things."

However, on the other hand, any form of leader development activity was undertaken as a compliance activity under pressure from their organisation, to be perceived as actively taking charge of their self-training. For example, Sonia was convinced to undertake leader development by her manager because he felt it was the "next natural part" of her "career journey".

4.3.2.4 Supplementary activity

Finally, for some participants, leader development was an undertaking to supplement or bolster their existing leadership skills and capabilities, especially within the public sector. The stress put on the relevance of understanding public sector "context" was central in discussions with

these participants, along with a need to upskill by attendance at a leader development programme or course, as in the following narrative from Anita:

> I had done a lot of leadership development within my department. I was looking for something to allow me to do a leadership programme that would include other parts [such as] sector people.

For example, John explained that he decided to undertake leader development training because he believed it would give him "good context across central government".

In concluding, the participants present a view of a leader development practice within the public sector where participants undertook leader development activities either as a compliance activity by the existing normative behaviours associated with leader development within their organisations or due to a personal drive to grow their leader capabilities to be well furnished in their leadership roles. And yet, other findings present an essential point for consideration, where having a level of public sector knowledge was perceived as valuable by participants.

4.4 LIQ1: coding tree example

Table 4. 2: LIQ1 – coding tree

LIQ NUMBER	1
INVESTIGATION CRITERIA	A view on pathways to public sector leadership role.
INVESTIGATION SUBTHEME	1. Motivation for appointment to various types of leadership roles across both private and public sectors. For example, cadet, team leader, managerial, senior leadership etc. 2. Eligibility criteria for appointment to leadership roles - Subject matter experts or generalists. 3. Public sector leadership experience - Positive or negative aspects of the public sector. 4. Nature of the leadership practice - Promotion process to senior roles. 5. Mode of Public sector leadership career pathway - Planned and deliberate or unplanned and coincidental.

	6. Preference given to certain types of leadership roles - within one agency or across the wider public service. 7. Primary types of public sector leadership roles undertaken based on seniority - tier 4, 3, or 2. 8. An average career span for senior leaders within the public service. 9. Level of awareness of career progression through the public service.
THEME 1 THEME 2	a) Promotion to leadership roles b) Leadership role occupancy: affirmation and challenges.
CATEGORY	A. Public sector leadership career
LEADER IDENTITY QUERY (LIQ) QUESTIONS	1) To what extent do leaders rate leadership positions and promotions relevant to their leadership experience? 1a) How do they differentiate between managerial and leadership roles? 1b) What aspects of their leadership experience were important to them? 1c) How did they rate their overall experience - positive or negative? 2) Why did senior leaders wish to be appointed to public service leadership roles? 2a) How relevant/important did they think their role as a public sector leader was? 2b) To what extent did they distinguish between their role identity and leader identity?

Theme 1 - Promotion to leadership roles	
1. To what extent do leaders rate leadership positions and promotions relevant to their leadership experience?	
a) How do they differentiate between managerial and leadership roles?	
"I am a registered clinical psychologist. Been in the public service for 13 years, with 18 years of registration. " "I think initially I had no idea when I was training to be clinician that there were opportunities to become a leader in the public sector. So there was nothing in my career pathway that was looking past being the best clinician that I could be and being an expert in my field. " "....what drew me over to Corrections was the pay differential. It was so significantly better than what I was paid. " "I do want to keep progressing." "And so about 2 years into my role, I was asked to cover for the principal psychologist ." "Then, I was asked, must be in my fourth year here, if I would cover for a chief psychologist here. So I was a tier 5 regional manager in the regional management structure. And the chief psychologists is a tier 3..."	This leader began her career as a trained expert in a technical, scientific field. During her training as a clinician, she had no insight into leadership opportunities to become a leader in the public sector. So, her career pathway basically was around being a good clinician and an expert in her field. She got interested in working for the public sector after comparing the pay difference, which was substantive in her case. She was a hard worker and kept progressing to senior roles. She ended up in a tier 5 role and, through secondment opportunities, was promoted to a tier 3 position.

"So, two years later, the person responsible for my current role was also rehab focussed, left, and the DCE asked the chief psychologist to call me and asked if I'll be interested in applying."	
b) What aspects of their leadership experience were important to them?	
"having those leadership year-long course opportunities was probably also important." "And actually a tier 3 here now, one of my first supervisors, at some point in Corrections, early on, that I was ambitious. " "So it was the chief psychologist, quite senior saying, "we want you to have this job. We want you to go to Wellington. Cause that's where we think you should be." So, they kept it in my ear. " "When this job came up, we thought it's financially and career-wise, that's the job to take. So those two people were really quite critical." "Again, unless when others were giving me that advice, I don't think I would have necessarily seen the next step myself." "So, I really made that sort of my mantra, is possible take opportunities, network with all parts of the business as much as I can. Be good to everybody in the business, irrespective of rank and file."	This leader was encouraged by her supervisors and managers to keep progressing in her career pathway. To the extent that she attributed her career advancement to senior roles to their advice and encouragement. She also highly rated the leadership development training she undertook on the job to help her step into leadership roles. Secondly, she made a conscious effort to be open to opportunities by networking with all parts of the business and being good to her colleagues in the business irrespective of rank and file.
Theme 2 - Leadership role occupancy: affirmation and challenges.	
1. To what extent do leaders rate leadership positions and promotions relevant to their leadership experience?	
c) How did they rate their overall experience - positive or negative?	
"In terms of those roadblocks, they were positive. And yet, you get plenty of negative experiences as a leader who has also been, you know, shaping and failures and challenges with people and staff, is where I learnt the most about myself." "I think they have been largely positive, and my current bosses have said the same thing. You can see this as a stepping stone to my next opportunity." "So overall, I think it has been a very positive journey."	This leader rated her experience overall as positive because she felt that the negative experiences taught her most about herself. She thinks of these as largely having a positive outcome because it helped her move forward as a stepping stone to her next career opportunities. The latter was also endorsed by her managers.
2. Why did senior leaders wish to be appointed to public service leadership roles?	
a) How relevant/important did they think their role as a public sector leader was?	
"I think it's exciting. I think ideologically, I'm aligned with the governments' priorities. So that really matters to me. The ideology of where we are going really matters." "Something I keep coming back to is that I am really passionate about working with vulnerable people. Really passionate about being part of a system that works to change the shape of our society for vulnerable people. So that's a big part of what it means to me. "	This leader was very passionate about working with vulnerable people and being part of the system that works to change the shape of the society for vulnerable people. This was a big part of what it meant for her to be a leader in the public service. Secondly, she felt that as a public servant, her role was to serve people.

"We are here to serve the people. ....And as a public servant, our job is to serve them." "I think that's where my heart is." "My heart was anything but being a public servant. I think that's a very strong part of my identity and a very important calling for me. " "Personally, for me, I think it's really important." "I wanted to have the opportunity to be around the table where I could at least present my ideas, my perspectives." "...that's part of my passion. Is being about trying and influence and shape the outcome we are looking for. "	She felt that being a public servant was a strong part of her identity and felt that it was an important calling for her. She was passionate about trying to influence and shape the outcome, and so as a senior leader wanted to have the opportunity to present her ideas and perspectives to the senior leaders.
b) To what extent did they distinguish between their role identity and leader identity?	
"I think the real issue for people such as me without doing that sort of training is there is no focus on leadership within some of these specialist training……so you can promote technical experts who may not be good leaders. And I think that's an issue with lots of specialist groups. We train to be specialist; we are not training to be leaders. "	This leader strongly identified herself as a clinician and so stepping into a leadership role was entirely a new space for her to come to, especially also because she was trained as a clinician and not as a leader. She notes that there is a possibility that without the right leadership training, one could end up promoting technical experts who may not be good leaders. This clearly points out the role and identity dichotomy experienced by this leader.

4.5 LIQ2: coding tree example

Table 4. 3: LIQ2 – coding tree

LIQ NUMBER	2
INVESTIGATION CRITERIA	A view on leadership development in the public service
INVESTIGATION SUBTHEME	1. Degree of relevance for undertaking leadership development. 2. Role of agency in leadership development. 3. Rules, policies and processes around leadership development opportunities - within an agency and across the sector. 4. Motivation for attending LiP 5. Leadership development for public sector leaders in NZ 6. Level of effort or actions were taken by leaders to pursue leadership development. 7. Eligibility criteria for attendance at LiP within an agency.
THEME 3 THEME 4	a) Relevance of leadership development b) Responsibility towards leadership development

CATEGORY	B. Leadership Development within the public service
LEADER IDENTITY QUERY (LIQ) QUESTIONS	3. To what extent were leaders responsible for their own leadership development? 3a) How did they actively pursue development and training? 3b) What was the role of the agency in developing leaders? 4. Why did they choose LiP over other programs or courses?
Theme 3 - Relevance of leadership development	
3. To what extent were leaders responsible for their own leadership development?	
3a) How did the leaders actively pursue development and training opportunities?	
"No. So lots of people in this building do it. It's quite competitive to get on to, and I think we have only one or two spots per session, so yeah. Basically, they now do it through talent mapping, and I don't know if they did it then. They sort of did abstract talent mapping; that person should do that [laughs]. But I had to argue my case. "	Participants were not exactly clear about the leadership opportunity available to them nor how they could pursue an appropriate leadership training course.
3b) What was the role of the agency in developing leaders?	
"I had a manager here at the SLT who told me I should do it. Who said that probably that's the next natural part of your career journey and thought it was quite a good year to do it because I thought it was going to be a sort of systems year.	They heard about leadership development and LiP in particular from internal sources such as a colleague who had attended the course in the past.
Theme 4 - Responsibility towards leadership development	
4. Why did they choose LiP over other programmes or courses?	
And it turned into a very unexpected year. But it was actually perfect for doing it at the same time as in a very uncontrollable [laughs] pressured work situation when I was in it. So I probably got lots more out of it by having this impossible challenge at work that you had to try and deliver to various degrees of impossibility at the same time. "	They decided to attend the course in spite of the work pressures they were under. And appears to have benefitted most because of the challenges they experienced at work while undertaking leadership training.

4.6 Summary

To summarise, this chapter presented the research findings that appropriate certain perceptions prevalent within the public sector as perceived by participants, which are relevant to LIQ1 and LIQ2. It appears from these that even though the leadership narrative at the centre emphasises and encourages leaders to adopt and inculcate a specific leadership 'style' within the public sector, the findings surface a level of inconsistency and confusion within public sector organisations, as well as for leaders regarding implicit outcomes associated with leader development and leadership development. This created a compelling need to investigate further

identity-related outcomes for leaders attending a leader development programme to understand other influences relevant to them both as a public sector leader and person.

The promotion was seen as the main activity by all participants to progress their leadership careers within the public service. Some were more open in accepting this as their career ambition, while others were not, attributing their promotion to external factors. However, seeking out a promotion to step up into a leadership role was perceived as more difficult by women participants and younger male participants than it was for senior participants, both in age and their professional stature. Participants who called themselves technical experts or specialists noted that a complete lack of formal leadership development training before their appointment into a leadership role resulted from a promotion, making it harder for them to function as leaders within their agency. Participants overall deeply valued their leadership role within the public service. Many expressed negative sentiments about one or more compounding challenges they faced as leaders, which often had a personal impact.

Attendance at LiP required all participants to seek approval from their line managers. It seemed for half the group, attendance at a leader development programme such as LiP resulted because of a recommendation from their line manager, as a direct outcome of their performance development planning discussions. For the rest of the participant group, there were other varied indirect influences – being informed by informal sources such as friends or colleagues, as a token of reward or recognition offered by the agency; or through a talent mapping process mainly based on specific eligibility criteria. Some participants appeared to have an intrinsic need to undertake leadership development. They felt driven and motivated to attend LiP as a medium to address their personal and professional growth.

On the contrary, others seemed to lack this perception. Participants that belonged to this latter group perceived undertaking leadership development as an act of compliance in response to organisational human resources policies and procedures for leaders and managers. In the next chapter, Chapter 6, I present findings emerging from the investigation undertaken using LIQ 3. Of particular interest is the identity regulation work undertaken by participants attending leader development programmes such as LiP. This provides a different account of the influencing behaviours that assist in providing additional clarity in answering the research question.

CHAPTER 5 – FINDINGS: LEADER IDENTITY AND ROLE OF LEADER DEVELOPMENT

5.1 Introduction

Findings presented in this chapter emerged out of the analysis of interview transcripts recorded during interviews with participants about the third and final line of inquiry called Leader Identity Query 3 (LIQ3). I developed the interview questions to pursue mainly LIQ3:

LIQ3: Role of leader development towards leader identity formation.

In this chapter, answers provided by participants to interview questions, as well as inferences from discussions with participants during the interview process, are presented. I posed the interview questions to participants in relative terms (To what extent? How much? How little?). After analysing the data to understand how participants associated their leader identity with leader development, six themes became evident as informing this analysis, as is outlined in the table below.

Table 5. 1: LIQ3 – Role of leader development towards identity formation

LIQ 3: Role of leader development towards identity formation
Theme 5: Needing a safe house
Theme 6: Realising self-awareness
Theme 7: Developing empathy and trust
Theme 8: Going insane
Theme 9: Feeling out of place
Theme 10: Making a difference

I have explained each of these themes in detail. Participant narratives across these six themes focused on personal triumphs and tribulations, which appeared to command a central position in their leadership roles. This 'thing called leadership', which some participants referred to in the previous chapter seemed to unravel into an intricate and elaborate map of inferences and interpretations. This informed their internal meaning-making process, guided

by their personal choices and preferences as external influences during their attendance at LiP. This process appears to form the gist of the very core of their behaviours that exemplified their emotional struggles and epiphanies as they seemed to flow through all these themes. Participants' narratives showed that experiential and observational learning formed a crucial part of them realising, imbibing and exercising leader development learnings they acquired at LiP, primarily informed by their overt behaviours, further leading to self-attribution. Finally, I perceived from these themes that developing, crafting and forming one's leader identity presented a processual view for these participants to create their unique leader identities.

5.2 LIQ3: Role of leader development towards leader identity formation

This section focuses on the perceived views of research participants regarding public sector leadership within the New Zealand public service. I have paid particular attention to leaders' experiences and interpretations about both leadership role occupancy and their identity as a leader. Six key themes emerged after participants interview transcripts were analysed. These are:

- Theme 5: Needing a safe house.
- Theme 6: Realising self-awareness.
- Theme 7: Developing empathy and trust.
- Theme 8: Going insane.
- Theme 9: Feeling out of place.
- Theme 10:Making a difference.

In the following subsections, I present a detailed account of how the participant data-informed these themes.

5.2.1 Theme 5: Needing a safe house

During discussions, some participants explained that LiP provided them with an environment wherein they could ‘safely’ express their deepest concerns personally and professionally. This ability to open up in an environment where they could begin to trust each other was expressed in various ways and modes by almost all participants. However, some participants were more open and willing to develop that trust relationship with the members of their cohort, whereas others seemed less forthcoming and reluctant. Interestingly, as the course progressed nine months, all participants became more familiar and empathetic towards each other’s circumstances and positions as leaders within diverse public sector organisations. This camaraderie continued and developed more profound even after they completed the course. What was the basis for the development of such a strong relationship among a group of strangers? This theme consists of three sub-themes as presented below:

1. Battling insecurity
2. Feeling distressed
3. Regaining self-confidence

5.2.1.1 Battling insecurity

In this section, the notion of 'feeling safe' is explored a little deeper through the narratives of two participants deeper through the Both these participants directly reference LiP as a "safe" environment in their interview excerpts. First, I discuss my interview with Arthur. During his interview, Arthur explained that LiP provided him at a "personal level" the ability to address some of his "vulnerabilities". This, to him, was a "real addition" from a leadership perspective. Arthur elaborated that:

> The 4-day residential period provided me with a safe environment that was critical for me to transition from just focusing on ensuring a deliverable to

understanding what I was delivering and how I was delivering it.

As the interview progressed, Arthur slowly began to describe his experience at the Action Learning Group (ALG) sessions, which were spread across the nine months. He explained that he was more inclined to use the ALG sessions as a "safe place" to have "conversations around leadership challenges" he was having at work.

Next, I present Karen's narrative. During discussions with Karen, it became clear that she found her experience at LiP "quite emotional" but that it was not "inappropriate" in any sort or form. She explained how a few years ago, her agency was “cutting jobs”, and there were a “lot of people losing their jobs. [It] was quite emotional,” she explained. She felt that as a leader, she couldn’t “really show that.” But she felt that “it was safe in the group to open and be frank about the challenges, so it was quite emotional”. She expressed that she found her experience in the workplace “quite confounding”, and so she thought LiP “was a safe place to share some of those real challenges as a leader and a manager” at a time when there were “quite a few dramatic changes in the public sector.” Karen explained her experience during her attendance at LiP as:

> …to be in a safe place with other public servants, getting to share some of that stress and strain on [her] team safely navigating all that, due to downsizing, not because of any performance issues but there weren't enough jobs anymore. I think my strategy is to talk about things, to try and understand in a safe space. Cause effectively; you can't talk about it outside of the public service. So, I found that very helpful.

She felt that this situation was very emotional for “people who were career public servants and [so] they [didn’t] have a lot of support.” She explained that understanding the “bigger picture” helped her in the sense-making process by placing her “situation in the broader context”. Consequently, she thought that LiP gave her the “space” to examine the situation in what she called was a “safe environment with people who were facing similar challenges”.

This, in effect, she felt gave her the "clarity" on her "ability to be a good public sector leader, a manager" and what she might do to "get there".

As can be seen from the above excerpts, Arthur and Karen's interviews appear to take the form of an unravelling and unpacking exercise for them. As a result, their narratives present insightful findings regarding how they perceived LiP as a "safe house" based on their experiences during the residentials and ALG sessions. These were also based on their personal preferences and choices, which were sometimes but not always shaped by their viewpoints as leaders within the broader scope of the public sector leadership practice in general.

5.2.1.2 Feeling distressed

The next sub-theme – Feeling distressed, was vital as it brought forth the complex internal struggles experienced by four participants at various stages during the nine months they attended LiP. One of the most striking aspects of this theme is its strong focus on internal struggles, which surfaced an intensely emotive response from participants during the interviews as they recalled their attendance at LiP. Their struggles emerged into confidence issues, which fundamentally stemmed from their past. And yet, these were in many ways connected to their present leadership experiences. This formed the dominant tone for these interviews. This section presents excerpts from interviews with four participants – Arthur, Jack, John and Courtney. Interviews with the four participants revealed that, although they had picked up important learnings throughout the nine months, the most impactful learnings took shape for them during the four-day residential. All four explained that it was at various points during the four-day residential that they experienced a personal shift. Here, therefore, excerpts from their interviews that delve into this theme are presented.

First, I begin with Arthur's interview. Arthur was initially "sceptical" when he found out that he had to attend a residential week. He explained that he had a four-month-old baby and a wife who was not in paid employment at the time. So, the "idea of being away from home" had seemed very "daunting" to him. Secondly, he felt he had confidence issues at the time because of a "historic event" in his professional career, which resulted in a "sort of gulf". Arthur explained that he had not known until that Thursday afternoon during the residential week that he could not continue his "journey" without addressing some of those issues that proved to be the critical challenge of the week and at the final presentation. He certainly did not anticipate that was going to happen because, for him, the course was about "developing his leadership" and not about "going to the demons of the past". But through his experience that week, it became "crystal clear" that that was the way it was going. He explained that it was "full-on demons" that week for him. It was ultimately the presentation that helped him "close the door on some of those old demons".

During the interview, Arthur broke down as he fought back the tears to explain how he had "quite a lot of angst" about whether he was going to get through the presentation "without breaking down." But in the end, he presented to the group, and although he felt "sad" about the experience, he thought the group was "really supportive." He, therefore, found the presentation at the end of the residential "pretty daunting", which he felt came back to the "confidence issues" discussed above. Putting together what the key challenges were and his plan was moving forwards had seemed "pretty difficult" to him at the time. Arthur explained:

> So, there was a lack of a better term, a historic event in my professional career when I had a sort of a gulf and niggled quite a long time. And we had an exercise, just through that week and whether it was that particular exercise or not, but what I really, it gave me the opportunity to put that to bed. And there was a degree of confidence; there was a significant confidence knock through that period. And it wasn't probably till that week, that residential week of the programme, that I turned my mind

enough to it to move it off the feet.

Summarising, he thought it was "interesting" that it resulted in a "significant change" from where the matter would have been for him before attending LiP. Secondly, for him, "at a personal level", the ability to address "some of those vulnerabilities" was a "real addition from a leadership perspective". He explained that a "key benefit" he got out of LiP in addition to others was "to address the demon and to put him to bed".

Next, we look at Jack's narrative. It turned out to be extremely difficult to interview Jack as it was pretty hard to get any form of detail out of him. He always spoke in abstracts. On one occasion, he asked me to switch off my recorder, which I did. Jack described his experience at LiP as "quite challenging and affirming at the same time" He explained that:

> The beginning of the training, the specific training around the action learning groups, was interesting; it was challenging. It was about being disciplined. As for me, it was being more disciplined than [I] was used to being. So that was just the part of it; it was just personally challenging. And the residentials I may be said already, some of the socialising I may have found challenging. I found that difficult. Some people were more accessible to mix with than others. It was like a feeling in which you are in a fishbowl. A fairly intense experience, I suppose.

But he had received direct feedback from coaches that some of the members in his cohort, whom he had "really admired", had found his contribution very helpful as "individuals." This, to Jack, was "really affirming" and resulted in a "great sort of feeling of self-confidence". It was through this experience that he had found his "niche" as a leader.

Third, I present excerpts from an interview with John. John was not in his tier 3 role when attending LiP but was in another position in his previous organisation. His job at the time was highly pressured – there was pressure from a "whole different sorts of angles". He was the senior public servant fronting up but was in another role in his previous organisation. His job at the time was highly pressured – there was pressure from a "whole different sorts of angles."

He was the senior public servant fronting up – doing work with Ministers, being at the court, at the tribunals. And he was also leading a team of people. So, it was a "very, very pressured" environment. So, effectively he had transitioned into his tier 3 role after attending LiP. While he had thought of his tier 3 leadership role as attractive, he had never looked at it as something that best suited him as a leader at the time. But attending LiP over nine months gave him the confidence that he could be a leader in this new role he was looking to take up.

5.2.1.3 Regaining self-confidence

The confidence that John gained by attending LiP convinced him that he was “well up for this” and that there was no reason why he could not progress to more senior roles within the public service. This, however, was not the case on his first day at the residential. As John explained:

> I think from day 1 with a cohort of people who are on that course for a particular reason, I think a lot of people, myself included, were thinking, can I actually do this. Do I have the skills to be a senior leader in the public service? Question mark. Because, you know, maybe I don't. And what do I need to develop and learn so that I could be? And that certainly was in my mind because I'm a big boy. I could go off and do some other things with my life if I wanted to. But the confidence that I gained going through that process as "yeah actually I am well up for this. There was no reason why I couldn't progress to more senior roles in the public sector.

Attending LiP gave John the confidence to "let go of the need to being in control of all the details". This, to him, was the moment of clarity, which to him was "awesome" because he thought that he was not "shackled" to the "subject matter expert mentality" that had been "huge" for him. He explained that, while in his previous role, he was "super invested" in the outcome emotionally from an "expert point of view", in his current role, he still had a range of opinions. However, if it did not happen in that particular way, it was still "okay". He saw that as not necessarily being "happy" with a lesser outcome but instead a "more sophisticated" way to understand the decisions "given away" within the public sector on issues.

Overall, the experience attending LiP was "compelling" for John. He had gained a "lot more confidence in operating on the sort of scale" in terms of the work he was tasked with. John thought that to get to where he would have been a dream outcome for him at the start of LiP. The process of stepping up into a more senior role for John was a direct outcome of finding his self-confidence during the nine months attending LiP because there was "no way" that he could have considered being in a tier 3 role "pre-LiP". Finally, the interview with Courtney brought forth similar confidence issues during discussions. Courtney explained that after attending LiP, she was more "willing to contribute", as outlined in her interview excerpt below:

> I am not naturally confident talking about my ability. So yeah. It turns out that I am pretty good at some of that stuff. We compare it against either literature or other people's examples, and some of the stuff I thought, people would give examples of things they had done, and I'm like, “well, that’s a bloody stupid idea. Of course, that was going to turn out badly.” So, that sort of reassured me that lot of things I think, “ah, well, of course, you do it this way.” That naturalness, to get to that point, is not as common as I might feel it is. I might think, “it is common sense, of course, you do it that way.” But actually, that is a developed analysis and choices. So, it gave me confidence that actually I was good at what I was doing. As opposed to “oh, it's easy, so why, you know, anybody could be doing it.”

She explained, therefore, that LiP gave her the confidence that she was good at what she was doing. This, to her, was what I was doing. Almost, where, initially, she felt that what she was doing was "easy" and that "anybody could do it".

As seen from the above accounts, participants described their struggles and professional dilemmas as they developed into leaders. Some experiences in their leadership role made them question their ability as a senior leader. They started to create varying levels of insecurity, distress and a certain sense of diminishing self-confidence. Only after their attendance at LiP were they able to surface and more clearly analyse these sentiments. LiP provided them with learning tools and techniques to address some of their underlying concerns and remediate them. I argue that this might have been a direct consequence of the training they acquired by attending

LiP which made them recognise and self-aware by refocusing on their abilities – both as individuals and as leaders'. Therefore, the following section presents the sixth theme – Realising self-awareness.

5.2.2 Theme 6: Realising self-awareness

In this section, I present excerpts from interviews with three participants – Peter, Sara and Ella. Discussions with Peter, Sara and Ella, brought into focus their experiences attending LiP, but these were not related to anyone part of the course. Instead, the experiences spanned the entire nine-month period starting from the four-day residential. For instance, the four-day residential was the period that was most impactful for Peter and Sara, whereas Ella picked up key learnings and a "new way of thinking" throughout the nine months. One of Ella's most potent experiences happened during the nine months when she was in the work setting. Discussing the scenarios with her coach helped her unravel the situation at hand and her state of mind. This theme consists of four sub-themes which I discuss in the following sections:

1. Leadership role fit
2. Facing misbehaviour
3. Embracing self
4. Developmental life events

5.2.2.1 Leadership role fit

First, I begin with Peter's interview excerpts. LiP was not the first leadership course Peter had attended during his career. In the beginning, his mindset about the course was very different to what it ended up being at the end. For instance, he had entered the programme thinking he already had self-awareness. But soon, he realised that the course helped broaden his understanding even more. During the course, one of the issues that he was grappling with was his role in his organisation.

Peter felt he had "lost his mojo" with his job. He thought that he wasn't "passionate about his job" and that "he wasn't loving it" at the time. To him, it seemed to lack "pace" and "crisis" and "didn't seem to have all the things that [he] was hungry for in terms of [his] career satisfaction." But as the course progressed, he realised that he had "coached himself" in believing that the role he was in "was right" for him, when in reality, he "didn't enjoy it" to a greater degree. Peter explained this further in the following interview excerpt:

> It was an important realisation that the job I was in, as much as I thought I enjoyed it, wasn't right for me. This critical moment of self-discovery was quite helpful because it proved crucial to admit that I wasn't enjoying the job I was in. As much as I thought I enjoyed it, it wasn't right for me.

He further explained that the "best things" for him regarding his career development were to actively pursue changing his job. So, to him, LiP "kind of pushed [his] buttons more", which resulted in him eventually leaving the organisation and moving to another organisation. But this was a "big decision" for him at the time.

5.2.2.2 Facing misbehaviour

Second, I present the discussion with Sara, which touched on a similar experience about self-awareness. Sara explained that on the last day of the four-day residential, participants had to do a presentation to the other members of the cohort around a situation that they were going to take away and work on. This session was particularly unnerving for her to the extent that she "the night before laid there thinking about it and what it really meant to [her]". The experience she talked about at the presentation was about how she "struggled" with the behaviour of one of her senior leaders. Sara explained at her interview that:

> …when in a meeting, a senior leader in my organisation was always quick to jump in and correct the person talking as "this is what you are saying, or I think what you are trying to say is this or I don't think you quite got the wording right". This made me not want to contribute to the meeting because I felt I didn't want to be the next one that he was going to jump

on.

Her manager's feedback at the 360-degree session leading up to LiP had confirmed this further because he had mentioned that he could see that she was "off-put by it" but that she "shouldn't let it worry [her]" because she had "good things to contribute" and that it was just the senior leader's "style". During her presentation, one of the things that had "surprised" her was how much this was "affecting" her and that it was "emotional, and it was bigger" to her to the extent that she kept it "at the back of [her] head". She decided to work on it with her mentor and, in the process, realised that the way she had dealt with it was to "park it at the back of [her] mind and worked [sic] right under without addressing it". What "surprised" Sara most was that "[it] had always been sitting there niggling and that [she] hadn't addressed it before". She explained that this had made her "really uptight" to the extent that it affected her. After Sara left the four-day residential, she felt that she had "ideas, thoughts in the wake of how [she] needed to address and work around" this case. She said that she felt that she "left with stones on [her] shoulders but that [she] left with a better headspace on how [she] could address it instead of working around it all the time".

5.2.2.3 Embracing self

Finally, Ella's narrative focuses on a similar incident after returning from the four-day residential follow-up nine-month period. Ella spoke in-depth about a "highly embarrassing" experience that happened at her work. She began by recalling how a meeting of senior managers had been called to develop a solution within a tight timeframe of 24 hours. At this meeting, Ella was in discussions with her colleagues when unexpectedly she was "horrified" as the realisation dawned on her that she had interrupted her colleague with a "reinforcing comment". This resulted in her colleague feeling "a bit sensitive to being interrupted" and replied saying "don't interrupt me, please". This to Ella was the "most firmly" she had ever heard her colleague speak because she was known to be "quietly spoken".

Ella felt "horrified" about being "told off" in front of "everybody". As the meeting came to an end, she thought that she had "no other opportunity" to say what she wanted to say. She explains that at that point, everyone else was "jumping in, including people who didn't have a skin in the game". So eventually, she got "fed up" and "lost it entirely, banged the table and said, 'I want a turn'." She felt her response was "quite loud and inappropriate like a three-year-old which was very highly embarrassing". Ella burst into laughter at this point during the interview as she joked, "they all gave me a turn". Eventually, she and her colleagues came up with a solution in that meeting. But she felt "very upset" about the situation and "just mortified" that this had happened and that she had responded in such a way to her colleagues. So, she "tried to figure out what on earth was it to get this". She felt affected particularly about this episode because she was attending LiP, "working on relationships," and actually "doing things differently to before, which was going quite well". After discussing this incident with the LDC coach, seeking guidance from her coach, she felt that she "finally figured it out". Ella explained this during her interview as:

> And the takeaway for me, in the end, was that I had these little hang-ups about being poor in social situations. As far as I was concerned, that had nothing to do with my work. But the reality is that it's not like that. Especially when you are a manager, I think it's quite an exposing position to be in. And your hang-ups are going to come to bite you one day at work. So, for me, it was kind of important to out that.

During LiP, participants became more aware of themselves and their surroundings about members of their cohort. The following section illustrates this point by bringing into focus the next sub-theme – Developmental life events.

5.2.2.4 Developmental life events

During one interview session, I was struck by a participant's relative level of ambivalence towards LiP. Although the course or its specific sessions were not critiqued in discussions, the

overall relevance that LiP provided was discussed and compared by the participant about her life events. This presented yet another angle on how this participant interpreted the value of attending LiP and the experience gained. In this section, I present the narrative from Felicity's interview. During the interview, Felicity explained that based on her "personal circumstances", she had approached her experience at LiP differently. There were two main aspects to this view.

First, Felicity explained that she felt she had received the opportunity to attend LiP "slightly later" in her career. This view came up in several different ways during discussions. For instance, she mentioned that she went on LiP largely convinced that she should have done it 25 years earlier and that it was a "little bit late" for her to undertake that course. Further, since many members in her cohort were younger and early in their careers, this reinforced the view. Therefore, she did not consider herself at an age or stage like the rest of her cohort.

Felicity explained that given her “age and stage”, she did not find the course “particularly difficult”. She further recounted her personal experience as linked to her leadership development experience as follows:

> I'd been in my role for a long time. I didn't feel under pressure in any other way. So, yeah, that was quite manageable. I don't have any young kids or anything. They are all gone and have independence, so yeah. I probably based it on my circumstances and approached it differently than I might have previously. So, three, no four years ago, I was diagnosed with breast cancer and so you know had the full nine yards treatment. And, it was not pleasant, and you know, that puts life in a rather hard perspective. So, again, I felt a lot relaxed in my own skin and my leadership journey.

Felicity explained that "there was nothing poignant at the time" for her when she attended LiP. But she explained that she took some key learnings away from the course and applied them when she stepped back into a senior role later. But because of her most recent experience health-wise, her career was not the "most important thing" to her at the time. So, she expressed

that there were only some things that she could "take in" from LiP as part of her "leadership journey".

This theme has brought into focus the relevance of self-awareness for participants. They perceived that without addressing some of the core issues and problems they were battling, they could not completely comprehend the full scope of the leadership development training. Therefore, being self-aware became a critical step for many participants in developing into leaders within the public service. As a result of the training they were offered at LiP, these participants appear to have felt supported in finding a solution to some of the challenges they faced in their leadership roles, both past and present. Further, it also becomes evident that the timing for undertaking leadership development is relevant for all leaders. Leaders appear more receptive to undertaking self-awareness when they are new entrants into a leadership role and so less experienced. Next, we look at the seventh theme, touching on this notion by discussing these participants' interpretation of trust − Developing empathy and trust.

5.2.3 Theme 7: Developing empathy and trust

In this section, I present the narratives of two participants. Both refer to being emotionally affected by their experience at LiP. The most striking feature common in both their discourses is the precedence they give to their feelings over logical thinking or skills and capability about their overall leadership development experience at LiP. This theme consists of four sub-themes:

1. Emotional astuteness
2. Counter-intuitiveness of logic
3. Learning to trust
4. Feeling human

5.2.3.1 Emotional astuteness

First, I start with Tina's interview excerpts. During discussions, Tina explained that she was "really moved by the real kind of heart that was in the room from the presentations that people gave". Tina was adept at keeping her emotions in check in a work environment. She explained that in her personal life, she was comfortable with emotions and was "more feeling-led", while in her work environment, she "tended to [be on] the more analytical side of things". She did not tend to express her emotions at work, but she felt them.

Attending the four-day residential, in particular, appears to have presented Tina with an odd experience in which she found herself expressing her emotions in a work environment, as a result of which the last day of the four-day residential "felt a little bit uncomfortable". As she witnessed the members of her cohort present their presentations, it made her relook at herself because the people before her were "incredibly emotional about their presentation". Tina explained during discussions that she felt impacted by what was going on around her at one of the LiP sessions:

> And it was very much about the heart and did wonder afterwards whether that's the reason why it has stuck more than others. When you feel something, I think it stacks more than when you think something. And I did wonder if that was one of the reasons it had more of an impact as there was a heartfelt response to things and a commitment, so heartfelt commitment as well. Rather than me going, ah I will do XYZ, it was very heartfelt. And I did wonder if that was a big part of the change. The reason that it stuck, you know, the change is stuck.

Tina felt that by drafting a presentation that was "very factual" and one that "totally fitted the bill", she had "almost distanced" herself from the rest of the group and from the course itself. She felt "very moved by the real kind of heart in the room" from people's presentations. So, she literally "threw her presentation out of the window" and instead talked about her

personal journey that she had gone through as opposed to the development plan she had committed herself to.

5.2.3.2 Counter-intuitiveness of logic

Next, I present Ella's narrative. After her experience at LiP, Ella believed that convincing people with logic had a downside because it would never work unless they could be convinced with their "hearts as well". This, to her, was a revelation in many ways and was very different to how she was used to working in her role. This, she explained, was what made the difference in her and her understanding. But ultimately, the realisation "wasn't fun" and that she had a "long recovery period after that week" after the residential.

Ella explained during the discussion that she came back from the four-day residential with "quite a shift in mindset." She came away with a "sense of the value of relationships" that she had not had before. Admittedly, she said she had known about this aspect in the past as if it was "simple," yet, her experience at LiP provided her with a perspective with a "sense of the way the world", which effectively remoulded her view of the world. Ella explained that:

> I came away with a sense of the value of relationships that I hadn't had before. It was quite a shift in mindset, and it sounds simple when I talk to people about it. It's one of those funny things that actually sounds simple. And I knew this stuff before, and I knew it after. But it's a little bit about the heart rather than the mind; you know what I mean. It's just kind of a sense of the way the world is. And that's what I came away actually with the sense that the world is built on relationships in a way that I hadn't really had before. So that, to me, was a fundamentally different way of thinking.

While, initially, she believed that the world was "built on structures, and deliverables and activities and the relationships between them all", she had not understood until then that the world was, in fact, not built on those things at all. It was built "on people and how they relate to each other". It became clear to her from her experience at LiP that the world was built on relationships between people.

5.2.3.3 Learning to trust

Building trust was not a simplified process for most participants. It became evident from their interviews that this was by far the most intensively emotional journey that some participants had had to go on. The ability to trust others and, above all, themselves was a lesson for them. But they all admitted that it was a valuable and critical part of their leadership learnings. In this section, I present the narratives of three participants on trust – Arthur, Anita and Victoria.

First, I begin with Arthur's narrative. During his interview, Arthur expressed that what "surprised" him most about the course was that:

> …how quickly the course [sic] the structure of the programme got a group of senior individuals comfortable enough to share reasonably intimate information in a really short space of time.

This, to him, was also the "advantage" of the residential week. Therefore, he felt that "the way the level of trust was built was fantastic" because he thought the members came closer together as a group.

5.2.3.4 Feeling human

In this section, I illustrate my interview with Victoria. Victoria struggled to forge a trust relationship with the members of the cohort from the beginning. She explained that attending LiP residentials was a "different experience to what [she had] expected". She found some of the experience "quite intense" ", "very personal." She thought that the course was structured in such a way that members were "encouraged to look deep inside" of themselves and to "share that" with others. This turned out to be "quite a disturbing experience" for her because she felt she "needed to be able to trust" them. But she also felt that the course was "very well set up to develop that trust" which she took to be a "lesson in itself". This she thought "wasn't [a] means to an end" but it was "part of the lesson". Victoria explained her experience as follows:

> So, the biggest light bulb moment is pretty clear to me. One of the things, it sounds really trivial, but it makes such a difference. One of the commitments that I had in my action plan was to go in for pointless coffees with people. So not going for coffee with somebody because I wanted something from them. But I was going for coffee with someone because they were interesting and interested and they were there. And who knew what would come of it, but it would be a good relationship to build on. So, I used the commitment to going for a pointless coffee every week. Pointless in inverted commas because I was beginning to understand by now that this wasn't pointless in any shape or form. It was actually more important [laughs].

The learnings Victoria took from this experience was around "working on a very human level." She explained how she had changed her working style after the four-day residential and was "astounded" when she was back at work. She found that she would spend 45 minutes talking to someone about their personal life or her personal life over a coffee and then, in the last five minutes, do what she wanted to do in terms of "business". In the past, she would have spent the whole 50 minutes talking about what she was trying to achieve and going backwards and forwards because she had not built the "trust" with this other person.

Victoria explained that this change was part of the process of building "relationships" and "rapport" by "sharing a personal side by being open about the challenges" that she faced. She realised through this learning that the fundamental "objective" of this exercise was "understanding other person's perspective and just working on a very human level". She explained that she was "seeing results" regarding the "relationships" she had built by using this approach.

This theme brings into focus a realisation in participants about the relational side of being leaders. It also portrays the importance of building trust and relationships to help them in their leadership role. I found that some participants before coming to LiP were less receptive towards their and others emotions. It appears that they tried to unsuccessfully implement transactional ways in their role as leaders by suppressing their more natural emotional responses. It is unclear why some

participants adopted this particular stance as leaders. But it appears that attendance at LiP made them aware of these sentiments and that they needed to let go of these to become better leaders by being more attentive to building relationships. This, in many ways, was implicit learning they imbibed at LiP, even more exemplifying the importance of being emotionally receptive as a leader. In the next theme, theme 8, I present some of the most profoundly confronting circumstances and experiences that some participants were experiencing when they attended LiP.

5.2.4 Theme 8: Going insane

In this section, I present the narratives of three participants – Victoria, Gabrielle and Sonia, who shared a common sentiment – Going insane. It appears that some participants experienced extreme levels of stress and strain in their leadership roles. This was to the extent that they experienced anxiety which started to impact them personally and affect their behaviours outside of work. First, I begin with the discussion with Victoria. During meetings, Victoria explained that she had stepped into a new role, which, although it "provided a perfect canvas", also brought with it a "whole heap of challenges". She had found that it was, in fact, "the most challenging role ever". This theme consist of two sub-themes which are discussed in the following sections:

1. Seeking resolution
2. Finding support

5.2.4.1 Seeking resolution

Victoria explained that she used the Action Learning Group (ALG) sessions as a short-term solution to the challenges she was facing at work:

> But also, there were a whole heap of challenges and the most challenging role yet. So, it gave me a bit of an outlet to go to people I could go to I was finding particularly difficult and make sure that I wasn't going completely

> mad. So, it was using the group from that point of view.

She had found the ALG sessions "useful for short-term things", such as providing an "outlet" to go to the members of her cohort for advice and guidance on issues at work that she was finding "difficult" at the time. These actions were also reinforcing to "make sure" that she "wasn't going completely mad".

5.2.4.2 Finding support

Second, I present illustrations from my interview with Gabrielle. Gabrielle had found LiP particularly useful because some of the learnings taught and prepared her to look after herself. For example, on previous occasions, she found it difficult to "detach" herself from work and "go home". Those were also times when she dealt with "tricky individuals", and LiP provided her with a "clear plan and additional ideas". All this helped her to "externalise the problems" she was dealing with at the time. It made her realise coming back into her role that she was "not going mad" and that there were some things that she needed to "actually work" through the problems she was experiencing at work.

Third, I discuss interviewing Sonia. Before LiP, she thought it was "some kind of new-age thing", but she realised that it was very relevant to the job she was doing at the time. First, she recalled that "overnight" she had "inherited" 15 more staff with all the "political filtering, median filtering and everything else". Sonia "had to create and build a team within a couple of months". All these activities, tasks and responsibilities were handed down to her over a short frame of time. She explained:

> So it helped put some framework around the situation I felt as a leader who was with the case then asked to do something hard, lot of people who are looking to you to provide leadership. You feel like you have to keep it together all the time because the one thing they needed was someone who looks like that they don't know what they were doing. It was also good to go outside and get some external reference on ideas from people who

weren't relying on you to deliver leadership.

To her, it was one of "those extraordinary times" when it felt that adaptive leadership was a "totally legitimate style". She felt that if she "hadn't had the programme to go back to and that the idea to have a plan and change it every five minutes was fine", she probably would have felt that she "was going crazy".

Participants interview excerpts present various facets of the extreme levels of stress and anxiety they experienced in their leadership role. I argue that some of the leadership expectations and responsibilities they inherited in their leadership roles triggered this emotional state in them. On the other hand, it appears they could only fully comprehend the emotional impact of these experiences when they attended the LiP course. Further, action learning seemed to have helped them seek resolution to some of the challenges that seemed insurmountable to them in the workplace. This also surfaces some of the more poignant concerns associated with leadership role occupancy for leaders, which, if left untreated, could lead to self-blame, emotional instability and stress in leaders. LiP seemed to provide a supportive environment to resolve workplace problems and a trusted outlet for some participants. However, this was not the case for some other participants. These participants found it hard going from day one at LiP, and the next section presents the sixth sub-theme, which illustrates this – Feeling out of place.

5.2.5 Theme 9: Feeling out of place

In this section, I present the narratives of two participants who struggled to a much greater extent at LiP, mainly because they were unaccustomed to exposing their vulnerabilities and flaws to others. They felt acutely uncomfortable in proximity to other members of their cohort, particularly during the four-day residential. During this period, the members were often encouraged to spend most of their time with their group. This also included break times during

morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea and dinner. In this section, therefore, I present Jack and Victoria's pessimistic views on the residential, which stand out in stark contrast to those of the rest of the participants. This theme consists of three sub-themes which are discussed as follows:

1. Imposter syndrome
2. Needing personal space
3. Learning commitment

5.2.5.1 Imposter syndrome

First, I start with Jack's narrative. During discussions, Jack described himself as "not a confident person." He explained that being at the residential was "difficult" for him because he tended to "feel socially awkward". The interactions in the evenings with his group members were challenging going for him because he firmly believed he was "somewhat of an introvert". He laughed heartily as he referred to himself as a "communicative introvert". Secondly, he also found it was "difficult to click" with one of the trainers at the residential. And yet, after completion of LiP, he "chose" to enrol with the same trainer on another course, which he thought "turned out to be brilliant." Jack believed that the social experience felt intense because he needed "a bit of a space". He explained during his interview that:

> So being put in that environment where there were people like ambassadors and senior managers, and some from influential organisations, I felt that "ooh! I don't know if I belong here and whether I can hold my own here." And so, I did feel like a fish out of water. I am not as polished as some people.

Jack had an innate sense of being out of place and constant self-doubt about his "fit" with the rest of the group. This also seemed to stem from an underlying belief that he was a "maverick", while the members of his group were "fairly conventional on their part". He also

found the experience "personally challenging" because being put in his group felt like "being too disciplined". He described his experience as "fairly intensive", like being in a "fishbowl".

5.2.5.2 Needing personal space

Next, I discuss my interview with Victoria. In the interview with Victoria, it became clear that she felt a sense of discomfort when with her group. She explained that she had never met the members of her cohort before. Yet, she was aware that she was indirectly connected to them through her work. She found the experience during the four-day residential to be "disturbing" because it "involved bringing the personal into the professional level". Victoria presented her views in the interview as follows:

> The other part, these were primarily people I had never met before. They were all primary people I was in one way or different connected to. So that needed to be able to trust. But the programme was very well set up to develop that trust which I think was a lesson in itself. It wasn't a means to an end; it was part of the lesson.

So, the concept of developing a trust relation proved to be a key lesson she picked up during the residential period and afterwards in the ALGs. This conflict between the personal and professional was more pronounced in some participants than others. Therefore, I present the next sub-theme, which illustrates this point more pronouncedly.

5.2.5.3 Learning commitment

Next, I illustrate the excerpts from Anita's interview transcript. Anita explained that she "went into" the course "determined to really commit to everything [she] was doing." However, she found out soon enough that not everyone who attended the course "brought to the table" the same sentiments as her. She felt this was quite a revelation. She began to describe her observations during the initial stages of the four-day residential about how other members of her cohort were behaving. Anita explained that:

> I think I went into it determined to really commit to everything I was doing. One of the first revelations for me was that not everyone who attended brought that to the table. Whereas for me, I just trust the process we were taken through. If we have speakers coming in, I will listen to them; I will think about, you know, questioning is how I go to that more profound level of understanding.

She noticed that some were "clearly out of their comfort zone in the activities that they were doing". This group of attendees she saw "very outwardly questioned and challenged" some of the information that was being shared with them on some of the tasks they were doing during the residential sessions.

It is clear from the above theme that the notion of one size fits all might be less applicable when considering the make-up of the cohort of leaders attending a highly intensive leader development programme such as LiP. It appears that some participants seemed to have a far different interpretation of the course content than others. It is unclear if these participants were not aware of the course content before attending LiP. Or whether they had different interpretations about the structure and design of the course than what was presented to them before their attendance at LiP. This also brings to the surface how differently participants responded to the design and structure of the LiP course given their varied personalities. Next, we look at the 10th and final theme – Making a difference.

5.2.6 Theme 10: Making a difference

In this theme, I present the interview excerpts of four participants who expressed a strong desire to make a positive change, which for various reasons, they believed they could enhance or improve as a leader. This also brought into focus a delineation they surfaced between their personal preferences and their leadership preferences. This theme consists of two sub-themes which are discussed in the following sections:

1. Valuing leader development

2. Facing conformity

5.2.6.1 Valuing leader development

This view seems to have become more solidified and more apparent when they attended LiP, which may have been absent earlier. First, I illustrate John's narrative:

> For a moment there, I was going to say building teams, but in my mind, great leadership is building other great leaders or developing other great leaders. And I think that that is also a segment in that pie where my leadership is not about me. It's about developing everybody else to be successful and also be great and brilliant. And I put a lot of energy into that cause I think it's essential. So probably diversity of thinking and developing leaders.

In the above excerpt, John brings into focus his vital interest in developing leaders and a more direct focus on building leadership within the workforce. Felicity presents a similar view in the excerpt below:

> I develop my people well. I am conscious that people have done it for me. So, for me, it's about paying it forward but paying it back, if you see what I mean. My responsibility is to make other people have the same opportunities as I have had. So, there is that development focus.

In the following few interview excerpts, I illustrate the discussion about how participants related to the notion of non-conformance as a consequence of attending LiP.

5.2.6.2 Facing conformity

Discussions with two participants revealed how acutely they were impacted with a notion of a particular perceived leadership model that they felt demanded undue conformance and compliance from leaders within the public sector. First, I present Nicole's interview excerpts. Nicole expressed her newly formed views as a result of her attendance at LiP. She explained:

> I think I was worried coming into it about what kind of leader I ought to be. And I think the LiP programme gave me the confidence to be my

> authentic self. And to not try and sit into a particular box. Be comfortable in my own skin. Because I think the public service is becoming more diverse and different leadership styles are really important in that. And having that recognition through a LiP type programme just helped validate that I didn't need to conform to perhaps some of the role models that I had earlier on in my career. And that there are different styles of leadership that are equally as valid.

This depicts a realisation and acceptance for non-conformity she lacked earlier. It is noteworthy here that she felt she needed "conform" to sit in a "certain box". However, this need alleviated once she had attended LiP, which made her open and accepted other " leadership styles". Next, I illustrate a different perspective on non-compliance, as picked up in my interview with Arthur. Arthur provided a different interpretation of his interactions with ministers and other senior public sector officials due to his "improved self" since attending LiP. He explained:

> So yes, at a content level, it happens fairly regularly at the new ministerial direction you don't necessarily agree with. Still, ultimately my role in those sorts of circumstances, it's about adapting as best as we can to ensure that we can deliver the benefit. I'll do what the minister or executive wants, but you will also see some potential benefits for the community and workforce.

It appears that attending LiP provided some participants with the ability to be more "authentic" leaders. It also brings to attention that some leaders indeed felt a need to "conform" to certain types of leadership "style" before undertaking leadership development at LiP.

As discussed above, as participants became more confident leaders, they appeared more receptive to bringing in a change or improvement into the areas that they perceived needed to shift from a traditional approach to a more contemporary and forward view. Secondly, knowing the relevance of undertaking leader development since their attendance at LiP, participants also felt responsible for their development and training and developing other future leaders.

5.3 LIQ3: coding tree example

Table 5. 2: LIQ3 – coding tree

LIQ NUMBER	3
INVESTIGATION CRITERIA	A view on LiP and its role in leader identity formation
INVESTIGATION SUBTHEME	1. Nature of leadership practice as interpreted by leaders before, during and after attending leadership development - LiP, 2. Influential leadership development aspects of LiP for leader identity formation- experiences, learnings, outcomes. 3. Relevance of LiP for leaders. 4. Role of contextual factors in leadership development. 5. LiP design features that worked and did not work for leaders. 1. Leader identity formation as a process - entry, transition or identity shift and exit. 2. Influential leadership development aspects of LiP on leader identity - experiences, learnings, outcomes. 3. Level of leader identity and role incongruence or congruence experienced before and after attending LiP - identity crisis. 4. Reasons for leader identity and leadership role incongruence or congruence. 5. Role of leadership practice in leader identity formation 6. Role of contextual factors in leader identity formation
THEME 3 THEME 4	a) Leader identity formation as a process b) Dealing with identity crisis, identity shift and identity conflict.
CATEGORY	C. LiP and interpretation of leader identity
LEADER IDENTITY QUERY (LIQ) QUESTIONS	5. To what extent did leaders feel affected by LiP? 5a) What was their experience at LiP? 5b) What events/experiences impacted them emotionally? 5c) What was their experience in the workforce during the nine months while attending LiP? 6. To what extent was LiP informing their leader identity formation process? 6a) What was their experience after completion of LiP? 6b) How was their experience at LiP relevant to their development? 6c) What aspects of LiP created a lasting impression on them?
Theme 5 – Needing a safe house.	
5. To what extent did leaders feel affected by LiP?	
5a) What was their experience at LiP?	

"What was really powerful for me was the other people." “I found that very inspiring, the power of the group. I really enjoyed the week of it. You know, we did a week of wherever, Wallaceville of wherever. And really enjoyed the time away. To think about this place. The reactive, urgent work and have time to focus. And some of the things I enjoyed, I guess, I really enjoyed the resilience, the well-being, I really enjoyed the challenge to look back on your life and think about what’s most important and that connection back to more your family really than the career side of things. So I found it quite powerful, and because I was new and struggling, I really enjoyed the action learning groups. And the support of my colleagues. And I felt that I could speak very frankly, in that context about some of the issues I was struggling with. And I hugely admired some of the honestly from some of the others. So these were not people full of bravado but saying “gosh I am struggling. Not doing as well as I thought would in my job. People were really showed such strong leadership doing self-reflection and I found that really inspiring. "	Leaders found it beneficial to spend time away from work and in close proximity with other leaders in their cohort; reflecting and listening to the challenges of other leaders.
5b) What events/experiences impacted them emotionally?	
"It was safe in that group to open and be frank about the challenges and so on, so it was in some ways quite emotional. But I thought that was quite confounding, really. Oh yes, as I said, I thought it was a safe place to share some of those, you know, real challenges as a leader and a manager, and for few reasons, there was quite a dramatic change in the public sector. " "So to be able to be in a safe space with other public servants, so getting to share some that stress and strain so your team safely navigated all that, to downsizing, not because of any performance issue but there weren’t enough jobs anymore. Those kinds of things are very emotional for people who are career public servants, and they don’t have a lot of support. I think my strategy is to (she stammers) talk about things, to try and understand in a safe space. Cause effectively, you can’t really talk about it outside really of the public service. So I found that very helpful. You know, I guess the understanding the bigger picture of helped me to understand I guess."	Leaders acknowledged that attending LiP provided them with a safe environment to express themselves freely within their cohort. They felt secure in the midst of other public sector leaders in their cohort who were experiencing similar challenges at work.

5c) What was their experience in the workforce during the nine months while attending LiP?	
"I also found that very interesting, and I guess it confirmed for me, you know, the validity of some of my own perceptions. And it strengthened my resilience, I guess, you know when you know other people are going through some of the same challenges and things and hearing about strategies for you to cope. And helping you to develop your own strategies for being resilient and for being, you know, a change leader and to absorb the change. I think that I found that very helpful to me as a leader. " "I think I felt that week more clarity. I think I was in this fog, you know trying to get things done at work. And get the team through this change program. Do my job, be a good leader and all that and I felt that I hadn't examined myself through all that. Having that space to do that, as I said in a safe environment with people who were facing similar challenges, I think that gave me some clarity on how, you know, my ability to be a good public sector leader, a manager and what I might do to get there. I found that. So yes, that was a kind of a revelation – clearing through the fog of wall, the fog of everyday, just getting things done."	Leaders were able to reflect and rea-arrange their thinking during the time they attended LiP. They felt they were better furnished as public sector leaders after undertaking the course and completing it, than they were when they started.
Theme 6 – Realizing self-awareness.	
6. To what extent was LiP informing their leader identity formation process?	
6a) What was their experience after completion of LiP?	
"It did change the way I work. [did it] yeah. And it did change the way I thought about things, and it certainly changed the way I approached difficult staffing issues. I think before I did the program, I would have really, like everyone else, hated difficult conversations. And I have done everything to avoid them and manage around them in the staffing sense. Because I do difficult conversations all the time [laughs] in my normal job. Now I am much more likely to be pragmatic and professional about it and externalise that. " "And the other thing I did once I finished the program was actually continued with my coach from LDC for another year. Just to have a monthly catch-up session, and that was really good in terms of making sense of changing job, when I had a, went into a new job. A whole new set of challenges. "	Leaders undertook a process of self-realisation. They were more aware of their strengths and weaknesses as leaders after completion of the training.
6b) How was their experience at LiP relevant to their development?	

"I think the other thing it changed for me is that I felt that I was very young to be doing the job that I was doing. And I just got right over that and thought that's fine" "The other thing it definitely made me do is leap off the cliff in terms of going into an area I think I didn't have technical expertise in. I had always relied on my reputation for building a lot of technical expertise so that people knew I was expert in something. The job I am doing now, I have a lot of relevant skills and competencies for, but I wasn't really across the detail at all and what I was doing. I had to invent the job when I came into it. I was much more relaxed and focussed on, and being relaxed helped me to focus on what I was doing"	Leaders felt more self-confident in their role as public sector leaders than they had prior to their attendance at the leadership development training.
6c) What aspects of LiP created a lasting impression on them?	
"They have a number of chief executives or other senior guest speakers who came along. And there's always one or two, and there particularly one that I recall talking about his leadership journey. And what it meant for him to be an authentic leader, and that time I had a particular challenge that didn't sit well with me in terms of the action I had taken or what I had to do in terms of that particular issue. And it didn't sit well with me. And when I listened to him, I thought, sure, I just trusted my judgement actually remember to be who I am. I don't have to be what someone else wants me to be. And you know it's about that, be who you are and be authentic as a leader. And actually, I was okay, what's that word, humanistic I suppose you know. "	Listening to and hearing the experiences of other public sector leaders made a significantly strong impression on leaders and influenced their ability to be more self-aware.
Theme 7 – Developing empathy and trust	
7. How did participants describe themselves as leaders?	
7a) What description did they prefer?	
Well, I want to be a compassionate leader. I don't want to be authoritarian. I want to be focused on the people. The vulnerable people that we are responsible for addressing. Ought to demonstrate that I can take feedback from my team. It's not just a one-way street. So I think those are the things I value. And I need to keep checking myself, that I am living up to those things and that if I am not, then I need to do something about it. So I need people around me who can help me with where I am up to.	The leaders became more self-aware after attending leadership development training. They became more receptive to negative feedback and challenging situations than they were before.
7b) How did they perceive their colleagues or peers described them as leaders?	
Oh, it depends whom you talk to. I am sure there are a couple out there who would not have too	They acknowledged that as public sector leaders, conflicting interests

many nice things to say about me. Then some that would. So it's going to absolutely depend on relationships. So with the number of them, I would hope that that's absolutely how they would see me. As a compassionate colleague, someone who can go head-to-head with someone else too. So I don't always want to agree with my colleagues. Neither do I want them to agree with me. So I think across the sector we work with number of agencies, and sometimes there are tense conversations and that needs to shift. It doesn't have to ruin the relationships. So I'd hope that attribute will be seen and being courageous. Being the greatest leader willing to talk through things that are of concern or I think are of critical importance.	and contradictions was part of he terrain. But they appeared willing and open to try their new leadership learnings they acquired through leadership development.
Theme 8 – Going insane	
8. To what extent did the leaders feel a sense of leader identity incongruence / struggle?	
"I had a very hard task, and then I sort of got an impossible task out on top of that. And had to ask, overnight had inherited fifteen more staff. Whole lot of sort of political filtering, media filtering and everything else. And had to really create and build a team within a couple of weeks, you see, initially. I think if I hadn't had the program to go back to and that idea of it's fine to have a plan and change it every five minutes. That's a totally legitimate style when you are going through one of those extraordinary times. I probably would have felt I was going crazy, I think."	It appeared leaders expressed a sense of misalignment between their personal or self-identity and how they thought they perceived themselves as leaders.
Theme 9 – Feeling out of place	
9. How did leaders interpret their identity struggle?	
9a) What was their experience and interpretation of their leader identity struggle?	
"I had a very hard task, and then I sort of got an impossible task out on top of that. And had to ask, overnight had inherited fifteen more staff. Whole lot of sort of political filtering, media filtering and everything else. And had to really create and build a team within a couple of weeks, you see, initially. I think if I hadn't had the program to go back to and that idea of it's fine to have a plan and change it every five minutes. That's a totally legitimate style when you are going through one of those extraordinary times. I probably would have felt I was going crazy, I think."	It appeared leaders expressed a sense of misalignment between their personal or self-identity and how they thought they perceived themselves as leaders.
9b) How did they respond to their identity struggle?	
"What I really enjoyed was the resilience work that was done. And thinking really, how do I look after myself in this. And how do you detach a bit from work? How do I learn to detach better from	Leaders valued the resiliency training they received at LiP. They used their learning at LiP to make sense of the

the workplace and leave this here when I go home. So I found that really, I found that particularly helpful. I think some of the structure around dealing with tricky individuals when I was working through and then having a really clear plan and some additional ideas, I think that was the other thing. That coming back and going right, I'm not going mad, you know, this has been a neglected part of the business, so if I spell it out, I found that really helpful too. You are not going mad. And here are some things you need to be doing to actually work your way through it. "	identity struggle they experienced in their leadership roles.
Theme 10 – Making a difference	
10. What did they perceive to be the impacts of their leader identity struggle?	
I think the rapid pace affects everyone. I think that one of the things I try to do with my team is to stay very calm—a as there is a lot of anxiety coming down. And I don't want to pass that on. If I don't be the buffer for my teams, then the level of anxiety is going to remain very, very high. So I guess, professionally, I feel that. And there is a constantly changing goal post. Then we have a new thing to stand up to within a month. And you know, some of the things are bit time frames that are so short, and the idea is so minimally thought through that you think "hmmm." And the pressure on people. So, I think my task at work is to stay as calm as I can to alleviate anxiety. To be really clear, when it's my problem and not theirs to fix. Here's what we're going to do, but actually, that sits with me. So I just want you to help me figure out how we can work through it. I think personally, the challenge with that is turning off on the work. Slowing it down. Not ruminating about it. Actually, figuring out how to relax. Cause when you've got things being chucked at you from so many different angles in a day, you are empty.. Your adrenaline is high and I think that one challenge for me is turning that off. And calming down. So, yeah, personally I've been in the job for nearly 2 years. Do I want to keep working at this pace, with this very rapid intensive pace, with very short turn around on things. Probably I don't want to do that for a lot longer. But I'm not miserable and I love the focus of my work and my team. I am really passionate about that. So, obviously there is a personal impact.	It appeared leaders expressed that attending LiP equipped them to address areas of self-improvement better. They perceived that the challenges they encountered as leaders had a significantly high impact on them personally.

5.4 Summary

This chapter summarised findings from employing the Leader Identity Query 3 (LIQ3). With each participant interview, I found that a picture began to form what I would like to refer to as a leader identity continuum, starting from implicit behaviours to leadership role occupancy to those behaviours that are more contingent on emergent leader identity as an end state. This surprisingly was evident as a common trend across most participant interviews with very little exception. Certain behaviours manifested more in some participants, while in others to a lesser degree, across the leader identity continuum. Participants in senior leadership roles perceived confronting challenging situations at work severely affected them on a personal front. In most cases, they were unable to draw a delineation between their personal and professional lives. Constant subjection to governance scrutiny and inquiry, both internal and external, compounded by a general state of business, manifested into excessive stress, strain, anxiety, insecurity and overall neglect towards their health.

Attendance at LiP raised participants' self-awareness about their emotional and physical state. It made them empathetic towards other members of their cohort, whom they perceived as experiencing an emotional struggle. Learnings undertaken at LiP seemed to have a highly positive impact on all participants. With only one exception, most participants attributed this as significantly higher, mainly due to their inclusive experience at the four-day residential, than at the remainder of the nine months of the programme. Their interpretation of the resultant behavioural shift in themselves and the cumulative effect on their identity, both personal (or self) and professional (or leader), seemed to vary vastly. The implicit nature of the public sector context was also a central point of convergence across all participant interviews.

It transpired during further analysis that each of these themes fell into one or more phases, mainly: Inception, Initiation, Recognition and Rebellion. I present these four phases in

the next Chapter 6 as four quadrants of a leader identity formation framework which I perceived as relevant to public sector leaders forming a leader identity.

CHAPTER 6 – DISCUSSION: LEADER IDENTITY FORMATION FRAMEWORK

6.1 Introduction

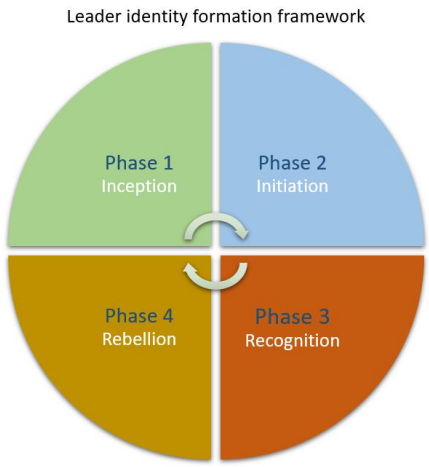
The discussion section of this thesis spans two chapters – Chapter 6 and Chapter 7. In this chapter, I propose the leader identity formation framework as the main theoretical contribution of this thesis. Therefore, the main emphasis of the content in this chapter is on the four phases – Inception, Initiation, Recognition and Rebellion – that have emerged from findings presented in Chapters 4 and 5. Here, I have examined these findings using Bem's (1972) self-perception theory for interpreting participants' perceived attributions about self and others. Rather than arriving at the best judgment about the efficacy of given events, programmes and practices designed to develop leaders, I have taken an interpretive approach that allows identification of varying interpretations– some seen as valuable, some perhaps potentially damaging (Mabey, 2013). I perceived the overt behaviours exhibited by participants as relative to their self-attribution, which appears to forge identity regulation work in each phase.

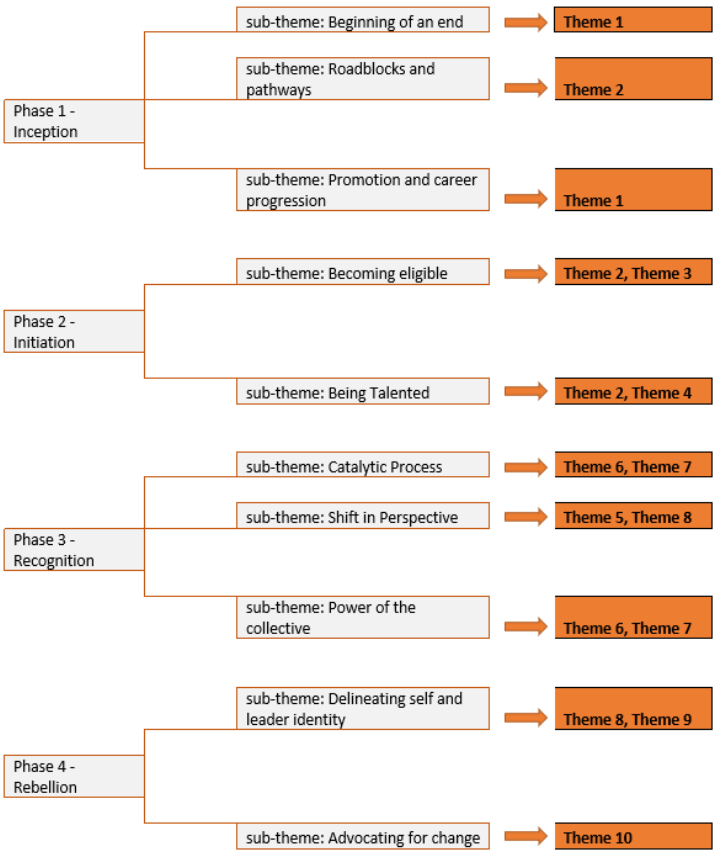
6.2 Leader identity formation framework

I found that each of these four phases further comprised of one or more sub-themes. The Inception phase consists of three sub-themes: Beginning of an end, Encountering roadblocks and pathways, and Promotion and Career progression. Second, the Initiation phase comprised two sub-themes: Becoming eligible and Being talented. Third, the Recognition phase included three sub-themes: The catalytic process, a shift in perspective, and the collective power. And, finally, the Rebellion phase was made up of two sub-themes: Differentiating between self and leader identity and Advocating for a collective change. I discuss these four phases and their sub-themes along with their connection to the Themes as presented in the preceding chapter 4 and chapter 5.

Figure 6. 1 Leader identity formation framework and meta-analysis.

- Inception
- Initiation
- Recognition
- Rebellion





6.2.1 Inception

The inception phase maps the early beginnings of a leader's 'leadership journey' into the public service. It is primarily in this phase that a leader steps into a leadership role. Within this phase, a leader occupies one of the following into three distinct parts or stages and steps up from one

position into another, finally stepping into a leadership role: stage 1 – non-leader or non-managerial; stage 2 – managerial or team leader; stage 3 – senior leader role.

6.2.2 Initiation

This phase maps critical experiences and circumstances faced by leaders in their leadership practice. This phase is essential for leaders because it brings them closer to the reality of becoming a leader within the public sector. This phase consists of three sub-themes: Beginning of an end; Roadblocks and pathways; Promotion, and career progression.

6.2.3 Recognition

Compelling concerns take hold in a leader in this phase. This results in an internal struggle, which creates in them a more profound meaning-making process. Leaders begin to better comprehend certain aspects of leadership practice as more concerning than others. It is in this phase that they learn to develop a heightened sense of self-awareness. Two sub-themes typically mark this phase: Becoming eligible; Being talented.

6.2.4 Rebellion

In this phase, leaders achieve a maturity level that enables them to take a more reflective stance by taking into account the external challenges and problems and finding solutions. They begin to delineate some of these as systemic leadership concerns, finely woven into the fabric of the public service itself, and so there may not be easy solutions for these. This phase evolves into two sub-themes based on the process undertaken by leaders in each stage: Delineating self and leader identity; Advocating for a change – seeking a resolution to common leadership problems. I discuss each of these phases in detail in subsequent sections.

6.3 Phase 1 – Inception

The term inception has many meanings: Inception is the beginning of an institution's establishment or starting point or activity. I present Inception in this thesis as the first and earliest phase of the leader identity formation framework. Inception depicts the earliest stages of leader identity formation for leaders within the public service. In this phase, leaders who I interviewed expressed their interpretations and expositions about how and why they decided to put themselves forward for a leadership role within the public service. My research intention here was to explore their views and beliefs about public service and its leader. What motivated them about the public service? How did they interpret public sector leadership? Why was being a public sector leader relevant to them at a particular time in their career span? Inception represents the first quarter among the four quarters that complete this framework: Inception, Initiation, Recognition, Rebellion. This phase comprises three separate sub-themes, each informing the overall inception phase:

1. Beginning of an end.
2. Roadblocks and pathways.
3. Promotion and career progression.

For many participants, the Inception phase depicted the end of their non-leader identity and marked the beginning of a critical new stage in their career span. I delve into this in the section called 'Beginning of an end'. Next, participants' perceptions about how they experienced this progression or transition into a leadership role are discussed in the section called 'Encountering roadblocks.' Moreover, placement into a leadership role was often viewed and expressed by participants in many instances as, first and foremost, a promotional activity with references to recognition and reward being a core theme of their interpretations. This I discuss in the section called 'Promotion and career progression'.

6.3.1 Beginning of an end

This section is called 'Beginning of an end' because it draws out participant narratives that portray them ending their current state and commencing a new future state. Participants' narratives indicated the start of one or more career progression activities undertaken to achieve employment in a leadership position within the public service. Therefore, this represents a point-in-time reference when they had decided to change course to become a leader. This state is vital because it brings out participants' emotions, thoughts, feelings and perceptions that indicate a readiness to shift from a non-leader to perceived leader identity. The perceived approach adopted by participants earlier on during their career progression or career growth stages appears to commence with a strong desire to exit a non-leadership role they were employed in at the time. This surfaced their inclination towards an elevated and superior employment position associated with a leadership role. This brings into focus the relevance of role occupancy for participants about a leader identity, which furthers the concept of a sharp delineation as viewed by participants between a leader and a non-leader role in terms of where a 'true leadership role' begins, and a non-leadership part ends.

All participants firmly appeared to agree that the career progression pathway they chose for stepping into their first-ever leadership role presented them with a transition phase to make a shift from their non-leader self to becoming a leader. Participants recognised this step as vital to them. It signified a major milestone or accomplishment in their entire professional career; they acquired a self-attributed distinguished position associated with being a leader. Therefore, this transitional phase held special significance as it marked their career move signifying a departure from a non-leader to a leadership role.

In this case, participants appeared to commence their 'leadership journey' with the penultimate aim to get appointed to a leadership role either within their organisation or across

the more comprehensive public service. Participants seemed strongly focused on pursuing this goal: they put a deliberate action plan in place, and they thoughtfully planned and carved out a segue in their professional career pathway. All participants seemed to have started this phase at different stages in their professional career span and were driven to do so for varied reasons – change of scene, increased pay, career progression, or step up into a leader or managerial role. Yet, first and foremost, participants were in most cases urged on in their pursuit by inbuilt determination. They took a conscious decision to forge an altered professional and personal viewpoint and recognition of a new, improved state, one that they distinctly separated from their current state.

Based on these narratives, I assumed that most participants in the early phase of Inception experienced a strong desire for appointment into a leadership role within the public service under internal and external factors. This might be a possible result of the misattribution effect given participants' self-attribution as a non-leader was displaced by both inner feelings and external drivers, which appears to have triggered an aversion in them for non-leader roles and a greater appeal for leadership roles.

6.3.2 Roadblocks and pathways

Intriguingly, this stage within the inception phase was expressed by participants as the most 'deeply valued' aspect of their leadership 'journey'. In this phase, they portrayed completing one stage of their professional and personal growth. Having commenced a new setting, they appeared relevant mainly because it led to their Inception into a leadership role. Secondly, it seemed to convince them of completing their non-leader career and a start or beginning of a leader career. Therefore, I note here a convergence of two opposing sentiments that come to the surface: on the one hand, participants narrated events that exemplified and heightened

personal stress and strain they experienced in pursuit of a professional stature as a leader, while on the other hand, they expressed this as an essential and essential turning point in their career.

Their narrative detailed a comprehensive description of numerous personal and professional 'roadblocks' they encountered while 'stepping' into a leadership role. Participants' experiences appeared mainly associated with a chosen career progression path that led to their appointment into a leadership role, which was widely referred to by them in scaling a "hierarchical structure" or in some cases described as ascending a "mountain". To me, their narratives painted a distinct picture of an unsteady, upwardly rising ”pathway”, which by its very nature was not only steep but unattainable at best as they needed a foothold to continue on this path. An image started to form in my mind of a steep ascent undertaken by participants, which was inferred by all participants as a crucial phase in their personal and professional lives.

The perceived connotations that participants associated with pursuing a leadership role within the public sector were mainly diverse and optimistic. For instance, participants stated that a critical driver for them to seek appointment to a leadership role was because of the opportunity it provided them to directly "improve lives for communities", "contribute to NZ", "develop the policy", or "shape the outcome". This brings to attention their interpretation of a leadership role as a medium that made them more adept at influencing a positive change within the public service and the wider community. The aspect that most notably stands out here is a vital connection participant appeared to make between a leadership role and attainment of a resultant positive end state, which was a very valid reason for being perceived by self and others as a leader. However, it is debatable if this was the fundamental reason that drew them to become a leader within the public service in the first place. Or whether this was the resultant residual effect of the noticeable changes that they gradually realised they could make within

the broader community as a direct outcome of the policy changes they gave effect to or were partly responsible for implementing when in a senior leadership role.

A dichotomy also stood out in discussions with participants about their experiences of “stepping up” into their first leadership role. While some participants expressed it as a "good learning" experience, others voiced discontent. They disfavoured approaches they viewed as "traditional" or "old-fashioned", practised in some areas of the public service that impacted individuals who were transitioning from non-leader to a leadership role within the public sector. In particular, there seemed to be a more robust response among younger leaders regarding the current public sector leadership role occupancy processes, which as they perceived favoured a stereotype of older white male leaders. This presented challenges for some of the young leaders attempting to start their leadership career within the public service. This signals a fork in how some of these participants viewed public sector leadership roles.

The above discussion presents a strong argument supporting the effect of self-attribution of dispositional properties on individuals who are in a state of transition, having shifted themselves from a non-leader identity to a leader identity. Perhaps this might explain why participants continued facing challenges along their chosen “path” in this transitional state. It is a possibility that the act of steadily encountering and then overcoming several professional hurdles during this transition phase increased their ability to become more compliant and acceptable of facing failures and setbacks than they ever could before. This resonates with Freedman and Fraser's (1966) investigations about the 'foot-in-the-door' phenomenon in which a person who can be induced to comply with a small initial request is more likely than to adhere subsequently to more significant and more substantial demands.

6.3.3 Promotion and career progression

There were two distinct categories of leader behaviours that appeared to surface in participant narratives describing their promotional and career progression activity: an inclination to seek leadership roles in other public sector organisations; and an inclination to pursue leadership roles in the same public sector. These emerged as a consequence of the leadership career progression methods that these participants chose. Important to note here is that the notion of professional "struggle" or "hard going" in attaining a leadership role was equally expressed as relevant by participants in both these leader behaviour categories. This was by either being appointed into a leadership role for the first time within the public sector or through placement into internal leadership roles within their public sector organisation. Another differentiating point that needs attention is the consideration given by participants to undertaking leadership development, training and coaching while working in the public sector. Interestingly, the need to undertake formal training and development was touched upon only lightly by participants during interview discussions.

Some participants were more inclined to resign and leave their organisation to take up a leadership role in another organisation or sector within the public service. Often, but not always, these participants seemed to belong to a demographic of younger leaders (age<40 years). These leaders had, in most cases, undertaken little or no formal leadership development and training before their appointment to their first public sector leadership role. They appeared to favour and generally relied on their professional achievements to secure their next leadership role through promotion and career progression activities rather than undertaking any form of professional leadership development and training. Most of these "younger" or "new leaders" among the participant group only became aware of the relevance of leadership development after their appointment into tier 3 or 4 roles. A perceived lack of awareness regarding the

availability of relevant leadership training and development courses stands out as a significant point for consideration regarding leadership development within the public service in the future. Moreover, there appeared to be limited leadership training and development programme information provided by their line managers and senior leaders within their organisation about role expectations and associated tasks in a few cases. Leadership tools and techniques could be, in some areas, deemed a prerequisite for an individual who was 'stepping into' a leadership role.

For other participants, because they got presented with a promotional opportunity within their workplace, this happened to be their primary preference as a career progression model. These participants were mainly much senior experienced public sector leaders belonging to higher age bracket (age>50 years) or sometimes who referred to themselves as "career public servants". These participants had previously been appointed to a leadership role. They showed a greater preference to align with their internal organisational remuneration and promotion policies to further their career as senior leaders. These leaders had developed their leadership careers primarily within the public sector by seeking out leadership roles in their organisation. They seemed to have attended leadership development training before attending the LiP programme, mainly leadership development training run internally within their organisation.

We can conclude from the above discussion that the career progression pathway or the process associated with appointment into a leadership role was perceived as neither less strenuous nor more manageable by senior experienced or 'tenured' public sector leaders even within their organisation than it was perceived by those who sought out a leadership role for the first time or earlier in their career span across the public service. Given the case, my early assumption that senior experienced public sector leaders would be more relaxed about career progression and promotional activity would struggle less. It would, therefore, seek out more

varied roles outside of their own public sector organisation settings was proven wrong. The less experienced and younger leaders displayed behaviour favouring various roles across the public service rather than in their organisation. Secondly, there appeared to be limited understanding across the entire participant group about the relevance of leadership development training as needed for career progression. Recognition of the value and benefit of undertaking leader development also appears to be scattered in pockets among the participant group, influenced to some extent by their age, role occupancy and professional experience as leaders within the public service. This conflicting view uniquely presents the disparate participant interpretations associated with leader development expressed by younger and older leaders within the public service. This suggests that the misattribution effect could play a key role in changing senior or less experienced leaders' self-attribution about career progression and promotion to a leadership role. This could be achieved by manipulating external factors associated with leadership job placement activities, leadership development and training processes and remuneration policies, either run internally within their agency or those run centrally across the public service.

6.4 Phase 2 – Initiation

Initiation as a noun is defined as the act of someone becoming a member of a group, often with a special ceremony; the act of introducing someone to an activity or skill; the act of starting something. As proposed in this thesis, Initiation depicts the second phase of the leader identity formation framework presented and is the second among the four quadrants that complete this framework: Inception, Initiation, Recognition, Rebellion. The second phase of the leader identity framework represents a development phase in which participants appeared to strive for recognition and acceptance from their peers. As noted earlier, appointment into a leadership role may have been their sole intention and driver in phase one, Inception. Still, the Initiation phase signifies their need to get noticed as leaders by others. In this phase, it appears that

participants purposefully push forward and engage in self-reinforcing activities that might help them 'step up into a leadership space'. Participants seemed to strive hard for recognition as leaders because they perceived this would elevate them to a superior level by setting them apart from their co-workers, colleagues and peers alike. Therefore, their focus shifts towards getting noticed and recognised as a leader by others rather than being employed in a leadership role, as was the case in the inception phase.

An interesting aspect of this phase was the intense shade of exclusivity and centricity placed by participants on themselves – their skills, behaviour, abilities, and achievements. In more ways, they seemed to start to segregate themselves from others in their organisation or unit through their actions and achievements, surfacing a superlative predominance. This appears to be a crucial phase, a point of convergence for most participants, mainly from undertaking leader development training. In some cases, it had set them on the path of undertaking leadership development training either directly through placement opportunities through their organisation or through other external sources they had sought out. This phase comprises two sub-themes:

1. Becoming eligible.
2. Being talented.

Certain aspects of this phase strongly signal a notion of segregation and elitism as interpreted by participants. For instance, the sub-theme called Becoming eligible refers to the narrative that brings to attention how participants variedly expressed their desire for undertaking leadership development training. Next, we discuss external image as depicted by the participants, which brings out how they would have liked to be perceived by others as leaders. Here, we examine a sub-theme called Being talented, the varied and disparate notions that participants associated with becoming a leader.

6.4.1 Becoming eligible

Participants expressed a conflicting position about seeing themselves as "eligible" to attend leadership development training, especially for a programme such as LiP, which is expensive and intensive. This notion was particularly relevant for new or early-career public servants appointed into a leadership role by an unexpected early promotion into a tier 3 or 4 positions. These participants strongly believed that by outshining others at work through delivering critical and often tricky projects or pieces of work, they would carve out a special status for themselves as a leader. As a result, they perceived they were "put forth" on "good" leadership development and training programmes such as LiP. It appears that this nomination process for being considered "eligible" to undertake leadership development training as expressed by participants was neither well defined nor clearly articulated for these leaders.

It appeared that often a narrow focus on work outputs and deliverables by organisational leaders created a need in participants to frantically chase work outputs due to a self-constructed measurement scale for professional recognition and embellishment. They endeavoured to make indelible impressions on key stakeholders and senior executives within their organisation through their work. However, they gradually realised that the metrics based solely on their ability to chase work-related outputs were an insufficient eligibility criterion for acceptance and recognition as a leader. This was because it was often loosely defined by other senior organisational leaders and influential external stakeholders and based on priorities that abruptly shifted and changed. Finally, this urge for recognition and a need to seek acceptance as leaders sometimes unnaturally tipped the balance towards narcissism and egotism for some participants. Embracing setbacks became harder for some of these participants because they had grown into the habit of never failing. Leaders described how professional competition for

training and developmental opportunities within their organisation triggered egotism taking stronghold as they continued to function in leadership roles.

In many ways, leadership development in undertaking learning and training-related activity was interpreted differently for younger, less experienced leaders than it did for experienced senior leaders. As a formative stage for younger leaders, undertaking leader development sometimes was perceived by them as an opportune time to "step up" into a leadership role. Commonly, they strived to be perceived as "eligible" by senior stakeholders and other leaders so that they could be offered leader development opportunities to undertake leader development training. Participants who were older and more experienced within the public service seemed to have fewer performance-related and impression management imperatives to perceive themselves as undertaking leader development, sometimes younger and less experienced leaders. Instead, the former was strongly driven by an "inner moral compass" to grow their leadership skills and capabilities; they were always acutely aware of the commitment needed to set course as a leader within the public service sphere. These participants explained that they had gained many reinforcing experiences and life lessons throughout their career within the public service that convinced them to be more attentive to undertaking proactive leader development training.

They seemed convinced that making a favourable impression on their manager put them in a more adept and good position; and closer to achieving their next development goal. Leaders perceived recognition and reward as a token or passed for their "initiation" to becoming a leader because it elevated their position as a leader and distinguished them from their colleagues, peers, and managers. In this phase, participants began to realise the importance of leadership development training. Having worked in the public service, sometimes for more than 20 years, some of the senior leaders in the participant group regularly attended leadership development

training. They were persuasive and proactive in seeking out developmental opportunities within their organisation and broader public service. In contrast, this practice was less common among younger, less experienced leaders. It was clear from their narrative that they were less exposed to or, in some cases, completely unaware of the leadership development training courses and programmes both within and external to their organisation.

This discrepancy in leadership development and training as perceived in totality is concerning. A lower degree of awareness towards leadership development prevailing in some pockets within the public service surfaces a critically inadequate inward view taken by some organisations. Leadership development is offered at best selectively. This filtering or selection process further reinforces fastidiousness in participants where a perception appears to take a stronghold, which reaffirms to them that professional achievements act as embellishments that are a central eligibility criterion to undertake leadership development.

If we recall in the findings chapter, Gabrielle stated, "I was nominated for LiP". The prominence of leader development as presented by this participant and by a few others resembles a reward or token of recognition that brings an interesting angle into participants' identity movement. This signals a slow and uncanny change in participants linking their non-leader identity with a self-perpetuated superior identity that they strongly associate with their leadership role. The act of being "nominated", "put forth", or "offered the opportunity" for attendance at a leadership development program such as LiP may depict the emergence of leader identity in some leaders. This typically resembles an attractive and superior front or put on for these leaders, creating the impression of being far worthier than their colleagues or peers. In doing so, leaders expressed how they also began to differentiate themselves from their non-leader self, wherein as a consequence of fewer or sometimes a complete lack of developmental

opportunities, they undertook little or no leadership development training. Therefore, I propose as the first definitive 'initiation' step into developing a distinctive leader identity.

In conclusion, there is a possibility that the self-attribution of dispositional properties effect might help to understand why individuals who are younger and less experienced leaders might be more prone to getting caught in the cycle of chasing work outputs more than senior and professional leaders. It could be inferred that a tendency to encourage a young leader to work harder and longer on challenging work projects might induce in their compliance with an initial request from senior organisational leaders and other external stakeholders, and are then more likely to comply consequently with a more significant and more substantial demand on their time. They might then perceive themselves as high-performing leaders who are constantly delivering high-quality work outputs at the peril of over-working and neglecting their health and personal life. Secondly, an individual's self-perception about being eligible for undertaking leader development could be examined using the misattribution effect. For instance, by manipulating the relevance of leadership development training as an eligibility criterion for being recognised as a leader, an individual's self-attribution as a leader could be influenced by giving him false feedback in some cases.

6.4.2 Being talented

There appears to be a distinct shift in focus for participants in this phase from a preference towards a leadership role to seeking recognition as a leader to gain membership into a self-perceived public sector "leadership talent pool". Some participants had started to become more self-centred and inward-focused in their attempts to demonstrate proven superior leadership talent. Yet, they expressed that this shift also caused them to feel uncertain about their leadership abilities. More and more, they became more reliant on delivering work outputs and meeting organisational expectations that helped them to excel and outshine to make an indelible

impression as a leader. Ultimately, they were more focused on their work outputs and endeavoured to strive harder as they sought recognition as high-performing leaders within their organisation.

Participants expressed conflicting views about talent mapping as perceived across the public service and within their organisation, as noted by Sonia, who called it "dark arts" and "abstract". These perspectives appear to drive a perceived embedded notion in participants about leadership as an elusive and rare talent among a chosen few. And yet, surprisingly, all participants who had attended LiP functioned as leaders in tier 2 or 3 leadership roles within the public service. Effectively, I argue that participants in their leadership roles faced increasingly high expectations with performing better leadership; however, the yardstick of quality measurement morphed and changed across the public service with very little consistency. I propose that this might be one of the leading causes of uncertainty and self-doubt among leaders.

Therefore, the initiation phase also characterises a complete mismatch of expectations and utter confusion about developing a leader identity for inexperienced leaders. They regarded organisational leadership training and development practices as relevant. Still, They soon realised that these converged on and were influenced by loosely defined executive leadership development conventions and norms, which they found were by far less inclusive and more inconsistent. As a result, this instilled in participants numerous internal changes that influenced their actions and approach towards becoming a leader, inculcating a drive to excel professionally, developing a competitive edge to excel, pursuing credibility and recognition among other leaders; and securing a privileged position by outshining peers and colleagues. Consequently, participants were pushed into a self-inflicted vicious cycle of all work and no life.

The first and foremost distinguishable aspect surfaced by participants in this phase was their ability and drive to deliver ted vicious cycle of all work and n, as we found in Arthur's narrative. Having a "profile" that was "right at the time" made it less of a "hard sell" to progress his leadership development aspirations within his organisation. This presents an imbalanced view because public sector organisations may aim to raise the leadership bar higher for their leaders. I argue for the plausibility that leaders have to build a well-regarded high profile as a leader to be 'put forth' or accepted for attendance into a specialised leadership training programme in most public sector organisations. This raises a conflicting argument about when and why leaders need to undertake leadership development. Is leadership development training a prerequisite activity for developing a leader identity to become a leader? Or do leaders need to prove their worthiness first to undertake suitable leadership development training?

The selective nature of the approach adopted towards leadership development discussed above surfaces some contradicting concepts associated with talent mapping as interpreted by participants. The variance in the approach taken towards leader development both at an individual and organisational level brings out certain contrasting aspects and considerations towards understanding the development needs of future public sector leaders. Although the process of becoming a leader may or may not be academic, there remains a stronger argument to support the proposition that leadership can be taught in a supportive and inclusive environment. However, I am not slighting the relevance of experiential learning for leaders in this case. This was precisely the point of difference noted by most.

In conclusion, it is a possibility that applying the overjustification effects associated with self-perception theory might help in understanding this stage for individuals. According to this theory, if overjustification effects do occur, then they provide a possible affirmative answer to the old question of whether or not extrinsic reinforcement for an activity reduces the intrinsic

motivation to engage in that activity. As I analysed the participants' narratives regarding their self-perception of being perceived as a leader by others through reward and embellishment, the extrinsic effect in organisational leadership development activities might reinforce certain overt behaviours in individual leaders self-centred feeling. This, in turn, could have a reverse effect and trigger an increased sense of self-doubt and uncertainty in individuals. This could further reduce their motivation to engage in activities that previously would have motivated them to become a leader in the public sector and thereby form a public sector leader identity.

6.5 Phase 3 – Recognition

Recognition as a noun has two definitions. First, recognition is defined as the identification of someone or something from previous encounters or knowledge; and, second, recognition is also the acknowledgement of the existence, validity or legality of something. Therefore, both these definitions are equally relevant and, therefore, are actively used in this section to discuss participants' experiences and learnings in developing a leader identity as they described it. Recognition depicts the third phase in the leader development framework presented and is the third among the four quarters that complete this framework: Inception, Initiation, Recognition, Rebellion.

Participants began to weave an intricate and rich tapestry of their personal and professional experiences in this phase. They appeared to intersperse the leader development learnings they had acquired through practice and experience as leaders throughout their career span within the public service with those they had earned through attendance at specialised leadership development courses such as LiP. This phase, in many ways, is a central piece in the leader identity formation framework because it draws our attention to a complex and contemporary mix of leadership and leader development processes for leaders, from which a new leader identity starts to take form for them at the seams. For many participants, this seemed

to occur in the least expected ways. However, participants' narratives suggest that this change or the formation processes leading to a change slowly became evident and genuine throughout the nine months of the training period.

In the Recognition phase seemingly, participants began to develop a strong sense of leader identity, which, although mainly relational, had started to draw on their personal or self-identity until it finally became more separate, distinct, and identifiable. This process from start to finish varied in its pace for all participants: it started rather slowly for some participants while it was more fast-paced for others. For instance, the development of a leader identity for some participants occurred during the four-day residential. In contrast, for others, it happened sometime over the entirety of the nine months of their attendance of undertaking leadership development. The initiation phase consists of three sub-themes:

1. Catalytic process.
2. Shift in perspective.
3. Power of the collective.

In the sub-section called the Catalytic process, I discuss the critical role played by leadership development, in this case LiP, in helping participants realise and form a leader identity. Next, in the sub-section called the shift in perspective, we look at the internal changes that ensued in participants in this phase as they began to unravel their state and become more aware of themselves as individuals and thereby, began to recognise the effect of the learnings they had gained by attending leadership development programme. This further helped them to differentiate their self-identity from that of their leader identity. The important relational role played by the LiP cohort provides an insight into the collaborative relationships and camaraderie the participants developed with the members of their mate; this I discuss in the sub-section called the power of the collective.

6.5.1 Catalytic process

A leadership development programme was deemed more effective in developing and informing a leader identity development process because it was designed to target the leadership development needs of participants in leadership roles to address specific leadership deficit areas. Consequently, a sudden shift started to take hold in participants during the course that helped them frame their unique leader identity. Participants perceived that this experience was triggered by undertaking leadership development and that they would have never experienced it in quite the same way had they not attended the programme. Therefore, I would like to call leadership development as a catalyst that propagated this change in participants. Participants who attended LiP expressed their gratitude for the opportunity they received. The learnings and mentoring support they received at LiP, according to them, was a key factor to help reposition their moral compass and set course on their 'leadership journey'. It also taught them to be mindful and empathise with others in the cohort, recognising that the work-related hardships, stress, and strain were invariably part of their individual 'leadership journey', which they had to resolve.

The process of nurturing and providing adequate support to leaders plays a central role in anchoring essential leadership learnings. Most often, the focus of highly marketable leadership development courses or training programmes is rarely on a leader's emotions and state of mind. I propose that this approach needs to be flipped right on its head entirely. There is a far greater need to understand and support the emotional needs than calibrating and measuring a leader's leadership skills and traits or their deficit, for that matter. Self-assessment tools such as 360-degree reviews provide an excellent platform; however, their use to produce a tailor-made report on what works and what does not might not only give a straight-jacket approach towards developing self-awareness.

I argue that no two types of leader identity processes are the same. This is because a leader's identity is likely to be tightly coupled with their varied personal experiences, learnings and emotions they associate with other aspects, including their interpersonal relationships with others throughout their lives. For instance, before attending LiP, most participants were acutely aware of their hardships in a leadership role. However, they were unclear about how best to navigate through uncertainties and ambiguities, which further harboured self-doubt and stress in them. Sometimes, emotional upheavals in their personal lives spilled across their professional boundaries, leading to further worry and self-blame.

One could argue that the influence of a leadership development programme on participants to develop their leader identity could sometimes be deemed only limited and at best temporal given the course covered nine months. So, its relevance for participants' identity formation process cannot be mainstream or prominent compared to their entire career spanning many years of service within the public and other sectors. However, it is essential to note here that leadership development was contextually relevant to participants attending the programme, instigating a shift in them to form their unique leader identity. Participants viewed LiP as beneficial because it provided them with appropriate leadership tools and techniques assisting in their day-to-day tasks in a leadership role. Still, more importantly, they received guidance, advice and training. They needed this to support them personally, which allowed them to function more confidently in a leadership role. This development process was perceived by participants in many ways as personally nourishing because it nurtured principles of personal care and healthy living in them and intimately linked them back with their core values and beliefs, instilling a level of confidence and personal peace in them.

Second, I argue that in the absence of the intense emotional struggles and turbulence participants faced at the time in either their work or personal lives, the leader identity

development process would have taken longer to trigger in them or would have never taken place at all in participants. I see all these factors as critical ingredients or chemicals for leader identity development to commence in leaders, which for my participants happened to be triggered or catalysed by the learnings from the leadership development training that they received. Another notable point is that leadership development on its own cannot be deemed as the sole central motive for participants to form a leader identity, rather these personal hardships and challenging professional experiences were also relevant. The resultant learnings were all-encompassing in commencing a change in their outlook and approach towards leadership and becoming a leader. This, in turn, could be early signs of leader identity development in leaders.

I argue that leaders would fail to initiate a change that would trigger the formation of their leader identity without them having to face the most challenging and unsurmountable circumstances – crucible moments – in their lives. These crucible moments have been expressed by participants in their narrative as experiences that pushed them to the extent of their narrative, as suggested by Gabrielle in her interview. These moments were arguably the most critical tipping points for leaders because they represented a process to form a leader identity as a continuum of their overall leadership 'journey' undertaken within the public sector. A common inference I made is that in most mainstream leadership studies, more than enough stress is put on resiliency training for leaders without outlining the 'how to'. Attending a leadership development program such as LiP, on the other hand, provided participants with a highly suitable medium in which they could openly discuss their deepest fears and emotional conundrum, seek resolution to problem areas, and further develop personal resilience and restore their emotional stability.

In conclusion, the changes participants experienced, both in their physical and emotional state, could be explained using the misattribution effect of self-perception theory. According to Schachter (1964), a person's attribution of her/his internal states is a joint function of both internal physiological cues and external factors of the situation. For participants, attendance at LiP was a significantly valuable and valuable experience because the learnings they received during their time undertaking the programme appeared to have initiated a change in both their internal physiological state and their external surroundings. Almost all participants, except a few, at the time of their attendance at LiP, were going through a phase of emotional upheaval either in their private or professional life and in some cases both. Some participants expressed feeling overwhelmed with stress, anxiety, internal conflict, frustrations, anger, self-doubt, sleep deprivation and in some cases, loneliness. During the first four days of the residential programme, they started to find that these feelings were in some way related to their work or personal state. These short training courses compelled them to focus back on themselves; follow a regular exercise routine and good diet to instil personal care and healthy habits; take short periods out for personal reflection and introspection, and build relationships with other members of their cohort by building trust and openness. These appear to be instrumental in helping them make that connection with their physical and emotional side. Therefore, they soon realised that by mediating these external conditions that were the cause of negative feelings, they could alter their physical and internal state. This realisation appears to be the fundamental reason that made them initiate an internal shift. It put them in control of modulating their behaviours in response to external factors, which helped manage their emotional responses resulting from their overt behaviours.

6.5.2 Shift in perspective

The shift as experienced by participants was neither short-lived nor external. As noted by Courtney in the Findings chapter:

> I suppose it's not this sort of massive shift, but often, when I am involved in conversations with some of my colleagues, I am more willing to say something. More inclined to question to understand. It's my relationships up and out. I think it has altered. I think I am more willing to contribute. Suppose they don't like my ideas, fine. But it's the contribution that's the important thing. If I just sit quietly, that doesn't help the decision-making process. Or you know I am not contributing.

A recognition that resolution to a problem, be it external or internal, could only be sourced internally was another crucial part of this change that participants experienced. Gabrielle explained that the concept that most stuck with her was that "no one is coming." This process of building resilience slowly started to trigger a change in leaders. Sometimes, they used other participants in the cohort to help them begin the process of change, which for many participants was extremely hard. Importantly, recognising this change needed to influence and reshape their surroundings depicts a critical development process for leaders. This not only legitimised and validated their leader identity by making them feel more in control as leaders. They seemed less disconcerted by leadership hardships where in the past they would have routinely struggled and could be riddled with feelings of being inept and ill-equipped as leaders.

It is noteworthy here that the sole purpose of LiP, as perceived by participants, may not so much have been to teach participants about leadership. However, the course is marketed as a leadership development course. The system helped participants initiate a change by encouraging them to dive internally, urging them to self-analyse their worst fears and experiences astutely to develop a realistic profile of themselves as leaders. Once successfully past this stage, leaders started the extremely delicate task of crafting their leader identity by drawing on both the learnings from the leadership development program and the support from coaches and their wider cohort.

This altered state of being might signal the anchoring of a deliberate leader identity, similar and yet in many ways distinct from a Leader's self-identity. For instance, participants

might or might not have undergone a dramatic external change; however, sometimes they perceived this change was noticeable externally to close colleagues and peers only, but at other times it was internal and implicitly nuanced. They explained how changes that ensued in the following their attendance at a leadership development programme surfaced a different identity – that of a resilient leader who was unwavering in resolute and strength. They had an implicit recognition of a renewed inner self-confidence often non-existent in the pre-LiP stages of their lives, with a stronger intention to harbour and nurture self-care by paving the way for a more optimistic personal and professional outlook and healthy habits.

Participants' narratives suggest that developing self-awareness provided them with a renewed sense of self-confidence. They perceived this was a direct outcome of recognising their short-comings and drawbacks by drawing on the learnings they received at LiP. Slowly, they began to accept and realise the aspects they needed to improve and change personally and professionally. This included spending time with their family, keeping an eye on their well-being, and being mindful of how they projected themselves as leaders, equally when interacting with other leaders and their staff. It is noteworthy that these 'moments of self-awareness' made a deep impression on participants because they only came to them during their attendance at a leadership development training programme when they had more recently faced medium- to long-term episodes of feeling unsupported, lost, defeated, challenged and helpless on more than one front. The participants echoed self-awareness as one of the most deliberate and essential lessons they drew from it. However, it was also surprising to note that many participants were in a real sense unaware of precisely what it meant to be self-aware. Most participants described themselves coming into the LiP programme as individuals with reasonably low confidence levels, mainly stressed and highly disconcerted with the state of affairs either in their personal or professional lives and in some cases both.

I propose that self-awareness in leaders can only be nurtured when they begin to develop camaraderie, mutual self-respect and trust, a willingness to change and grow, and, most importantly, build attentiveness to their personal and emotional health. This emotional health check was vital to safeguarding and protecting participants from anxiety and stress build-up. It was a critical leadership learning point that helped them build resilience and courage. But, most importantly, self-awareness provided them with learning tools to practise self-realisation and self-preservation. This made them aware that their own distinct leader identity is inevitably interrelated to their well-being as a leader. The fascinating aspect of all participants' narratives has been their ability to vividly remember the most delicate details of experiencing an emotional change or shift during their attendance at LiP. Sometimes, this experience grew on some participants as they slowly started to realise and accept the change, while other times, participants had very little emotional preparedness to undergo the experience. This unravelled into a practical personal interpretation and diagnostic process for participants.

In conclusion, attending leadership development programme encouraged participants to make small but significant positive changes in their personal and professional lives. This included establishing a regular eating and exercise routine, practising social skills in work settings, learning to prioritise work and personal commitments, and switching off from time to time for personal reflection. Having initiated and completed these changes, participants became more open to undergoing other significantly significant personal changes in their behaviour, such as being more mindful of their actions as leaders and their impact on others, focusing on their collaborative leadership skills. Suppose we examine these changes or shifts in light of the self-attribution of dispositional properties' effect of self-perception theory. In that case, it becomes apparent that this might offer a better explanation for understanding these processes. This presents the argument that it might be possible to change long-standing 'attributions' that individuals might make about themselves by changing or manipulating their behaviours and

controlling factors. For participants, this could imply a willingness to comply with making small changes in their behaviours, as encouraged by programme coaches and facilitators, which eventually leads to them being more open and willing (or compliant) to put into practice behaviours that needed more extensive and substantially intimate changes in them. Consequently, this might be why they could craft a distinctive leader identity by ultimately making those significant internal shifts, which were fundamentally triggered by changes in their external behaviours.

6.5.3 Power of the collective

Most participants attributed their ability to undertake a radical change in their perspectives to varying degrees to the support and comfort from other leaders in their cohort. For instance, as we saw in the Findings chapter, John's narrative signals that he found the confidence to "step up" into a Tier three role due to finding his self-confidence during the nine months of attending LiP. Other participants found themselves opening up to the members of their cohort by "bringing the personal into the professional", as described by Victoria. This series of experiences and group interactions overall formed the foundation for camaraderie and friendship among participants. However, some participants also found this experience "disturbing" and a cause for concern and discomfort.

I argue that the frame of requisition developed over time by these participants, which upheld a superior self, full of egotism and exclusivity, was shattered as they were taken through the exercises at LiP. One such learning encouraged participants to discuss the results of their 360-degree review with other members of their cohort. Consequently, participants experienced many emotions when interacting with other members of their cohort – shame, guilt, fear, pessimism, loss of self-esteem, and, most importantly, a sense of empathy that developed over time into camaraderie and mutual respect within members of their cohort.

Participants gained an opportunity to discuss and seek counsel from other leaders from their cohort at various times during but more during the residential programme. Consequently, this instigated them developing a trust relationship, often but not always culminating into stronger bonds of friendship, while in other cases into deep levels of personal gratitude and mutual respect towards other cohort members. Most times, participants were convinced of their inabilities and short-comings as leaders. Still, they were not ready to admit this openly, mainly due to a complete lack of a supportive environment, which deprived them of the critical opportunity to step back and analyse a situation from the outside. Sonia described this as "taking a balcony view". Although most participants yearned to seek counsel and advice from members of their cohort and mentors and coaches within the LiP programme, some resisted and were reluctant. These participants only did so when they were encouraged to do so by the programme facilitators and trainers. This learning process from observing each other helped build a strong foundation in participants towards developing a leader identity.

Acceptance of their failures and short-comings, along with learnings offered at LiP, also surfaced a vast sense of relief and uplifting for participants as they realised they were "not alone" to have faced extreme hardships and difficulties in one or more leadership roles. This realisation cemented a greater belief that they could be better leaders with the support and advice of other leaders and mentors who had experienced similar or worse in some cases. This was by far a pivotal point of self-recognition for participants as they made a personal choice and commitment to make a change, in either personal or professional circumstances. Their deepest intention to change then led them to seek a resolution to their problems and helping others to do the same.

In conclusion, participants expressed in their narratives that their cohort had a strong positive influence on their learning process while undertaking leadership development. They

learnt to be more open and upfront about their failures and fears when they observed presenters, who also happened to be senior public sector leaders, and other participants in their cohort. Effectively, participants altered their behaviour once they observed that other leaders were facing challenging situations quite similar to their own. A possible answer to this changed behaviour in them could lie in self-perception theory, which emphasises that neither the interpersonal observer nor the individual is confined to inferences based solely upon overt actions; instead, it is based on the 'meaning' they associate with the behaviour (Bem, 1972). Therefore, the altered state or behaviours in the participants could be explained as the ability to respond not only to overt behaviours of others but to respond as well to the controlling variables (or external factors, which in our case is the LiP programme context) of which their behaviour appears to be a function (Bem, 1972).

6.6 Phase 4 – Rebellion

Rebellion as a noun means the action or process of resisting authority, control, or convention. Oxford Learner's Dictionary (2014) defines rebellion as opposition to authority within an organisation, a political party, etc. Rebellion depicts the fourth and final phase in the leader identity formation framework presented, which completes this framework: Inception, Initiation, Recognition, Rebellion. This phase motivated and excited me most because I felt entrusted by all participants to deliver a key message to a much broader and knowledgeable academic audience using my research. Essentially, this quadrant completes the framework, but it also brings us full circle to understanding the formation of a leader identity. The key theme that emerged in this phase was that all participants in this final phase desperately wanted to make a positive change to help other future leaders. It was in the minutest way possible to carve out a more straightforward path for the next generation of 'aspiring' leaders who might be on their own 'leadership journey' to develop their leader identity. This phase, therefore, describes participants' desire and intention to leave a small legacy for these new leaders in the form of

insights and advice that they may need about becoming a leader within the public service. This notion of 'giving back' is the most optimal aspect of this phase because it surfaces the relevance of the collective for a leader over and above their interests.

This phase paints a rather compelling and fervent picture of public sector leadership as seen through the participants' eyes. The picture is compelling because participants cast public service overall against a hard reality of factual imprints. Second, the picture is fervent because it brings out through the participants' narratives many intensely vibrant tones of desperation, anger, regret, elation, triumph, frustrations; typically, a slow-moving but strong note of resistance to subjugation as I noted, an earnest plea for help and support. Two key sub-themes characterise this phase:

1. Delineating self and leader identity.
2. Advocating for a change.

Critical to this discussion is the notion of a viewing lens to explain participants' interpretation of their experiences and intentions. Secondly, participants' earnest pleas for implementing critical future changes to the public service leadership context bring to attention their ability to be self-aware leaders. This makes them recognise the full impact of the policy changes they could be responsible for affecting their leadership role in public service. In the next section, I present these sub-themes in greater detail.

6.6.1 Delineating self and leader identity

In this final phase, I noticed a specific shift emerged in participant narratives. Participants appeared to change their referential position from identifying with a particular leadership style, as commonly perceived in earlier interview transcripts, to one where almost all participants with very few exceptions appeared to slowly draw a separation between 'I as a leader and I as a person'. This change was very nuanced, but it started to build an image in my mind of them

examining or analysing themselves – their actions, behaviours, thoughts as a leader – as a separate and distinct identity from themselves as a person. This fourth and final phase is representative of participants' interpretations of their experiences and the highs and lows they faced both in their private and professional lives, which contributed to the 'becoming a leader' by the process of leader identity formation as described through the first three phases of the leader identity formation framework: Inception, Initiation and Recognition. Locating these changes in participants' narratives is particularly relevant to further our understanding of the leader identity formation process because of the nuanced distinction as noted by participants in their interpretations. This, in turn, confirms and provides evidence for the processual view of leader identity formation for participants who undertook leadership development training. These changes triggering leader identity formation appeared to be driven out of their self-identity, but yet they stood distinct and separate.

Participants' narratives in this phase presented participants interpretations of their leader identity by making a logical separation of their actions, responses, behaviours, weaknesses and strengths as leaders from their leadership context. This does not in any way mean they took a detached or dispassionate position on the matter, but on the contrary, they were now able to describe how given a chance, they could reshape or change the course of their 'leadership journey'. It appears that attendance at LiP, both the residential and during the nine months of the programme, proved a critical fork in their 'leadership journey'. Participants often reached a higher order of self-awareness and acceptance and continued a path to learned growth, as discussed in the third phase of recognition. However, in this phase, participants interpreted this change from a different perspective, such as in the third phase themselves.

In this phase, participants seemed to have begun to distinguish between their personal or self-identity and their leader identity in such a way that they perceived their triumph and defeat

as decoupled and less integrated with leadership outcomes. This presents a sharp contrast to their interpretations in earlier phases, where they had both these fused and associated with their leadership role. For instance, Gabrielle noted in her interview that "there is a personal impact." As I examined this statement closely, it became clear that at that moment, she was making a distinct delineation between herself as a person from that of a leader in a leadership role. Her narrative described her views as if she was looking in through a lens, something she had not expressed in the past because, in earlier phases, she associated leadership outcomes as "personal".

Second, in this phase, their focus sharply had shifted from themselves to other future upcoming and aspiring leaders. They had started to refocus on how best they could mobilise their newfound confidence into shaping a smoother and straight path for others. This perceived shift from self to others could be proposed to signify the completion of a leader identity formation process for a leader. Participants presented their in-depth view on the existing leadership context and its relevance in informing a leader's identity. They did not hold back in highlighting areas that were particularly relevant to their leader identity formation process. They perceived could also "impact" other aspiring and "new leaders" if left unstressed. They voiced their concern with a distinctively defiant tone on crucial problem areas they had encountered within public sector leadership practice for New Zealand. They provided helpful advice and practical steps to help "improve" and support future leaders in undertaking leader development.

In conclusion, altered self-attributions helped form a leader identity in participants and changed their interpretation of the leadership context within which they operated as leaders. In this phase, participants became aware of their leader identity and felt more adept at making changes to the operating model for the betterment of future public sector leaders. Self-

perception theory (Bem, 1972) suggests that in using the misattribution effect, individuals can come to 'know' their attitudes, emotions and other internal states partially by inferring them from observations of their overt behaviours and circumstances which this behaviour occurs. Participants appeared to be in better control of their emotions and feelings because they 'viewed' their leader identity and associated it with leader behaviour rather than their self-identity. Using the learnings from LiP, they were able to manipulate or change their leader behaviours to create a perceived delineation between their self-identity and leader identity. They thereby gained a better understanding of their emotions and feelings, which they appeared to lack in the earlier phase of the leader identity formation framework.

6.6.2 Advocating for a change

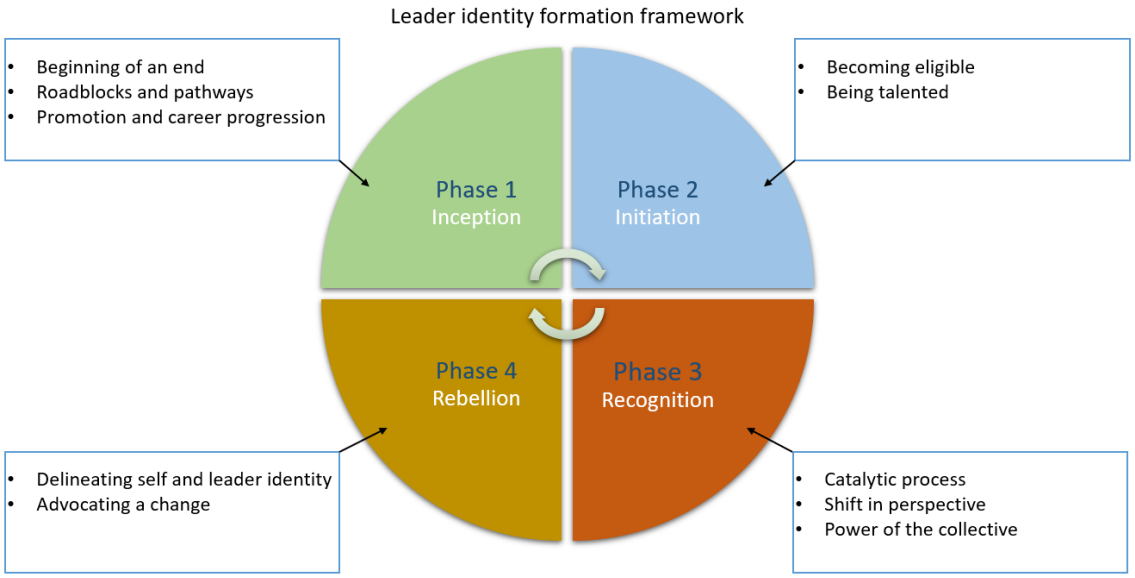
A strong plea for a change in the climatic conditions for public sector leaders seemed to surface in the participants' narratives. In the past, they perceived as being "trapped" within the context of their leadership role, a strong desire to rebel now replaced this. Their rebellion seemed more attuned to conspire in a climate of change and betterment for all leaders within the public sector. They aspired to make a radical shift from within the system, not by "breaking the rules" but rather by "bending the rules", with little self-serving purpose and but instead aiming to build a steadier path for other aspiring leaders who could be facing leadership hardships and struggles similarly as they did in the past.

This phase depicts a radical shift as was perceived in participants from going through a phase of feeling subjugated at a personal level to finally emerging into a confident leader. This phase could critically analyse the leadership landscape as all-encompassing, riddled with unrealistic expectations, and driven out of demanding political pressures and organisational outputs. They began to intrinsically link their leadership role with the overarching politicised climate and public scrutiny they were constantly subjected to. Participants described this phase

as public scrutiny. They were subjected continuously to have attained a state of confidence to help and support others in their "leadership journey".

In conclusion, this radical shift in participants could be explained based on the overjustification effect of self-perception theory, which states that performing the activity under robust contingencies of reinforcement leads to the attribution that the activity must not be enjoyable in itself and then perhaps to decreased motivation to engage in that activity. I argue that individuals in leadership roles find it more difficult and less motivating to perform leadership-related activities under the guise of an organisation reward or recognition for their work outputs as leaders. These extrinsic rewards are more likely to deter leaders from feeling pleased with themselves because they could perceive these acts of rewards as strong reinforcements for overt behaviours that might dissuade them from pursuing leadership roles because of the many emotional impacts – anger, frustration, self-doubt, anxiety – they experienced, as discussed in the first three phases of the leader identity formation framework.

Figure 6. 2 Leader identity formation framework – Core sub-themes.

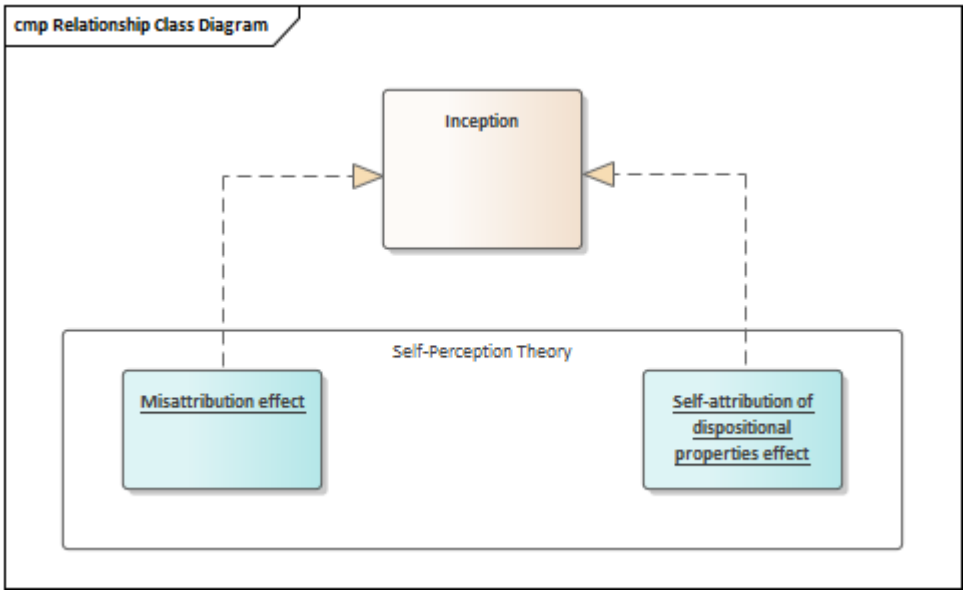


6.7 Examining leader identity formation framework: Using self-perception theory

In this section, I use self-perception theory to examine the fundamental assumptions and inferences I made, particularising each of the four phases of the leader identity formation framework. This section is divided into four subsections as follows:

Inception and self-perception theory

Figure 6. 3 Relationship between self-perception theory and Inception.



In the first phase of Inception, it is interesting to note that most participants rarely distinguished between the act of becoming a leader and their appointment to a leadership role. Both these activities converged into a single performative outcome of being perceived by self and others as a leader.

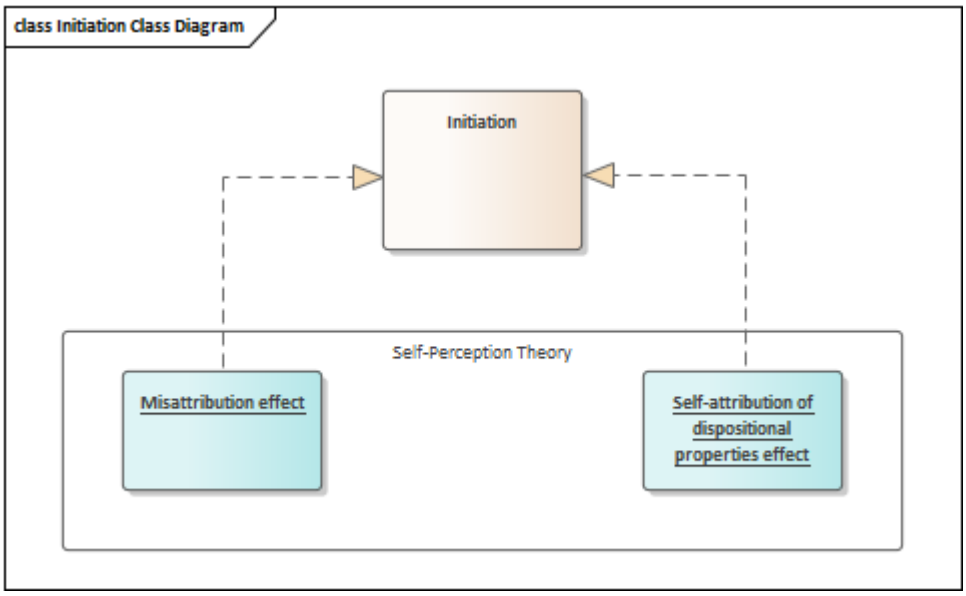
Second, the misattribution effect is likely to play some role in predicting how individuals perceive themselves as leaders, especially during the early stages of their transition into a leadership role from a non-leader role. This effect is also relevant during the stages that

individuals associate with career progression and promotion to leadership roles within the public service for senior leaders and less experienced or new, young leaders.

Third, there could be compelling reasons to suggest that self-attribution of dispositional properties, especially for individuals in the early state of flux or transition, result in compliant behaviours towards minor setbacks and failures experienced within the public service during their initial career progression. This might effectively lead to increased compliance and tolerance in these individuals towards even more significant challenges and demanding situations. At the same time, they continued to pursue a leadership role or transition into a leader identity from a non-leader identity within the public service. In the next phase, Initiation, I discuss how participants associated their leadership role occupancy with self-identity.

Initiation and self-perception theory

Figure 6. 4 Relationship between self-perception theory and Initiation.

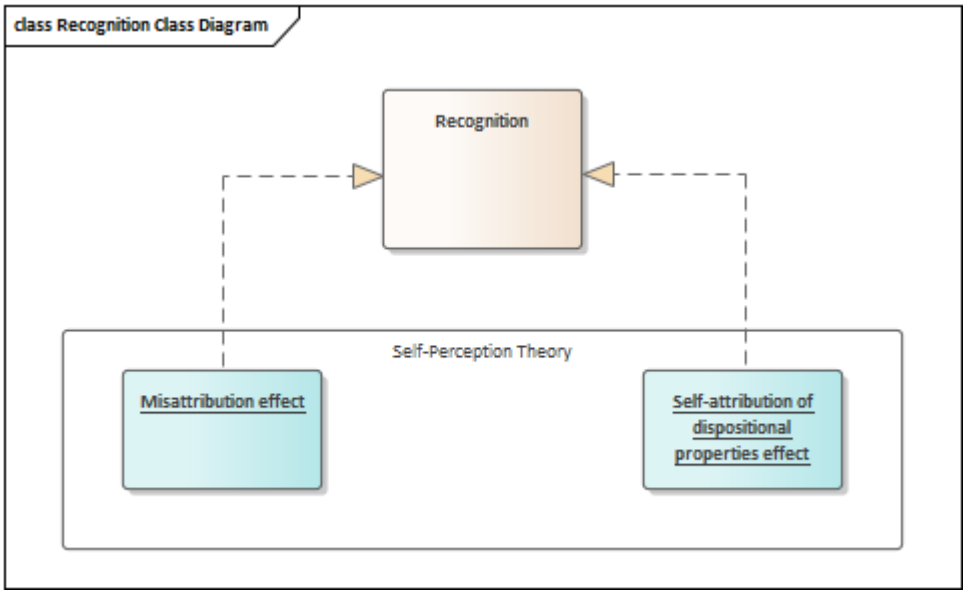


In the initiation phase, participants expressed a stronger perceived urge to be recognised as leaders. This primarily indicates their readiness to fully inculcate and form their leader

identity, which is separate and distinct from their self-identity. Given this shift in focus on self, the misattribution effect and self-attribution of dispositional properties present a valuable reference to understand the leader's overt behaviour. They might show a preference to exercise confident work-related choices over others, such as working harder, longer and delivering high-quality work outputs at a frantic pace, often at the peril of personal self-care and health. Then, to use this approach to prove their eligibility for being presented with opportunities to undertake leader development training. It appears to instil in individuals, especially younger leaders, a notion of a measurement scale and yardstick that calibrates their performance as leaders narrowly against work outputs only, rather than considering the whole person.

Recognition and self-perception theory

Figure 6. 5 Relationship between self-perception theory and recognition.



The role of LiP as a practical and relevant leadership development programme for senior public sector leaders became more prominent in the recognition phase because it helped participants connect back with themselves – their core values, beliefs, thoughts and emotions. This phase could be called the most critical phase for participants because, in this phase, there

is the most strong possibility that they became aware of their leader identity as distinct from their self-identity. It was primarily in this phase that they began to understand the relevance of undertaking leadership development at a particularly crucial time in their lives.

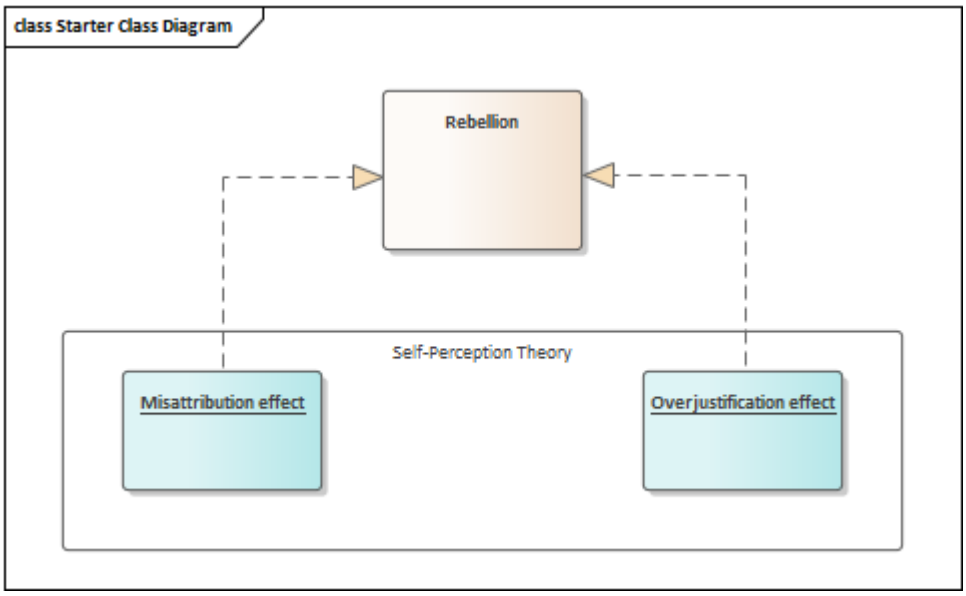
First, by putting into practice the various learnings they received at LiP, they had started to set into motion a series of changes in their surroundings and, in most cases, actively resolve the problems and challenges that had seemed untenable to them in the past. This, in turn, triggered a realisation in them that by modulating these external factors, they were able to make a positive impact on their emotional and physical state. This closely confirms the misattribution effect of self-perception theory because it is a possibility that by changing or manipulating external factors (in our case, participants' perceived problem areas), an individual's self-attribution (in our case, the participant's physical and emotional state) could result in being altered. Undertaking leadership development at certain critical times acted as a catalyst because it provided participants with the leadership tools, techniques and resources to improve their circumstances or external factors by encouraging certain behaviours and practices, which helped influence and guide them to delineate and carve out a leader identity separate from their self-identity. They closely observed other members of their cohort and worked in a group, which is likely to have helped trigger the meaning-making process in participants based on the self-attribution effect. This suggests that self-attributions are made from individual's observations of their overt behaviour and the circumstances in which it occurs. In this case study, the 'circumstances' could be related to the external contextual conditions that became more relevant and meaningful for participants during their attendance at the LiP programme as they observed other leaders and participants.

Second, the self-attribution of dispositional properties effect might help understand the process of 'internal shifts' that took hold in participants when they attended LiP. These were

instrumental in manipulating or changing participants' behaviours by initiating a small request to change or comply, which resulted in participants' subsequent willingness or compliance towards making much more significant and more substantially impactful changes in their behaviours.

Rebellion and self-perception theory

Figure 6. 6 Relationship between self-perception theory and rebellion.



The fourth and final phase of the leader identity formation framework marks the completion of the leader identity formation process for participants. Participant narratives brought into attention two main areas: future-proofing leadership journeys for new, aspiring leaders; and the development of a radical shift in participant interpretation of the current leadership climate within the public sector. If these processes are examined in light of self-perception theory, two possible conclusions could be made.

First, using misattribution, participants could change their overt behaviours as leaders based on their learnings at the leadership development programme. This, in turn, manipulated

or altered their self-attribution about themselves as leaders by making a delineation between their leader identity and self-identity that suggests 'me as a leader and 'me as a person. This also shifted the frame of reference from their problems and challenges to other leaders by developing a need to 'give back' or help and support future aspiring leaders.

Second, the overjustification effect of self-perception theory might provide a possible explanation for a sudden radical shift in participants' interpretations about the leadership challenges associated with the public sector, which in earlier phases seemed incomprehensible to them. The practice of reward and embellishment often exercised commonly by organisations could be interpreted as a form of solid contingencies for extrinsic reinforcement, which is likely to reduce the intrinsic motivation in individuals to seek leadership roles because they no longer enjoy being a leader. This is to the extent that they begin to develop a sense of rebellion against the leadership practices in the system.

6.8 Summary

In this chapter, I presented the leader identity formation framework and its four phases. I discussed each phase in detail with emphasis on the underlying sub-themes. Further, I conducted a closer examination of each of these four phases using Bem's (1972) self-perception theory. In conclusion, leader identity formation for leaders enfolds as a multi-part, complex and deeply personal process, as discussed in this chapter. I propose that only after undergoing these four phases do leaders form a leader identity that is stable and distinct from their self-identity. In the next chapter, chapter 7, I discuss the implications of the proposed leader identity formation framework. Further, I discuss the leader identity formation framework presented in this thesis and its underlying contingencies as outlined using self-perception theory.

CHAPTER 7 – DISCUSSION: LEADER IDENTITY AND ROLE OCCUPANCY

7.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the leadership role occupancy, leader identity, and associated contingencies relevant to public sector leaders. I correlate the findings from this study with extant literature by surfacing certain vital concepts salient to undertaking leader development and leader identity formation for public sector leaders. The focus of this study is on New Zealand public sector leaders employed in senior managerial positions. These contextual conditions need further consideration when using an identity lens for surfacing and examining leader identity formation. This is mainly because of the leader identity formation's perceived processual nature, which could span their entire career within the public service. This chapter, therefore, outlines the broader implications of the proposed leader identity formation framework for public sector leaders by being attentive to the role of leader development, particularly for public sector leaders.

7.2 New Zealand public sector leaders as public managers

As presented in this study, the formation of leader identity brings into attention some of the contextual complexity associated with the role and function of public managers within the New Zealand public service. Their administrative working relationship and proximity to the political regime, especially for participants in Tier 2 roles, needs some consideration in the overall discussion about leader development. This section discusses the critical implications of this research in light of the prevalent politico-administrative arrangements vital to public sector leaders. I believe bringing this narrative into perspective is essential to take an unbiased and informed stance to validate and elucidate the relevance of the proposed identity formation framework for public sector leaders or, more commonly, public managers. Why would this matter to public sector leaders?

There is little value in debating any longer whether in New Zealand or, for that matter, in other jurisdictions, the world-renowned New Public Model (NPM) (e.g., Dunleavy, Margetts, Bastow, & Tinkler, 2006) is ‘dead’ or whether it is transcended (e.g., Christensen and Lagreid, 2007a) by a ‘postmodern’ public administration (e.g., Bogason, 2007) or entirely replaced by) a 'post-NPM' stage. Even acknowledging reservations or criticism (Ryan, 2012), "the contribution of NPM cannot be discounted" (Whitcombe, 2008). Notably, within New Zealand, many of the critical outcomes about the reforms are still in place and continue to be 'preserved', mainly that chief executives (CEs) are still employed on fixed-term contracts, generally for three or five years. Agency CEs provide advice and are accountable to the portfolio minister on the agency's day-to-day operations. However, the recent changes to Public Sector Act 2020, apart from the shift from state services to public service by changing the name of the State Services Commission to the Public Services Commission, confers statutory 'leadership' responsibilities on the CE to support the minister. This might confirm a view that NPM itself may have become 'integrated' (Ryan, 2012) into a broader set of public administration principles. Hence, the debate about the separation between politics and administration becomes even more relevant to leader development of senior public sector leaders.

The literature is replete with contending positions and lacks a broadly settled view about the actual and desirable relationship between the political and administrative realms (Demir, 2009). This distinction is called the purple zone (Alford, Hartley, Yates, & Hughes, 2017), representing where the 'red' of political activity overlaps with the 'blue' of administration. Within the New Zealand context, this describes an amalgam of separation and integration. An area of conversation between ministers and their senior officials (Matheson, Scanlan, & Turner, 1997). Within the current public sector model, senior public sector leaders or public managers need to engage and work closely with ministers to deliver good quality services and implement tasks in the public interest. This informs the need for further exploration (Parikh & Bhatnagar,

2017) of contradictory goals faced by top and middle managers in a public sector context. Doing so might inform future strategies for undertaking leadership development for these public sector leaders.

The recent coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis has shaken up many old assumptions of public service working methods. In many cases, traditional silos have been dismantled and replaced with agile governance structures, requiring fast, joined-up decision-making in the face of uncertainty based on scarce and unreliable evidence. Effective public service leaders rose to the challenge, leveraging new technologies and managing their workforces in new ways to protect their well-being while maintaining and boosting the delivery of essential services. These experiences prove that committed and creative public service leaders can achieve significant innovations when the right people, with the right resources and support, come together to solve public problems (Gerson, 2020).

The findings from this thesis have brought into focus several relationships of public managers in leadership roles, including with other stakeholders. However, the dominant narrative mainly uncovered many of the perceived struggles, challenges and emotional states reported by participants in senior leadership roles, which were much more profound when they expressed these within implementing policy, organizational change or advice to one or more ministers. The influence and impact of this resonated with directing staff, facilities, funding and changing priorities, all of which proved difficult in a highly politicised environment.

An interesting finding emerging from this research is how conflicted and challenged senior public servants felt when they wanted to exercise their leadership capabilities towards achieving greater public good while in office. Participants spoke in length about the dilemmas they faced in exercising their leadership decisions in the wake of political demands resulting

in less critical outcomes, which they often noted led to more waste and little public value creation. Jackson (2019) persuasively notes that "questions of agency" are generally "pushed aside" by a "pre-occupation with policy protocols and governance frameworks", leading towards being "governance-heavy and leadership-light". Although impactful for all participants, the ability to manage these sensitivities came more naturally for senior tenured public sector leaders than it was the case for less experienced younger leaders. Recent research also suggests that more senior managers reported higher levels of political skills, suggesting they became more sensitive to political dilemmas with experience (Hartley et al., 2017).

There are profoundly different, yet equally compelling, reasons for senior public sector leaders to undertake management training and formal leader development. Although the former is not in the scope of the present study, a lack in either can present many complex challenges and incomprehensible hurdles to an individual in a senior public sector leadership role. How best to resolve this remains a puzzle; however, understanding some basic concepts of public management becomes fundamental to leaders in senior leadership roles. It might be less presumptive to propose, based on this case study, that public sector leaders are often offered a senior leadership role with minimal emphasis on the requisite preparedness and practical experience essentially needed in their leadership roles.

Leaders in their interviews did note the many mistakes they had made, which resulted in concerns that never seem to leave them. They felt responsible for their actions as leaders. But in most cases, they were not personally responsible for doing something or giving effect to a particular outcome. This aspect lies at the very heart of leadership ethics. The most ethically distinctive aspect of being a leader is that leaders receive praise or blame for the good and bad things that happen under their watch − even when they know nothing about them or have nothing to do with them. In these cases, normal notions of agency that include the intent,

capacity or causal connection to an action do not always apply (Ciulla, 2018). If the primary responsibility of leaders is to take responsibility (Ciulla, 2018), then pertinent here is the support that could be extended to leaders while in office to alleviate self-doubt arising from being subjected to the highest levels of scrutiny and accountability. Could a more explicit focus on the timely learning and developmental needs and sharper attention towards leader identity formation processes alleviate these concerns? Taking up a notch higher, could this approach lead the way for some fresh thinking in this space?

7.3 Leader identity formation

The leader identity formation framework proposed in this thesis is the main theoretical contribution of my thesis. A conceptual framing of a 'leadership journey' presents consideration for whole-of-life events pertinent to a leader's developmental process. At any given point in time, leader development is more likely to map across one of the four phases of the leader identity formation framework: Inception, Initiation, Recognition and Rebellion. This forms the basis for the resultant processual view presented in this case study. Each phase encapsulates one or more intermittent changes, which become relevant in informing one or more minor or significant incremental shifts experienced by leaders. As shared by leaders in any one phase, these shifts or changes become instrumental for their progression to the next phase of the leader identity formation framework. This suggests that each phase builds on the learnings gathered in the initial phase towards forming a leader identity.

I perceived a level of discontinuity and non-linearity associated with these phases. Still, overall, it is commonly possible that leaders follow a cyclic pattern from phase one to phase four. However, their entry and exit criteria within each phase could also pursue a more longitudinal and elaborate leadership career across their entire life span. For instance, it was perceived in the first phase of the leader identity formation framework, Initiation, that some

participants expressed a strong career ambition to 'become' a senior leader within the public sector. Arguably, they could only achieve this goal through a series of incremental shifts experienced within each of the subsequent phases and, finally, collectively across all four phases. The attributions they accord to self and others, as guided by their experiences and interpretations, fundamentally drive and influence their leader identity formation, reflecting their personal preferences and choices in shaping their unique leader identity within the public service.

7.3.1 Leader identity and self-identity

We can conclude from the research findings that constructing a leader identity for most research participants was realised through a complex multi-step process, involving incremental and intermittent shifts mainly emanating from changes to their self-identity. As Hartley (2018) points out, research on leadership should pay attention to the fact that leadership is not always the same as authority. Formal authority does not on its own make managers take on their role as a leader. It appears from my case study findings that as much as this process was associated with role occupancy, it equally involved agency at each level of change or transition. Therefore, the process of leader identity formation became deeply personal to participants because they all pursued their individual, solitary paths towards learning and growth. By exercising their personal choice, they disassociated with certain overt behaviours and associated with new behaviours that helped forge a more stable leader identity. I argue that leader identity formation is inextricably linked to self-identity. Such that changes most often likely impact the other. I present this theoretical conceptualisation as a critical point of difference from extant identity literature (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Erikson, 1950, 1968; Haslam et al., 2004; see Alvesson et al., 2008) in this thesis. This conceptualisation aligns with a poststructuralist account of identity as a continuous process of 'becoming' rather than 'being' (Collinson, 2003; Knights & Willmott,

1989). Two dominant aspects are critical to this conceptualisation – self-awareness and personal resilience.

7.3.2 Relevance of leader development

I perceived that attendance at a leadership development program allowed participants to examine their deepest inner feelings. This only made them more self-aware but, in anticipation of their leadership role, providing them with helpful leadership tools and techniques to manage themselves across professional and personal fronts. The subtle changes that ensued seemed to create a greater need to inculcate more personal resilience to lessen their emotional struggles and create more stability in their lives. Arguably, during the initial phases of identity formation (mainly Inception and Initiation), participants seem to be drawn primarily towards the external pretentious eminence front associated with a leadership role occupancy. However, it appears that as they became more exposed to the stress and strain of 'doing leadership', they responsively began to mould and shape their leader identity as a result of their perceived changed disposition about self and others. Consequently, when they experienced one or more internal changes at various points in their career and across one or more quadrants of the leader identity formation framework, then more than before, the urge to undertake leader development training became paramount for them during these critical phases of identity formation framework. This point has a significant bearing on this case study given the perceived lack of salience attributed by many participants towards undertaking any form of formal leader development training within the public sector.

7.3.3 The power of the group

Being encouraged to surface their vulnerabilities and weaknesses in discussions with members of their cohort had an interesting effect on most participants. This was the part that 'stuck' with most of them during the entire nine-month period of attending LiP. Moxley (1998) noted that

negative experiences tend to promote learning and trigger self-reflection. This brings to the forefront a key point about 'reflective learning' as linked to experiences that are complex and happened 'then and there' (that is, in a realistic situation in the past) and not necessarily 'here and now' (in a simulated situation) (Schön, 1990). This, therefore, aligns with Janson et al.'s (2008) view that when this process of systematic reflection took place within the participant group, it stimulated the discovery and formulation of leadership principles beyond the individual's experience. In this case, the group, or cohort, served both as a tool for generalising leadership principles and their empirical verification because of the repertoire of experiences the participants were exposed to in their cohort or group.

The time spent by the participants with their cohort proved beneficial to them because it was during these interactions that they learnt most about each other – both on personal and professional fronts. For instance, during the residential, participants were encouraged to share their challenges and challenging experiences with other public sector leaders in their cohort (e.g., Gabrielle explained, "I found that very inspiring, the power of the group"). The conversations that happened during the residentials were at a personal level, which made a lasting impression on these participants and provided a boost to their self-confidence. This supports the view that information leaders gain during participation in a leadership development programme, while helpful, may not nearly be as important as the transformation that might come with interacting with individuals who are different from them. This is because they begin to see themselves differently and understand the world in new and energising ways (Steffensmeier et al., 2016).

7.3.4 Internalising leader identity

What was striking about the participants' interviews is that before attending LiP, they all believed the real issue was themselves. They doubted their ability as leaders to perform

effectively within the public sector (e.g., Courtney said, "it [LiP] gave me confidence that I was good at what I was doing"). These confidence issues most often stemmed from a lack of experience within the public sector or being a new leader. In extreme cases, some participants would refrain from actively participating in discussions in their workplace because they felt they hardly made a recognisable contribution. This hesitation in expressing themselves openly with their immediate colleagues and direct reports on the job invariably led to a state of constant self-doubt and lower self-worth in them. These confidence issues took precedence for some participants in their work settings, and during the period, they attended the LiP training programme. It was not unusual for most participants to doubt their abilities among other senior public sector leaders who were part of their cohort (e.g., John stated, "I think from day one with a cohort of people who are on that course for a particular reason, I think a lot of people, myself included, were thinking, can I do this. Do I have the skills to be a senior leader in the public service?").

To perform effectively in a leadership role, some participants developed a deep desire to work even more complex and longer prove themselves capable leaders. Participants were convinced that this would help them keep up with the office work (e.g. Sonia said, "I had that feeling that if I just worked hard enough, I would be able to keep on top of the emails and everything else"). It was only after their attendance at LiP that they realised that this manner of working had started to take a personal toll on them and was hardly a sustainable mode of functioning for a leader. I argue that this working behaviour adopted by participants provided them with a coping mechanism that helped build a level of resistance to the professional pressures they found untenable at times. Invariably, this professional stress spilled into their personal lives, affecting their family relationships. As a result, they felt personally responsible for their professional successes and failures (e.g., Gabrielle explained, "When I was at home, I was getting stressed, especially with the kids"). The stress and pressures in the work setting

started to affect some of the participants personally because they believed they had started to "push it on" to their families. They thought that this had become reasonably routine while in a leadership role because they allowed work-related pressures to permeate through and impact "other parts" of their lives. This negatively impacted them, resulting in intense emotional struggles, self-scrutiny, and a feeling of being alienated and lost in the absence of professional support and counselling.

Notwithstanding the pressures and stress associated with leadership roles in the public sector, some participants decided to leave their organisation and take up employment in another public sector organisation (e.g., Peter explained, "I had lost my mojo with my job"). However, this realisation did not come to them quickly. It is noteworthy that this behaviour was typical to participants (Sonia, Gabrielle and Peter) who were younger and inexperienced as leaders and yet highly motivated and committed to delivering the best leadership outcomes at work. These participants developed a deep resentment as a consequence of their leadership ineffectiveness. Participants were convinced that the problem was not with the role or the job they were in but with them. This notion of shifting one's focus from the task at hand to self-blame was a common theme in new leaders instead of career public servants and senior leaders. This reflects what Day et al. (2009) refer to as a positive identity-development spiral. According to Day (2012), the touchstone of the proposed identity-development spiral is that thinking is for doing (Fiske, 1992). That thinking of oneself as a leader motivates the behaviour to engage and behave – and develop – as a leader.

Effective participation as a leader has been linked to leader identity because it plays a crucial role in building leadership expertise (Day, 2012). Since individuals begin to think of themselves as leaders and internalise a leader identity, this motivates them to learn more about leadership roles and processes and act in a more leader-like fashion. Day (2012) proposes that,

as a result, there is better preparation for being able to participate effectively as a leader when needed, which in turn translates into a greater likelihood of being effective as a leader, which further inculcates a leader identity. McCall (2004) concludes that "the primary source of learning to lead, to the extent that leadership can be learned, is experience" (p. 127). Not eliminating other personal attributes and learning orientation and other multifaceted and complex leadership development processes, leadership development learning took place in participants, both senior leaders and new leaders. It was related to when, how and why the participants were exposed to one or more complex and unsurmountable situational experiences at work.

The direct effect of experiencing difficult situations and finding themselves unable to respond resulted in a further loss of self-worth in participants. But, by taking a step or two back, it became evident that the core concern was that participants found themselves emotionally unfurnished to respond to challenges. The development training offered by LiP was critically important for many participants because they found it helped them "cope" better under situations that were entirely beyond their control. For instance, as leaders, they were either held accountable or expected to come up with solutions by their organisations, which might at best have resolved only half the problem because the majority of times, such issues in their entirety lay beyond the immediate boundary of control of these participants as leaders (Gabrielle explained, "what I really enjoyed was the resilience work that was done").

This then raises a critical point related to providing both new and senior experienced leaders with the experience needed to grow and stretch their leadership capabilities. As is evident, without the adequately structured training to support them in this process, such as resiliency training, even with the experiential exposure provided in their leadership roles, participants were inclined to find themselves incapable of responding effectively as leaders.

7.3.5 What about a public sector leader identity?

The interpretive approach adopted in this thesis presents a construction of 'reality' as interpreted by participants, too, at a certain point in time. Therefore, this research refrains from making any claims of truth or falsity; instead, it reveals certain hidden and silent assumptions that inform the varied meaning-making processes that underscore participants' interpretations about their behaviours. These behaviours are, in turn, intrinsic to their knowledge of the present and a priori position that commonly forms the fundamental basis of their experiential learning. In this case study, I present the perceived ‘identity work’ undertaken by participants to form a leader identity as a continuous process of ‘becoming’ rather than ‘being’.

I argue on this basis that leader identity cannot be generalised as a core outcome of leader development, nor can it be reified as a thing. However, by focusing on leader development, certain antecedent conditions contingent on external factors could inform and trigger leaders' leader identity formation process. Leader identity formation then is likely to become more pertinent to leadership role occupancy rather than it is to the act of doing leadership per se. The perceptions that individual attributes to self remain divergent to those they attribute to themselves as a leader, substantiated by mobilising specific learning outcomes inculcating leader-like overt behaviours. This makes leader identity not only distinct and differential but also intimately linked to an individual's self-identity. With sufficient experiential learnings, these overt behaviours become more dominant when viewed internally by a leader and equally recognisable to an external observer.

The efforts and enthusiasm emanating from Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission towards building leadership capability across the New Zealand public service present an affirmatively firm intention to shape and grow outstanding leadership. The linkages between governance and leadership practices (Jackson & Smolović Jones, 2012) have been

well known for some time now. However, the implicit relationship between leader development and leader identity is less explicitly recognised and actively incorporated. While the dominant leadership and talent narrative from Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission commands attention, it misses out on identifying the relevance of incorporating these concepts in the official discourse. It is noteworthy that since the Better Services Report has been published in 2012 (State Services Commission, 2015), the official discourse dwells primarily on the conceptual framing of leadership talent and potential, competencies and tools, supported by a performance-based, outcomes-driven framework. Some of this remains intrinsic to the New Zealand model public sector reforms reminiscent of the NPM era. As noted by Donadelli & Lodge (2019), the NPM reforms celebrated New Zealand as the "poster child" but with far less concern for the impacts on public sector leaders of these machinery of government reforms which are such a constant feature in New Zealand politics. Therefore, perhaps there remains a growing need for some level of consideration and validity to be applied here to incorporate and acknowledge the impacts of this pattern on public sector leaders and their leader identity formation processes.

A civil servant or a public servant, in this case in a leadership role, will be unlikely to automatically imbibe these administrative ideas and retransform themselves into future public sector leaders. The impacts of underlying governance practices on public sector leaders that remain entrenched in politicised patterns driven by constant changes, highest levels of scrutiny, unrelenting and unforgiving pressures need to surface more clearly in leader development and leadership development discourses. The bit missing is a consideration for the person in a leadership role within the public sector, which in most cases is only human. The other problem is that people apply different self-ascribed interpretations to a given scenario, resulting in a diverse and rich set of personal motives towards learning and development.

This points to a rather significant leader development challenge for Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission. While 'leadership development' appears to be the central tenet, the underlying descriptions favour managerialism over leadership on closer scrutiny. An overarching emphasis on collaboration and breaking down silos is still encouraging. The leadership development discursive practice claims specific 'critical capabilities' for leaders, rearranges and naturalises a clear social way. On the other hand, it completely neutralises the socialisation process experienced by public sector leaders.

Moreover, leader development and leadership development discourses are used interchangeably, grounded in an outcome and performance-based (Holton & Naquin, 2000) functionalist discourse (Swanson, 2001), which only touches lightly on the emotional and physical well-being of public servants. What will leaders be saying about leadership development initiatives, where on the one hand, leadership capabilities, skills, traits and an outcomes-focussed approach takes centre stage. While on the other hand, attention to the leader emotional state surfaces only casually? As much as the discourse favours collaboration and shared leadership, it is ambiguous and contradicted by references that signal a robust central command function (Jackson & Smolović Jones, 2012).

In this case study, the emphasis is on the influence of leader development on public sector leaders as a primary vehicle to better inform and form their leader identity alongside experiential learning. However, this does not suggest that attention should shift from leaders made accountable for affecting challenging and retractable policy issues to a solely self-centric, inward-focused exercise. But it should be by acknowledging that the real strength of the system-wide leadership lies in strengthening the support network offered to leaders in leadership roles and implementing leader development at the most appropriate stages within a leader's entire career span within the public sector. However, this should not be mistaken as a

revival of the heroic leader approaches; rather, the acceptance that comes with the realisation that there may not be a better public service heralding a future of innovative public or civil servant without a better public or civil servant leadership and creative policy design.

Findings from my case study suggest that there remains within the New Zealand public sector a need to incorporate a more conservative stance towards the distinct differences and numerous similarities between leader development and leadership development at the local level, the current disparate state of public sector leader development, and contextual complexities driven by the implicit nature of the policy-driven discursive practice. More importantly, there needs to be an acute awareness, followed by a formal consensus from the centre and sector agencies about leadership problem areas that are more suited for leader development by segregating them from those requiring leadership development.

7.4 Summary

In conclusion, it is evident from my case study findings that because of the internalised nature of the self-attributed perceptions that the leaders associate with, the leader identity formation process for leaders could take a variegated form. Very rarely would two types of leader identity formation processes follow the same path and could end up with identical results. This brings into consideration the implied consequences of the proposed leader identity formation framework in light of the overarching leadership development narrative within the New Zealand public service, as discussed in this chapter. Secondly, a leader's identity formation process transpires as a profoundly personal, multi-step and incoherent process. It is possible to map across the core phases based on the dominant overt behaviours at a given point in time. Leader identity then mainly evolves into a stable form for a leader once they have attributed these overt behaviours as informed by their perceptions about self and others. This, in turn, is

based on certain antecedent conditions contingent on both internal drivers and external influences.

CHAPTER 8 – CONCLUSION

8.1 Introduction

In this final chapter, I discuss the research contribution that I make through my thesis. Next, I answer the research questions. Then I outline the practical research contributions proposed, followed by the limitations of this study. Finally, I conclude this chapter by presenting future research directions informed by this study.

8.2 Answering the research question

In summary, I have answered the research questions posed in this thesis as below:

My primary research question investigates the role of leader development in helping public sector leaders form their leader identity. RQa: What is the role of leader development in forming a leader identity?

The answer to my above stated primary research question is as follows:

Leader development is perceived as a critical bridge for a leader to restore their emotional state by helping them to delineate and strike a balance between their work and personal lives. The learnings from a professional leadership development most often cascade into a leader's personal life. Leader development is important for leaders to form their leader identity. They undergo a series of internal incremental shifts during one or more phases of the leader identity formation framework: Inception, Initiation, Recognition and Rebellion. Particularly, it appears that during the formative phases of Recognition and Rebellion, undertaking leader development becomes more critical for a leader because they are most likely to give effect to a profoundly personal self-awareness and self-realisation process in these phases, leading to one or more profound internal shifts and learnings. Consequently, receiving the appropriate level of leader development guidance and advice becomes vital to impact their emotional

stability and physical sustenance positively. Therefore, leaders are more likely to need leader development training in these final phases, especially one-on-one mentoring and coaching.

My secondary research question investigates the core processes, contingent factors and relevant antecedent conditions that may need consideration in leader identity formation for public sector leaders. RQb: How do public sector leaders form a leader identity?

The answer to my above stated secondary research question is as follows:

I have found that leader's form their leader identity through a complex, multipart and deeply personal process. The process of leader identity formation is most likely triggered by an unexpected event or an unsurmountable crucible moment at a significantly critical time across a leader's entire career span within the public service. The leader identity formation process consists of four main phases: Inception, Initiation, Recognition and Rebellion. It is possible that the fervent impacts of the many incremental changes or shifts as experienced by a leader in any one of these phases could have a cascading effect on them as they move across one or all of these leader identity formation phases. The resulting cumulative effect is likely to set into motion a series of profound personal insights and deep-set learnings in a leader. It is perceived that only in the final stages of the framework – Recognition and Rebellion – does an earnest need for self-discovery take hold in a leader. In these final phases of leader identity formation, a leader is most likely to experience a powerful emotional state signified by fear, sadness or anger. Experiencing these emotions is proposed as critical to a leader because it provides the fundamental building blocks for them to develop self-confidence, resilience and emotional stability. There are perceived to be the two primary resultant outcomes for a leader. First, this is more likely to position a leader to portray a visibly positive impact on their leadership performance outcomes within the public sector. Second, these begin to manifest into

less apparent changes in the personal identity by undergoing incremental shifts. Finally, as a leader starts to recognise the relevance of self-awareness, they decisively take measures to ameliorate their emotional state by exercising a new set of behaviours that may have been entirely absent or silent in the past. This, in turn, signals the formation of a distinct and stable leader identity and completion of a leader identity formation process undertaken by a leader. This is consistent with the view proposed by Kragt and Day (2020), confirming self-perception theory (Bem, 1972), which proposes that individuals draw inferences about their identity from perceptions of their own behaviour.

8.3 Research contribution

The findings from my thesis make a contribution towards research in the area of leadership development within the public sector. However, this research does not intentionally undertake an examination of the leadership development programme – LiP, because this is mainly used for purposes of contextual relevance in my research. The research contributions made by this thesis are mainly empirical-based using a case study approach, focusing on the role of leader development or leadership development. Both these terms appear commonly used interchangeably in forming a leader identity for public sector leaders. I make two main contributions in the area of leadership development. First, I present a new theoretical framework – the leader identity formation framework. Of particular interest is the processual nature of the leader identity formation for public sector leaders, as shown in this case study. Second, this case study proposes a relationship between leader development and the resultant core leader identity formation phases – Inception, Initiation, Recognition and Rebellion; all of these are central for forming a stable and distinct leader identity. Leader identity formation is a multi-step, complex and inconsistent process that spans the entire leadership career trajectory for a leader within the public service. Leader identity formation takes a processual view influenced by certain antecedent conditions contingent on external factors. The theoretical

framework proposed in this case study comprises four main phases: Inception, Initiation, Recognition and Rebellion. In each of these four phases, a leader undergoes a leader identity change that separates and distinguishes their leader identity from their self-identity.

8.3.1 Leader identity formation framework.

In my case study, I found that participants followed a leader identity formation process that was incoherent, inconsistent and gradual. Their leader identity weakened substantially and stagnated slightly during the first few days of attendance at the leader development programme before it grew and strengthened over the remainder of the nine-month programme period. The processual view of leader identity formation proposed in this thesis provides an insight into the multi-step, multi-level processes that a leader undergoes, in the end forming a stable and distinct leader identity. Therefore, the theory proposed in this thesis is consistent with the proposition that adult development is a dynamic process of gains and losses (Baltes, 1987); identity does not develop linearly towards more positive self-perception (Kegan, 1983). This is also partially consistent with Miscenko et al. (2017), who propose a curvilinear development trajectory for leader identity.

I propose that a self-ascribed meaning-making process drives the four main phases – Inception, Initiation, Recognition and Rebellion. This, in some cases, could span the entirety of a leader; some cases could span the entirety of a leader's leadership career, while in others could be restricted to a small and specific period. A similar conceptualisation of a lifespan development approach on leader development has also been proposed by Komives et al. (2005), concluding that leader development for a leader broadly could vary in its entirety, spanning a significant portion of a leader's lifespan. Therefore, the present research addresses a noted gap in rigorous empirical research on leader development processes (Day, 2000). Noting here the contributions of other authors, both conceptual (Day et al., 2009; DeRue & Ashford, 2010) and

initial empirical evidence (Day & Sin, 2011), this research has empirically outlined the formation of leader identity. I have specifically focussed on the implicit leader identity formation processes and presented a comprehensive understanding of leadership development for public sector leaders, which remains elusive (Bluedorn & Jaussi, 2008).

8.3.2 Relationship between leader development and leader identity formation.

Results from my case study provide evidence that public sector leaders in senior leadership roles are perceived to commence their leader identity formation process with intimate knowledge and practice of self-awareness gained by undertaking leadership development. They develop and build interpersonal relationships and finally learning to develop distancing and self-preservation from the toxic effects of damaging external influences outside of their control. Therefore, this thesis provides empirical evidence to inform better the conceptual basis for the multi-level nature of leader development (Day, 2012). For instance, during any one of the proposed four phases of leader identity formation, a leader could undergo development at various levels starting from an individual leader to a relational or collaborative level (subordinates, peers, superiors), and finally at an organisational culture level. I perceived that facing unexpected, challenging circumstances at specifically crucial times spurred a sudden growth in developmental processes in leaders – crucible moments. These 'epiphanies' in turn triggered more profound learnings in them and enhanced their problem-solving abilities.

Moreover, experiential learning and active problem solving made certain types of experiences 'stick' for leaders. In a similar vein, some studies have shown specific experiences mattered more than competency models to shape the learning and developmental process (McCall & Hollenbeck, 2007; Hollenbeck et al., 2006). This further confirms the five development characteristics that make work experiences developmentally challenging: unfamiliar responsibilities, high levels of responsibilities, creating change, working across

boundaries and managing diversity (Ohlott, 1998; McCall et al., 1988). These align with the kind of leader development 'challenges' that surfaced for public sector leaders in my research.

This case study surfaces the critical positive influencing role of leader development in realising and managing challenges, especially when leaders transition into a new senior leadership role. The Initiation phase of the leader identity formation framework is mainly associated with leadership role occupancy within the public sector. Most often, public sector organisations downplay the scope and magnitude of the impact of this transition on leaders. This notion has received widespread attention in the extant literature. Freedman (1998) proposed that managers in transition may need assistance to recognise these transitional challenges and to adapt and cope effectively with the legitimate demands of their new roles. They must realise that they have arrived at a significant career crossroads that requires a 135-degree shift. Social expectations attached to a leadership role set into motion an intrinsic need to compete and conform, which lead to deeper insecurities in individuals of a feeling of dissonance. Attending a leader development programme embeds leader development interventions that help break through this cycle, triggering self-reflection and awareness of one's self-identity, which leads one to doubt one's leadership capacity initially (Day & Dragoni, 2015). To resolve this conflict, individuals construct a ‘modified identity’ by engaging in identity work and generate variations of identity to ‘iteratively’ form a leader identity (Yost, Strube, & Bailey, 1992). Eventually, with practice and support, this leader identity is fully formed and distinct but related to self-identity.

The extreme levels of stress and emotional upheaval experienced by leaders brings into attention a greater need for resiliency training through coaching and mentoring, especially for leaders in tier 3 and 4 leadership roles within the New Zealand public service. Leaders most often seemed to function in fast-paced and relentlessly demanding situations every day.

Hartley (2018) noted that a need to foster personal resilience, particularly in public leaders, has gained prominence in academic circles given the state's authority, being subject to additional accountability, often along with public prominence. I contend that the physical, intellectual and emotional demands of leadership are high, especially for public sector leaders, leading to the possibility of feeling drained or burnt out. This view comes across from McCall (2010) as well, who showed how too much emphasis on on-the-job experience could be misleading because it suggests that coaching, mentoring and other training programmes are effective only when used as standalone interventions (McCall et al., 1988). This also aligns with other studies, which found that most public sector leaders were caught in the rapidity of change (Eisenhardt & Brown, 1998); uncertainty dimensions (Milliken, 1987); complexity across the whole system (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007); and ambiguity concerns (Denis et al., 1996; Baran & Scott, 2010). This creates white-water conditions (Hartley, 2018) for leaders where the context and conditions have changed rapidly. Consequently, the pressures to be resilient are perhaps higher than in other sectors (Hartley, 2018).

Finally, based on the empirical evidence presented in this case study, I provide a link between perceived leader-like behaviours and the transition into a senior leadership role or leadership role occupancy. This is the differentiating factor of my Leader Identity Formation framework from other identity models such as Hartley's (2021), as discussed in the literature review, which extends the existing four-stage role transition originally developed by Nicholson (1984) with some additions. Secondly, it differs from Zheng and Muir's (2015) leader identity development model, which focuses on two aspects (*reframing oneself and redefining leadership*). This is mainly because using the Leader Identity Framework, I propose a multi-part, complex and phased processual approach to leader identity development, mapping the fine-grained processes in public sector leaders, starting from their non-leader identity to their leader identity.

Further, I propose a downward spiralling effect on leaders aggravated by a sense of loss, common in the Recognition phase of the leader identity framework, further leading to self-blame, low esteem, loss of self-confidence, intense insecurity and self-doubt. These feelings are rooted in new circumstances, which present challenges demanding a different set of skills or capabilities than those required in their previous roles. Under these scenarios, their 'technical learnings' no longer remain applicable or valid, which they effectively need to learn to supersede with new leadership learnings. This is consistent with Freedman (1998) and Harrison's (1972) finding that upwardly mobile managers must let go at each career crossroads.

8.4 Practical implications

The practical implications emerging from this case study present some critical considerations for future development and implementation of leadership development programmes such as the LiP. LiP, in this case study, provided a rich background to study the experiences of leaders undertaking leadership development, with a focus on their leadership development experiences. Some parts of the nine-month course were more pertinent than others. All participants widely appreciated the value and relevance of the course content leading up to and covered within the four-day residential workshop. Participants noted the line-up of presenters and speakers from within the public sector as a key contributor and as a positive, motivating factor towards their learning process. Participants also upheld liP course content providing information on resilience training as beneficial towards their leader development. LDC might benefit from including more information on this front throughout the LiP programme to ensure they provide adequate support to the leaders after completing the four-day workshop.

Similarly, attention to caring for oneself became germane for participants during the residential period. LDC could consider innovative ways to influence participants to continue with this even after completing the residential workshop when they recommence their

leadership role in their workplace. The facilitator-led action leaning groups were favoured strongly by participants as a real value-add towards their learning and growth, adequately addressing their development needs from an individual and a group perspective.

Divergent views presented by the participant group about the length of time needed versus time allocated to various activities within the four-day residential workshop and over the subsequent nine-month period might inform LDC in shaping this workshop in future leaders. A rather large deficit due to a complete lack of any form of formal information about New Zealand public service or public management within New Zealand within the LiP course content, as alluded to by participants, needs consideration from LDC for incorporating adequate course content specific to public service and machinery of government within New Zealand. Participants' lack of interest in the self-led action learning groups increased with dispersed attendance during the nine months once they were back in their workplace setting. In noting this as a constraint due to high demands on leaders' time, LDC would benefit from accordingly reshaping the structure of the self-led action learning groups during the entire nine-month period, in ways that are most appropriate to leaders work commitments once they return to their day jobs. Participants outside of Wellington who could not attend action learning group sessions in person experienced technological impediments while connecting into the action learning group sessions, which negatively impacted their overall learning experience. LDC could improve their ICT capability by implementing better remote networking desktop technology and web collaborative access tools, which might provide a better experience for participants linking into these sessions remotely in future.

The findings from this thesis are significantly relevant for any future leadership development program designed for senior public sector leaders. They assist in informing us about some of the common issues and concerns associated with 'becoming' a leader in the

public sector. This further informs our understanding of critical considerations relevant to leadership development programs, especially those aimed at public sector leaders and training program designers, developers, and implementors. Although the focus of this study has primarily been regional, mainly on New Zealand, we could apply the inferences across wider jurisdictions based on the Westminster system.

In this section, I outline key deficit areas for consideration for leadership development within New Zealand that I perceived in this research as needing more attention and, therefore, ideally suited for future improvements. There appears to be a continuous focus on leadership development across New Zealand public service. Thus, the findings from this study provide a richer source of insights and use empirical evidence. This, in turn, is supported by leaders' views presented in this study about what works and what does not work when it comes to undertaking leadership development within the public sector. Secondly, for organisations specialising in designing, developing and delivering these leadership development courses, it provides a model to assist in reframing their course structure and content to better align with the four leader identity formation phases as proposed in this thesis. Critical points for consideration include:

Resiliency training

I inferred from the findings that leaders faced many challenging situations, causing extremely high levels of emotional upheaval and distress in them. This was a common occurrence during two phases – Initiation and Recognition phase. Sometimes, this appeared to be an amalgamation of personal and professional struggles they experienced, which inevitably took a toll on their well-being, health and mental stability. Therefore, trainers could deliver resiliency training as an essential part of leadership development in future leadership

development programs aimed at leaders in tier 3 and 4 leadership roles. This would be particularly pertinent for leaders undertaking a senior leadership role (tier 3 or 4) for the first time as in the Initiation phase because they could be unaware of the high expectations they are subjected to as leaders in their new role. And, equally so for technical specialists or experts who may have received very limited, if at all, leadership development in their previous 'non-leader roles.

Resiliency training would be equally beneficial for younger (age <40) leaders of both genders. These younger leaders are more likely to focus on delivering results and less likely to focus on their well-being to their detriment, as appeared during the Recognition phase. Finally, less experienced leaders (service < 20 years), as well as tenured senior leaders (service > 20 years) within the public service, are sometimes seen to be subjected to varied high levels of emotional stress and strain due to the ongoing demands put on their time by different priorities which could change very rapidly. The general 'business' leaves little time for them to actively seek out adequate leadership development training to meet their development needs best. This was predominantly the case during the Recognition phase when leaders expressed feeling inundated and overwhelmed. Under these circumstances, resiliency training could help them to respond and manage themselves appropriately within a pressured environment by providing them with the external support and help they might need in their leadership role. Provisioning resiliency training as a consistent training activity to leaders' as part of their overall leadership development across their entire career span within the public service would be more beneficial to leaders rather than in isolation.

Self-awareness

Attendance at LiP made leaders more self-aware about their strengths and weaknesses. This appears to have also fundamentally helped them to chart a future path for themselves as leaders and guiding them towards forming their leader identity. Therefore, I propose that self-awareness needs to be a core training course component for all future leadership development programs for senior leaders in tier 3 and 4 leadership roles as earlier in their overall leadership career within the public service as could be possible. Course content about self-awareness could be ideally delivered during the Initiation phase for leaders and then continued throughout the remaining three phases. This is mainly to accommodate and acknowledge the shifting nature of their strengths and weaknesses, which could vary in accordance with the changing external circumstances. For instance, they might no longer find the need to hold on to certain technical skills and capabilities they valued in their past roles. But instead, they might need to refocus attention to developing and inculcating certain vital attributes and strengths, which might prove essential to them as leaders in tier 3 or 4 leadership roles.

Self-awareness would also give them more insights into how they might impact others – subordinates and peers, through their actions as leaders. In turn, these self-attributed perceptions would help them form their leader identity as they transition through the four phases of the leader identity formation framework. Therefore, the recommended approach for leaders would be to undertake self-awareness more often and continually throughout their entire leadership career within the public service rather than intermittently and sporadically at specific discreet points in time.

Crucible moments

I inferred from the research findings that certain crucible moments spurred learning and growth to a greater extent in most leaders, leading them to form a stable leader identity. Therefore,

organisations would benefit from noting that precision planning an assignment or task might have a reverse effect and deter leaders from undertaking leadership development because it could lead them into a false feeling of comfort. This becomes more relevant to leaders during the Initiation and Recognition phase because an inevitable knock-on their confidence and comfort levels drives them towards learning and, therefore, growth, which helps them form their leader identity.

Placing leaders into more minor challenging roles would limit their ability to actively find solutions to resolve problems and, therefore, limit their ability to stretch themselves as leaders. Future leadership development programs would benefit from considering this and including more action learning modules in the course design. Leaders would have the opportunity to test and trial their improved leadership approach on a real-life problem. This approach would prove more beneficial for younger (age <40 years) and less experienced leaders (service <20 years), particularly during the Initiation and Recognition phases.

Role transition

I propose transitioning into a new role as an essential phase for leaders because they are more likely to need leadership development and external support during this stage. This is typified in the Initiation and Recognition phases of the framework when leaders experienced challenging situations at work or in their personal life, and sometimes both. It brings forth the necessity to acknowledge the complexity of role transition for a leader, which appears to be downplayed in central agencies' overall leadership development narrative as perceived from the data collected. The propensity of this change for a leader seems to be taken too lightly by public sector organisations if considered at all, or it appears completely silenced within the overall leadership development discourse published in official documents.

In future, public sector organisations would benefit from recognising the relevance of this stage for leaders' as a critical step towards their leader identity formation and, therefore, to provide them with an appropriate level of support and training to function in their new role. What seems to happen more commonly, on the contrary, is that leaders are encouraged to attend a leadership development course only after they may have transitioned into a new leadership role. The problem with this practice is that undertaking leadership development training is important for leaders undertaking role transition. They should ideally be encouraged to attend leadership development training before transitioning into their new role rather than at a later stage. Organisation's providing leadership development training to leaders must give due consideration to the salient nature of this timing in their course content while delivering training to leaders' during two phases of identity formation – Initiation and Recognition, more so for younger (age < 40 years) and less experienced (service < 20 years) leaders.

Social expectations and conformance

Based on this study's empirical evidence, I propose that leaders have a perception to conform or align with a specific 'type' of leadership style. This is stronger in the early Inception and Initiation phases when they seem to transition into their new leadership role from a non-leader role. Also, they appear to work harder to deliver results to meet certain organisational expectations to outperform themselves as leaders and, therefore, be 'noticed' for their leadership capabilities. This notion invariably brings to the surface a level of socialisation and change which most leaders are subjected to in their early leadership careers within the public service. I have been unable to ascertain the reasons that could lead to such perceptions in leaders in my thesis. Still, perhaps the reasons could be more nuanced and intricately mapped to organisational culture, dominant leadership narrative reverberating from the Centre or other contributing factors which this thesis has been unable to uncover.

It would be helpful for future leadership development program designers to reconsider this aspect when developing a leadership development program aimed at senior public sector leaders. Suppose trainers do not address this aspect during the early phases of the leader identity formation. In that case, there is an imminent risk that a leader might fail to realise and effectively shape their leader identity as distinct, separate and interrelated to their self-identity. Perceptions that a leader attributes to self by observing others and self are fundamentally overriding in helping them internalise a stable leader identity and externalise any perceived effects of socialisation that could restrict leader identity formation.

8.5 Limitations of this study

I outline three main limitations that relate to the present thesis as below:

Generalizability

The present research has limitations on generalizability, given the qualitative method adopted for this research. I conducted this research using qualitative methods of interviews, so it is unclear if undertaking quantitative or mixed methods would produce a different set of inferences. The leadership development programme chosen for this case study was centrally run by Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission New Zealand and specifically targeted the leadership development needs of senior public service leaders. Therefore, this study had a narrow focus, mainly on public service leaders within New Zealand.

Single researcher and researcher bias

A single researcher played the roles of the interviewer, coder and interpreter, which embeds a limitation into this case study (Pettigrew, 1997). Although I undertook this research independently, arguably, this qualitative study is not devoid of researcher bias (Morrow, 2005),

giving due consideration to my employment status during this research as a long-serving public servant within the New Zealand public service. This is also likely to create bias in presenting one view while hiding or silencing other perceptions that might have seemed irrelevant during the research process. All the methodological procedures outlined in Chapter 3, Analytical strategy, were stringently followed to avoid perceived bias. I have employed multiple sources of data (including interviews, documents, field notes), use of participant terms and references, and use of participants' voices, to build trustworthiness in the substantive theory (Birks & Mills, 2011; Chiovitti & Piran, 2003).

Small research sample

I conducted a case study based approach using a sample of 16 senior public sector leaders undertaking a leadership development programme. Therefore, I have not tested the proposed leader identity formation framework against a large sample. Although I have restricted the research sample using demographic disparities as outlined in Chapter 3, Analytical strategy, it is unclear if this alone could provide a sufficiently accurate measure to delineate some of the inferences to conclude as presented in this case study.

8.6 Future research directions

In addition to the proposed research contributions presented in this thesis, in this section, I outline research implications arising from this case study, which will help further knowledge creation through future research in the field of leadership. First, because leader identity formation signifies a processual view spanning multiple variant steps and levels, future research in the area could benefit from conceptualising process theories related to leader identity formation in leaders over a longitudinal period and further testing these models using relevant methodologies. There is much value in understanding the reasons behind core micro-

and macro-level processes that build up to leader identity formation than in undertaking short-term static methods that highlight the significant impacts. Suppose we assume that becoming a leader is less about leadership role occupancy (Day, 2011) and more about internalising an identifiable and enduring change. In that case, future research could focus on a longitudinal process to investigate the underlying antecedent conditions that trigger and support this change which makes better sense.

One of the challenges associated with the leadership field is to agree on measurable outcomes targeted through leader development and leadership development. Suppose we conceptualise leader identity formation as a multi-phased process tied to one's self-identity rather than being directly associated with a leadership role or position. In that case, using an organisational leadership development framework for training and upskilling leaders for placement into hierarchical roles becomes baseless. Although it may be convenient to use such outcomes, it is unclear how to compare positions across different sectors within the government that might have other drivers and imperatives (e.g. Health, Conservation, Defence, Education, Business, Innovation and Employment). Therefore, linking process models with relevant outcomes (Day et al., 2014) needs to be at the forefront of future research in the field.

Second, an inter-relation between a leader's self-identity and their leader identity, as presented in this study, makes a strong case for accommodating and acknowledging non-conformity and individuality in leaders. I have proposed Leader identity in this study as a self-ascribed process for leaders' which is perceived to help inculcate self-attributed overt behaviours informed by their values, beliefs, principles and choices as they develop their leader identity. This finding suggests that leader identity might be the “missing link” (Grøn et al., 2020) between leadership development and leadership behaviour. However, we need more future leadership research to further explore and define this concept. Leaders internally drive

this process because they chart a deeply personal path, consequently deriving a leader identity from their self-identity. Consideration of this processual view becomes more relevant for organisations responsible for designing and implementing leadership development programs for future leaders. Future research, therefore, would benefit from taking a holistic view towards leader development processes as a learning continuum mapping the four phases of leader identity formation spanning a leader's entire lifespan rather than within a shorter-term time bound period.

Some research in the area of leadership development supports a theoretical conceptualisation of an identity development spiral, which proposes that internalising a leader identity is important to facilitate the development process of leaders because this motivates a leader to act in a 'leader-like way' by further enhancing development (Day & sin, 2011). Looking closely at this view, I argue that a 'leader-like way' heeds conformance and rigidity, which further questions the proposed inter-relationship and co-dependency between a leader's self-identity and leader identity. For instance, a leader may struggle to internalise a leader identity in the first place without understanding what a leader identity means or looks like. My research has shown that the process of internalising a leader identity is often self-ascribed, internally driven, and personal to a leader. I argue on this basis that a leader might rarely form a leader identity or only half-form a leader identity without giving due consideration to their emotional and physical well-being. This study has shown the relevance of 360-degree feedback instruments as powerful methods to enable self-awareness and reflection. In future, researchers in the field could scope to extend these methods to incorporate tools imparting resilience training.

A common problem with the research approach adopted in some instances within the extant literature appears to be that it cannot analyse whether self-awareness and reflection are

related to resilience. Although self-awareness is measurable, there is room in future research to make some noticeable improvement in tracing and mapping resilience over an extended period. With more inclusive approaches, it might be possible to thoroughly investigate the relationships between self-awareness and developing strength and persistence using leader development training. For instance, Day and Harrison's (2007) conceptualisation that actual leadership development transcends the focus on the individual leader also consider relationships and sense-making; learning from shared experiences, collectively enacting fundamental tasks of leadership such as direction setting, building commitment, and creating alignment (Drath, 2001; McCaulay et al., 2007). Arguably, in this research, I have revealed that a leader's heightened sense of self-awareness could have a positive cascading effect on several leadership areas, including improving interpersonal relationships, building collaboration and learning to lead. Therefore, future leadership research could help further inform this research area using empirical evidence.

Third, in this study, I have found that undertaking leader development training at a crucial point during any of these four phases of the leader formation framework could present a critical intervention point to a leader. This can trigger leader identity formation by promoting a more profound meaning-making process in a leader leading to improved learning ability. Job rotation and action learning have surfaced in this study as critically important to a leader's personal and professional development needs, given the learning and development processes undertaken consequently. Moving out of their 'comfort zone' seems to trigger enormous learning and growth in leaders. This perceived growth became more relevant for leaders when the assignment was out of bounds and misaligned with their existing knowledge or background. Therefore, to seed and nurture a leader identity throughout a leader's career span, appropriate levels of leader development training and support become critical intervention points, especially during specific leader identity development phases such as Recognition and

Initiation. However, some research suggests that job rotation certainly can broaden one's perspective. Still, unless the assignments are chosen carefully by the line manager or the organisation to build an individual's ability, it can be an inefficient and incomplete approach to development (McCall, 2010). On the contrary, I argue that precision planning an assignment or task for a leader would be too predicting and less helpful in helping a leader form a leader identity.

In conclusion, overall findings from my study compared to the extant research in the area highlight a gap with regards to understanding the interconnectedness of learning and leadership development processes. For instance, DeRue and Wellman (2009) propose the theoretical concept of diminishing returns in their research on leadership development using experiential learning. This is based on activation theory (Berlyne, 1960), which suggests that once a challenging experience induces a level of activation that exceeds a certain point, the positive effects of developmental challenge diminish. DeRue and Wellman (2009) also noted similar theories of cognitive functioning in their work, such as cognitive resource theory (Fiedler & Garcia, 1987); and cognitive load theory (Sweller, 1988, 1994). These proposed that individuals in challenging and stressful experiences divert their cognitive resources (i.e., intellect and attention) away from the task, focusing on worries over possible performance failures and evaluation anxieties. However, findings from my study suggest that challenging experiences induce a high level of anxiety, stress and strain in public sector leaders.

Further, this seems to result in a greater level of attention, involvement and, most importantly, an intrinsic need to seek resolution and help. This enhances their learning and development abilities, not to mention an increased self-awareness, which I perceived as fundamentally critical in tipping the balance towards forming a leader identity. These multiple theoretical approaches help further knowledge creation in the field and present a compelling

view that urges future research directions to take into account the diverse nature of the treatment of leadership development and its outcomes, as seen within the extant literature. Therefore, I recommend that future research adopts a research position that is open to exploring new research methods and techniques rather than become vetted to commonly employed research approaches that promulgate and advocate some theoretical positions and hide others.

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APPENDIX 1 – LEADER IDENTITY QUEURY

THEME	SUB-THEMES	CRITERIA
A view on pathways to public sector leadership role.	1. **Motivation** for appointment to various types of leadership roles across both private and public sector. For example, cadet, team leader, managerial, senior leadership, etc. 2. **Eligibility criteria** for appointment to leadership roles – Subject matter experts or generalist. 3. **Public sector leadership experience** – Positive or negative aspects of the public sector. 4. **Nature of the leadership practic**e – Promotion process to senior roles. 5. Mode of **Public sector leadership career pathway** – Planned and deliberate or unplanned and coincidental. 6. **Preference** given to certain types of leadership roles – within one's agency or across the wider public service. 7. **Primary types of public sector leadership roles** undertaken based on seniority – tier 4, 3, or 2. 8. **An average career span for senior leaders** within the public service. 9. **Level of awareness of career progression** through the public service.	a) Promotion to leadership roles b) Self-identity, skills and traits
A view on leadership development in the public service	1. **Degree of relevance for** undertaking leadership development. 2. **Role of agency** in leadership development. 3. **Rules, policies and processes** around leadership development opportunities – within agency and across the sector. 4. **Motivation** for attending LiP 5. **Leadership development** for public sector leaders in NZ 6. **Level of effort or actions taken by leaders** to pursue leadership development. 7. **Eligibility criteria** for attendance at LiP within agency.	a) Relevance of leadership development b) Responsibility towards leadership development

A view on LiP and its role in leader identity formation	1. **Nature of leadership practice** as interpreted by leaders before, during and after attending leadership development – LiP. 2. **Influential leadership development** aspects of LiP for leader identity formation – experiences, learnings, outcomes. 3. **Relevance of LiP** for leaders. 4. **Role of contextual factors** in leadership development. 5. **LiP design features** that worked and did not work for leaders.	a) Leader identity formation as a process b) Dealing with identity crisis, identity shift and identity conflict.
A view on leadership practice and leader identity formation	1. **Traits, competencies, capabilities** perceived as contributing towards or making up leader identity. 2. **Contributing factors or reasons** critical to leader identity formation. 3. **Role of leadership practice** in leader identity formation. 4. Occurrence of **identity asymmetry in relationships** with peers or colleagues	a) Formation of leader identity within the leadership practice b) Identity asymmetry (identity crisis, conflict, shift) in relationships.
A view on improvements to LiP	1. **Most and least influential aspects** of the LiP programme to leader identity formation. 2. **Possible improvements to future design** of the LiP programme. 3. **Reasons behind the effectiveness of certain aspects** over others of the LiP programme.	a) Effective and non-effective LiP design features

APPENDIX 2 – PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

CONSENT FORM

A critical investigation of leader identity construction within the New Zealand public service.

This consent form outlines my rights as a participant in the research on *A critical investigation of leader identity construction within the New Zealand public service*, conducted by Samradhni Jog to inform her PhD research thesis. Samradhni Jog is a part-time researcher with the School of Government, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. She is also currently employed with Ministry for Primary Industries.

- I have been given and have understood an explanation of this research. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction.

  I understand that,

- My participation is entirely voluntary and I agree to participate in a semi-structured interview and/or informal discussions along with participant observation sessions (as needed) for the purpose of this research. I may choose to decline to answer any questions asked in the interview.
- I may withdraw myself (or my interview data) from this project at any time before the analysis of data (March 2018) without having to give reasons. Withdrawn data will be immediately destroyed and not used in any subsequent analysis.
- The data I provide in the interview will be kept confidential and reported only in a non-attributable form.
- Access to the data is restricted to Samradhni Jog and her academic supervisors. No one else will see the raw data I provide.
- The information I provide will not be used for any purpose not disclosed on the information sheet, nor will it be released to others, without my written consent.
- The interview will be audio-recorded, on the understanding that Samradhni Jog will make detailed notes and then delete the recording.
- One year after the completion of the PhD Research project, all raw data including electronic, hand written and audio recording will be destroyed.

Name of participant_____

Signature:_____Date:_____

I would like to be sent a copy of the PhD Research Thesis: Yes/ no

I can be contacted at the following email address_____

You may scan and email a signed, completed form to Samradhni.jog@vuw.ac.nz or sign at the time of interview.