Ethical decision-making:
Learning from prominent leaders in
not-for-profit organisations

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Abstract

Ethically questionable leader conduct continues to garner headlines. It has prompted the leadership field to renew their focus on research regarding the ethical dimensions of leadership. Empirical emphases have focused on understanding negative leader behaviour, with the typical leadership study reliant upon positivist approaches. I critique these studies as not having produced meaningful, practicable or wholly relevant insights regarding the challenges and support mechanisms required to lead ethically. Few studies have in fact examined leadership in not-for-profit organisations where decisions might reasonably be expected to possess elevated moral capital. To test this, my study interviewed leaders from professional sectors (the military, religious institutions, education, government and charities) in both the USA and the UK, to offer a more holistic interpretation of what underpins and directs leader moral disposition. As corollary, this research explicates issues of practicability and how other sectors might learn from leaders who perpetually practise their ethicality.

To gain insights that develop the field of leadership research, my thesis centres on the experiences of ten high-level, elite and specialised leaders. Although not selected as ethical, they were found to be principled, ethical decision-makers. A specific type of in-depth, qualitative interviewing was conducted and justified to more readily reflect the status of the leaders. Elite and specialised interviewing has not been widely used as a data collection tool, but it offered a unique opportunity to garner specialised data, once access issues had been overcome.

The findings reveal unique insights into the underexplored ethical leader mindset and highlight the complex processes of leader decision-making in situ by demonstrating what underpins leaders' behaviour, with reference to how they understand experiences for themselves. This study uncovers the symbiotic and interconnected nature of the variety of ideological frameworks at play, positing theological concepts alongside sociological and philosophical counterparts. Ethical

awareness, the notions of trust and responsibility are shown as bedrock and explicit.

This research presents a new ethical leadership, a typology that shows how ethical leaders are created through experience, sustained and developed over time, and nourished by awareness beyond the self. Current conceptions have done little to inform ethical leadership development, whereas I offer a more practical and holistic way to use the unexpected, traumatic, and intense crucibles of leadership experience to explicate and consolidate ethical foundations. This thesis presents a vision of a welfare driven leadership originating from the self, in the service of others, and for society; an ethical leadership for all.

Declaration

"I declare that the work in this thesis is my own, except where otherwise stated. It has not been previously submitted to any other university or institution of higher education, in total or in part, for the award of a degree".

Signed:

Dated: 27th September 2017

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I acknowledge here, as I do in the entirety of this thesis, the generous gift of the time and experiences given to me by my respondents, without them I would have nothing to say. This thesis is a testament to their unwavering dedication to the craft of leadership.

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Chapter One - Ethical leaders: hiding in plain sight

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy"

Martin Luther King Jr, 1963

Recent ethically questionable organisational conduct (Brown *et al.*, 2005) has prompted research regarding the ethical dimensions of leadership. Confidence in political and corporate leaders has declined (Yukl, 2013). Leadership failures and international scandals in the commercial and non-commercial sectors have tested public trust. Ethical failures 'have become an important reality for corporations, organisations, and societies at large' (De Cremer *et al.*, 2010b, p1). Leadership scholars have responded by renewing efforts to understand this complex phenomenon. However, the emphasis to date has been on understanding negative leader behaviour (Mayer *et al.*, 2010), few studies have drawn attention to leaders who have made the *right* decisions in morally intense situations. The scholarly notion that leaders could develop or possibly learn how to better behave, prevent or arguably eliminate unethical deeds as a result of the examination of deviant behaviour remains questionable.

Northouse (2010) criticised scholars for producing work 'strongly influenced by... personal opinions about the nature of leadership ethics and their view of the world' (p394). Such approaches have been at the expense of the explication of leadership and resulted in few studies to explore the role that ethics really plays (Ciulla, 1995, Palmer, 2009). The trend has been to conceptualise ethical leadership from a largely sociological standpoint, with scholars (Brown and Treviño, 2006, Brown and Treviño, 2014) leaning heavily on social learning theory as their sole theoretical underpinning. This study sought to challenge current conceptions and a seemingly entrenched community of leadership researchers. The purpose is to reconstruct the notion of ethical leadership to include ethical decision-making and to consider and thus demonstrate the presence of other theoretical lenses, how they interact, and what this might mean for the practice of

leadership. Although the literature review will show ethics as historically implicit (see section 2.2), this research will suggest that ethics, and notion of responsibility have always been explicit and omnipresent for *ethical* leaders.

In contrast to current methodological predilections, I sought high-level participants from specific not-for-profit sectors. These individuals were chosen because they were in possession of discretionary knowledge and elevated organisational and societal status. They were recognised as principled ethical decision-makers by their peers or experts (Woiceshyn, 2011). Given this, the sample required a bespoke methodological response. A specific form of in-depth qualitative interviewing was chosen; typified by Dexter (2006) as *elite or specialised*. Whilst the decision to *study up* (Nader, 1972, Hunter, 1995) was taken on the advice of Delaney (2007) and Goldman and Swayze (2012) it was facilitated by privileged access (see section 4.1.5). Ten prominent leaders from specific not-for-profit professional settings in both the United States of America (USA) and the United Kingdom (UK) were selected (see sections 4.1.3 and 4.1.4). According to scholars, the sample represented a seriously neglected, but rich research vein with a genuine emphasis on ethical leadership (Tenbrunsel *et al.*, 2003, Eisenbeiß, 2012).

The explicit aim of this study was to reveal unique insights into the underexplored ethical leader mindset to more fully understand the complex, less articulated practices of leader decision-making in situ. Posed as a research question, this study asks '*what is the role of ethics in not-for-profit leadership*? Unlike current approaches, I consider the separately researched areas of ethical leadership and ethical decision-making as symbiotic. And through an holistic approach to the data, offer a fusion of the fields to further understandings regarding the deeper structures of the leadership phenomenon (Klenke, 2008). This refocus will show how leaders characterised their leadership, understood their motivations and actions through advanced levels of (ethical) self-awareness and responsibility. As such, this research offers a welfare-driven practice of leadership for the 21st century. The overt focus is on positive organisational

behaviour, rather than through an examination of how *not* to act. This approach is designed to re-ignite the ethical leadership debate, to extend the literature, and to offer new ways of supporting leaders who are on their leadership journeys.

The remainder of this introductory chapter provides the rationale for the research. A brief problem statement is provided to underpin the research question, aim and objectives. References to the epistemological and ontological frameworks are woven through the chapter with methodological perspectives and choices outlined and discussed briefly to provide early indications of the research design more comprehensively attended to later in the work. To reinforce the research design and overall impetus of the project, reviews of the societal, intellectual, and professional research contexts at the time of study are provided. Collective significance is addressed and justified. Ethical considerations and researcher reflexivity are also considered to foreground the research. The chapter concludes by providing an overview of the methodological choices and limitations of the study. A brief description of the organisation of the thesis follows as a bridge to the body of the work.

1.1   The Problem Statement

The cumulative value and usefulness of research at the intersection of leadership and ethics remains debatable. Despite acknowledgement from scholars such as Brown and Treviño (2006) and Grover *et al.* (2012) , current insights have resulted in an under-developed, fragmented, and self-perpetuating field. Wilson and McCalman (2017) admonish the leadership research community for producing 'conceptual dead ends' (p152) and for falling into publication traps. Scholars have summarily neglected to use more creative methodologies, or research in more methodologically diverse settings beyond business and commerce. Leadership research in *nonprofit* settings has been carried out (Jurkiewicz and Massey Jr, 1998), comparisons have been made between for-profits and not-for-profits (Thach and Thompson, 2007, van der Wal *et al.*, 2008, Athanasopoulou, 2012), and across sectors research attempted (Kaptein *et al.*, 2005, Morrell and Hartley,

2006). But few have sought opinions regarding the ethical challenges of leadership from prominent leaders in a variety of morally motivated, or 'values expressive' organisations (Jeavons, 2005, p205). Extant research remains indifferent to the complexities of leading ethically (Alvesson, 1996). Positivist scholars pre-occupied with narrow sub-sets, convenient samples, and self-reporting surveys have sacrificed deeper meanings and understandings. Such research tells us little about the acquisition, importance and development of ethical underpinnings. Unholistic, piecemeal research is limited in its ability to transform into actionable and practicable recommendations for nascent leaders. For a number of reasons (outlined in the remainder of this chapter and more fully attended to in subsequent chapters), researchers have simply looked past more appropriate research samples. They have neglected to see, and thus simply ask the ethical leaders who are hiding in plain sight.

1.2   Research aim and sub-questions

The research title '**Ethical decision-making: Learning from prominent leaders in not-for-profit organisations**' provided both the framework for the conceptual scope of this project, served as a guide, and also operated as a 'useful analytic narrative device' (Pryor, 2010, p170). The title sought to express the general scope of the project at this stage of its life, and thus allowed for the generation of a set of more explicit research objectives to adequately address the over-riding aim. The final title did however; fluctuate from project inception, moving from examining authentic leadership (2009-2010) to exploring leader authenticity and integrity (2010-2011). The research finally settled to concern ethical decision-making following a family relocation to Washington DC, USA (2010-2012). Although it was always the intention to canvass a variety of not-for-profit leaders from both the USA and the UK, it was the relocation circumstances, which proved instrumental in finalising the topic and determining the nature of the sample (see 1.4.3).

Therefore, to research the nature of ethical decision-making across a variety of not-for-profit organisational settings, and to more fully understand the role ethics might play, this study sought to:

- Explore philosophical ethical and moral theory, and investigate ways in which they are integrated with the leadership literature.
- Advance current understandings regarding the ethical challenges of leadership in specific settings by conducting qualitative in-depth interviews with *elite and specialised* respondents.
- Examine the interface between ethics and leadership in terms of the frameworks leaders use to understand who they are, what they do, and how decision-making is informed and directed by moral disposition.

To strengthen the research question and achieve the aim a set of sub-questions were developed to further frame and provide structure to the research objectives.

- Was ethical leadership ideologically distinct from extant leadership theories as envisaged by the literature?
- What were the specific challenges to maintaining one's moral compass in ethically challenging situations?
- To what extent did leaders understand their own behaviour, in terms of the frameworks they used to inform and guide their decision-making?
- Were ethical decisions special or no different?
- To what extent was organisational setting a factor for ethical leadership and decision-making?
- Could the practice of ethical leadership be made more accessible, transferrable and actionable?

The overall purpose was to demonstrate how specific leaders understood their experiences, and through this exploration reveal the nature and the variety of the ideological frameworks at play when high-stakes decisions were being made in morally intense situations. Five British and five American leaders were chosen

from a variety of contexts and settings without an overt profit motive. Prominent leaders from the military, the government, charities, education and the clergy were chosen. It was anticipated that this research opportunity might also elucidate possible sectoral and cultural differences regarding the nuances of leading ethically.

1.3   Rationale and significance of the problem

Despite strong public concern and lively debate regarding recent high-impact ethical scandals the ethical credentials of leaders still attracted debate (Eisenbeiß, 2012). The field is thought to be a 'young and thriving research area' (Stouten *et al.*, 2012, p3) going through somewhat of a revival, but it has remained at an impasse for some time. Positivism has ruled; theoretical propositions have been manipulated by logical and hypothetico-deductive (Garwood, 2006) reasoning to satisfy empirical testing (Klenke, 2008). Whilst Yukl *et al.* (2013) reported that 'interest in studying the antecedents, outcomes and processes of ethical leadership has been growing steadily' (p38), the typical leadership study remains heavily reliant upon the convenient use of survey-based assessment tools according to Hunter *et al.* (2007) . This type of research has rendered the field underdeveloped and fragmented (Brown and Treviño, 2006, Grover *et al.*, 2012). Despite Ciulla's (1995) advice to adopt a 'multi-disciplinary approach', and consider leadership as 'a whole…not… a combination of fragments' (p9), thousands of studies have produced meagre results (Alvesson, 1996). Little has changed according to Mendonca and Kanungo (2007) 'despite decades of research our understanding of the leadership phenomenon remains incomplete' (p27). Moreover, the collective impact of 'emotions, thoughts, reactions, and embodied cognitions' (Dinh *et al.*, 2014, p37) has rendered current approaches as insufficient to reflect the 'richness' or recognise 'emerging factors' in 'ever-shifting realities' (Conger, 1998, p110).

I will argue that early leadership theories have provided little clarification regarding the importance of ethics (see Chapter Two). Work has focused primarily on questions regarding the nature of leadership; specifically characteristics and

models of leadership style (Palmer, 2009). Much of this work seemed of little value to practicing leaders (Van Seters and Field, 1990), and neglected to reflect dispositions and role demands (House and Aditya, 1997). Even leadership theories that appeared to accommodate changeable operating conditions fell short (Knights and O'Leary, 2006, Northouse, 2010, Yukl *et al.*, 2013). Whilst ethics began to emerge more explicitly in new genre normative leadership theories, alignment was still not perfect. There was a pressing need for ethical leadership according to Mendonca and Kanungo (2007) but ethics was still not the bedrock. For Kanungo and Mendonca (1996) it was a dimension or consideration; still not perceived as the heart of leadership (Ciulla, 1998). And whilst, it would appear that Brown *et al.* (2005) responded by developing a widely accepted, empirically tested ethical leadership construct based on a seminal qualitative study, close examination found that it too was flawed.

Like Crossan *et al.* (2013) , I took the view that leadership ethics was not about the supremacy of particular philosophical theories, but about revealing the true nature of leading ethically. Rost (1995) warned that it was 'time for ethicists to forsake their past and present theories of ethics and look to the future…there is ample evidence to suggest that those theories are beyond repair' (p141). Whilst advancements were being made by scholars (Whetstone, 2005, Resick *et al.*, 2006), only Eisenbeiß (2012) seemed prepared to fully embrace theoretical plurality. This research reflects her views and those of Ciulla (2005) . The latter invites scholars to 'critically read the leadership literature, separate the normative ideas from the descriptive and then put the two back together again' (p334). Indeed, this research will go further still. I believe that the leadership literature at the intersection of ethics ought to include research in the field of decision-making and ethical decision-making; they are the acts of leadership. Similarly to scholars (Messick and Bazerman, 1996, Winston, 2007, Shapiro and Stefkovich, 2011) I believe them to be indiscrete and like Grover *et al.* (2012) , require theoretical integration.

Ciulla's (2005) question regarding the preparation of 'leaders who have the capacity to responsibly use power, to carry out moral obligations to followers,

make sound moral decisions and serve their organisations well' (p334) also remains unanswered. Current fixations with unethical behaviour and leadership provide little guidance to leaders embarking on their leadership journeys. Unethical leader behaviour and ethical failures have been attributed to high-pressure contexts (Winston, 2007, Brown and Mitchell, 2010), when according to Werhane *et al.* (2014) they are more likely to be due to personal, organisational and societal decision-making impediments. The argument is, that by focusing on deficiencies in character and analysis of transgressions we are simply making excuses for immoral behaviour. Although progress is being made, recent research has begun to focus on possible personal and organisational constraints and enablers to ethical leadership (April *et al.*, 2010, 2011), scholars have neglected to consider whether there might be significant differences in alternative professional contexts; could they be more enabling? Indeed, constraints are important, but as previously noted, nascent leaders need to think about what supports their leadership, *if* they are self-aware they ought to *know* what constrains.

Eisenbeiß (2012) summarises the views of Tenbrunsel *et al.* (2003) and asks us to look in organisational environments where the 'system puts emphasis on ethical leadership and the organisational climate promotes ethics, fairness and respect' (Eisenbeiß, 2012, p806). She also adds that there needs to be more clarity regarding the 'principles… central to ethical leadership and decision-making… to prepare managers for dealing with moral dilemmas' (Eisenbeiß, 2012, p806). Research needs to be more forthcoming about specific mechanisms that develop and thus support ethical and/or moral principles. To more fully understand this research area, I sought to redress the methodological balance. I took the unique opportunity to study those who wielded significant influence (Delaney, 2007), and possessed exclusive knowledge (Pfadenhauer, 2009) to provide quality insights and unexpected revelations (Peabody *et al.*, 1990). This research is the long awaited examination of the core aspects of ethical leadership, not 'another technically proficient but conceptually thin study' (Wilson and McCalman, 2017, p151) asking different questions about minor variables.

1.4 Background justification

There existed a confluence of specific factors which aligned in order for this research to be carried out in the manner outlined. The initial stimulus for this enquiry centred around very topical and timely questions regarding the renewed focus on ethics. Like many others, I was dismayed by constant media reports regarding global corporate ethical failures. Post 2008 we have seen the fall of several financial institutions resulting from irresponsible practices in the UK. This malaise and the consequential introspection meant that other sectors also found the spotlight (Zheng *et al.*, 2015). As such, scandals in the military, the church, government, charities and education did not escape scrutiny, despite their apparent moral mission. Stories regarding good and ethical leadership were eclipsed; I found the deliberate focus on the negative disconcerting. Therefore, the balance required redressing.

1.4.1 Societal influences

According to Voegtlin (2016) interest in ethical leadership is a result of unethical behaviour by business leaders who were particularly susceptible to socio-economic pressures (Morgan and Thiagarajan, 2009). Top executives were found to have made self-benefitting decisions that jeopardised organisational reputation and financial stability which resulted in cultures of corruption, deception and self-interest (Edid, 2004, p2). Brown and Mitchell (2010) concur with Jones (1991) , this was normatively inappropriate or even illegal behaviour undertaken to enhance organisational *bottom-line* (Finney and Lesieur, 1982, Yeager, 1990, Brown and Mitchell, 2010, Umphress *et al.*, 2010). Extreme pressure to compete and achieve sometimes-unrealistic objectives coupled with poor organisational oversight provided fertile ground for poor decision-making. The leadership landscape has not improved according to Caldwell and Anderson (2017) , leaders continue to balance obligations in the struggle against pressures to maintain public trust.

Whilst the cost of dishonesty is not in question, as the global financial crisis of 2007-2008 shows, there are additional hidden costs to leader misconduct beyond the obvious visible scars. Although leader misconduct is not a new phenomenon, this new interest in corporate organisational behaviour appears different. Leader failure is thought to be a product of what Millar and Poole (2011a) describe as the 'era of excess' (pix); the conditions necessary for diverting leaders from their righteous paths (Stouten *et al.*, 2012, p1). Despite the fact that rationalisations for poor behaviour have begun to ring hollow (Edid, 2004), Wade (2009) contends that the crisis may yet have a silver lining. He claims that it 'discredited many established ideas about how societies should run their economies, and the consequences may last well beyond the recovery', but that the economic situation might just be the catalyst 'for advancing a social democratic vision of a moral society' (Wade, 2009, p39). The current climate of austerity, coupled with 'social, political, economic and environmental changes' has shifted and intensified focus on transparency and the lack of leadership (Hodges and Howieson, 2017, p69). Given this, we need ethical leadership now more than ever (Johnson, 2012, pxviii). Indeed, Rost (1995) was prophetic:

> *'Our organisations and communities need a way out of the materialistic, individualistic, self-interested, short-term, pragmatic, cost-benefit drive, male-dominated, rational, management-oriented culture that is the primary cause of our malaise. They need a sense of moral responsibility, a collective purpose to be virtuous in pursuing the higher moral ground, a new understanding of care for the commons, and the ability to regenerate themselves through the exercise of leadership. Such is the function of the postindustrial paradigm of ethics for the new millennium' (p141).*

1.4.2 Intellectual setting

Although, scholars have been concerned with the moral behaviour of leaders (Johnson, 2012, pxi) for some time, what is understood by morals or ethics is still a highly contested area. Some (Starratt, 2004, Strike, 2007, Pojman and Tramel, 2009, Langlois, 2011) have made distinctions between what constitutes ethics and morals. Indeed, each scholarly group has produced a wealth of diametrically

opposed research. Research at the intersection of leadership, ethics and decision-making is famously partisan. For example, Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) and Ciulla (2005) believed ethical leadership belonged in the realm of the philosophical, whereas recent conceptualisations (Treviño *et al.*, 2003, Brown and Treviño, 2006) posit it firmly in a sociological sphere. A plethora of leadership scholars have followed suit. Social learning or social cognitive theory has become the predominant stand-alone theoretical framework for understanding ethical leadership (see 2.4.1 for details). Leader behaviour appeared dependent upon the effects of surroundings, psychological factors and the acceptance of such behaviour in society. Ethical leaders were perceived as attractive individuals and credible role models by followers, less concern was given to nuances regarding *why* or *how* people behaved, or *ought* to behave.

Initial analysis of the literature seemed to suggest that a narrow, deliberately vague, one-dimensional lens would be inadequate to reflect the realities of how leaders envisaged or understood the acquisition and impact of personal ethical disposition upon the enactment of leadership (Bass and Steidlmeier, 1999, Ciulla, 2005, Resick *et al.*, 2006, Eisenbeiß, 2012). Ciulla (1995) contends that opposing descriptive and philosophical stances have fragmented the field. Indeed, questions are beginning to be asked regarding the conceptual confusion (Yukl *et al.*, 2013, p39). But few scholars are willing to confront an established but entrenched community of researchers 'who have written texts that are strongly influenced by their personal opinions about the nature of leadership ethics and their view of the world' (Northouse, 2010, p394). A wider lens is necessary according to Wilson and McCalman (2017) whereby ethical leadership is examined socially, historically and culturally to break the self-perpetuating cycle of similar studies. This research takes the view that no, one, theoretical framework can adequately explicate leadership concerning the pivotal role ethics really plays in present leadership contexts. It is time for a less polemic view. Moreover, there is a new call to fully embrace ethical pluralism, which might reasonably include ethical principles encapsulated and referenced in theological terms (Eisenbeiß, 2012). Ethics in leadership and leadership ethics should not be reduced to the

simple but deliberately vague ethical leadership construct envisioned by Treviño *et al.* (2003) and Brown *et al.* (2005) . Extant ethical leadership research simply represents 'the first steps' (Langlois, 2011, p39) toward revealing the complexities of this new form of working behaviour. As Langlois (2011) notes:

> *'Ethical leadership is alive and well...tinted by legal and regulatory frameworks in conformity with established norms; it can be coloured by a desire to create a more human organisation, in the pursuit of greater social justice, it can be imbued with personal and moral values that drive conduct and decisions' (p2).*

Klenke (2008) also argues that challenges to organisations and environments two decades ago were 'significantly different' (p379); therefore most leadership theories of that time are now obsolete. However, new perspectives have emerged because of this Zeitgeist, several of which appear to possess an ethical dimension. For instance, authentic leadership (George, 2003, Gardner *et al.*, 2005), transformational leadership (Burns, 1978, Bass, 1985), and charismatic leadership (Conger and Kanungo, 1998), servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977, Spears and Lawrence, 2002) and spiritual leadership (Chappell, 1993, Fairholm, 1997, Fry, 2003, Reave, 2005) are also considered implicitly ethical. But, like most theories with ethical values and moral behaviour as fundamental aspects, they also suffer from a lack of development relating to ethical theory and empirical testing (Ciulla, 1995).

These issues are not uncommon in the literature relating to the practice of ethical leadership; namely ethical decision-making. The literature is embedded within the realms of psychology and business psychology, although more recently in business ethics and philosophy (Elm and Radin, 2012). Scholarly focus seems to be on uncovering 'systematic weaknesses' regarding 'how people make decisions and process information' in order to reveal insights into errors and biases in order to enhance the ethical quality of decisions (Messick and Bazerman, 1996, p9). The popularity of ethical decision-making as a research topic has advanced exponentially in the last decade. New, albeit limited (Elm and Radin, 2012) decision-making models have been proposed, tested, reworked and applied as

analytical tools. However, there remains no 'consistent intellectual perspective about how people make ethical decisions' (Elm and Radin, 2012, p313).

My examination of the literature will show a preoccupation with the process of leader decision-making defined by narrow subsets. According to Elm and Radin (2012) this has 'impoverished our understanding of ethical decision-making' (p314) and possibly distorted it. Few scholars (Stenmark and Mumford, 2011) have made the obvious connection between ethical leadership, and ethical decision-making. Fewer still have linked these to leader education for ethical decision-making. There is no fusion of these literatures, no joint treatment; each sits silently at a respectful distance. The importance of these connections should not be underestimated (Verschoor, 2006, Hunter, 2008). Stenmark and Mumford (2011) remark that 'leaders are in a unique position in organizations...their decisions and behavior, especially with regard to ethics, set the standard for the decision-making and behavior of their subordinates...and organizational outcomes' (p943). Therefore it is imperative that leadership scholars at these intersections begin to collectively attend to the practicalities, and as corollary, seek understandings regarding what actually supports ethical leaders when faced with morally intense situations and choices.

1.4.3 Professional background and contexts

Winston (2007) stated that there was 'evidence of a crisis or potential crisis in ethical leadership and decision making in nearly every sector of professional life, both organizationally and societally' (p231). Ethical failures were not limited to the private sector (Zheng *et al.*, 2015). Transgressions by military leaders, denials of ethical responsibility from senior clergy and poor behaviour in regard to financial fiduciary by Members of Parliament (MPs) in the UK also found the spotlight. According to Bryson (1988) and Klingner (1993) these types of organisations also compete for survival, 'in a tumultuous political milieu of multiple-level agendas, constrained resources, and decreasing public confidence' (Jurkiewicz and Massey Jr, 1998, p173). Indeed, the shadow of austerity has hung

over 'a vast array of charities, voluntary organizations, community groups... and social enterprises... undergoing radical change' (Hodges and Howieson, 2017, p69). Arguably the stakes are higher, and the scrutiny tighter. Leaders in these sectors must 'project high levels of ethical reasoning...not only achieving the public good but also reflecting back favourably on both the organization and the individuals who provide the funding' (Jurkiewicz and Massey Jr, 1998, p175). Rothschild and Milofsky (2006) make the distinction that:

> *'Nonprofit organisations are grounded in their members' values and passions and sustained by the bonds of trust that develop within and between them. They are the organizational expression of their members' ethical stance toward the world: nonprofit organizations, by way of their very existence and practices, convey a public statement of what their members see as a better, more caring, or more just world'* *(p137).*

There is a strong mandate for leadership in the public interest (Wilson and McCalman, 2017). With this in mind, it made more epistemological sense to examine leaders who practiced their ethics positively in under-researched settings, in contrast to the current scholarly preoccupation with unethical leaders from organisations with an overt profit motive. Context was important according to Morrell and Hartley (2006) and Thach and Thompson (2007) . As such, the opportunity to gain access to such individuals presented itself as a result of a relocation from the UK to Washington DC, USA in 2010. Although it was always the intention to speak to leaders from organisations such as the military, the clergy, and those from educational settings, this new transatlantic location coupled with access to diverse social and professional contacts allowed for a more ambitious sample. Networking through a small but exclusive community, using connections with the British Embassy, and support from a high-profile and respected imprimatur as informal sponsor (Aberbach and Rockman, 2002, Welch *et al.*, 2002) enabled me to canvass elite and specialised individuals. Like McDowell (1998) , I would find serendipity, social networking and personal circumstances formidable factors for securing direct access and enlisting influential gatekeepers.

Leadership research based upon interviews with such high-profile leaders was uncommon according to Klenke (2008) . Moreover, research on the cultural nuances between UK and US leaders is almost non-existent. Norburn (1987) attributes this paucity to an assumption that there is no difference. He admonishes the field for the prevalence of *unicultural* studies, which are *single company based*, and 'conducted at the lower end' of 'corporate hierarchies' (p9). As such, this research would be transatlantic, multi-setting, *and* concern upper-echelon, not-for-profit leaders, filling a long-empty gap in the scholarly field.

1.5   *Overview of methodological choices and assumptions*

The overarching purpose of this study was to appreciate how prominent leaders understood their experiences, and through this exploration reveal the nature and variety of the ideological frameworks at play when high-stakes decisions were being made in morally intense situations. This study sits within the interpretive paradigm, the focus is 'on smaller numbers and in-depth analyses of human behaviour and perceptions' (Basit, 2010, p14). I had no interest in generalisation, but to examine and interpret the social reality of the leaders in this study. The intention was to move away from oft-used quantitative approaches (Treviño *et al.*, 2000, Brown *et al.*, 2005, Brown and Treviño, 2006). Qualitative approaches were considered reflexive (Klenke, 2008), flexible (Parry *et al.*, 2014) , and sensitive to contextual factors (Bryman, 2004, Parry *et al.*, 2014).   They would enable the emergence and pursuit of symbolic dimensions, unexpected ideas and opportunities during the research process. Conger (1998) was clear, he believed qualitative research to be 'the cornerstone methodology for understanding leadership' (p107). As a method, Klenke (2008) believes it has come of age. Although researchers have begun to use it more frequently in leadership research (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005), particularly at the intersection of leadership and ethics (Treviño *et al.*, 2003, Storr, 2004), it has still not been fully appreciated despite its potential.

In direct response, I chose to carry out qualitative, in-depth, semi-structured interviews with prominent leaders from a variety of not-for-profit organisations to address methodological gaps and empirical deficiencies. Ten individuals, five from the United States of America (USA) and five from the United Kingdom (UK) were purposively selected. They were to be *prominent*, and in some cases, public figures, who had not only experienced ethical challenges to their decision-making, but had also been called to defend their moral choices legally, and publicly. The term prominent in the title would convey the overall quality of the study, whilst also operating as an umbrella term to describe the significance of the sample, and as corollary give some indication that a bespoke methodological approach would be necessary (see section 4.1.2).

To capture uniqueness (Cohen *et al.*, 2011) and illuminate possible differences across and amongst contexts, a purposive cocktail of accidental and convenient respondents were sourced. I sought data from:

- two distinguished and specialised military leaders ranking at Lt. General (retired and active);
- an eminent Archbishop (in post), and an acclaimed Vicar General (deceased 2015);
- a school headmaster (in post) and a retired specialist college principal;
- a retired US Ambassador who had served in several political hotspots and a senior, influential and well-known Member of Parliament;
- the charity leaders were founders and figureheads of their respective charities, both recognised nationally and internationally for their dedication and philanthropy.

As such, a specific type of qualitative, in-depth interview was conducted due to the status of the respondents. Known as *elite and specialised interviewing* (Dexter, 1970, 2006), this approach offered an appropriate methodological fit. These were individuals with expert knowledge (Meuser and Nagel, 2009), formative and interpretive power (Pierce, 2008, Littig, 2009). Whilst there would

be notable differences in access and preparation, the contrasts with traditional interviewing would include the accommodation of power relations by attention to positionality as described in Chapter Four (see sections 4.1.2, 4.1.5, 4.1.6, and 4.1.8).

Answers were sought to a series of approximately seventeen questions (*Appendix B – Leader Interview Schedule*) and followed Kvale's (1996) interview guide. The questions were deliberately focused on the research aim, and took their lead from a set of research sub-questions informed by gaps in the literature. Data collection took place in the USA from May to June 2012, and in the UK between July 2013 and March 2014. The interviews ranged in duration (from approximately 48 minutes to one hour and 46 minutes) and were held in a variety of locations convenient to the leaders (*Appendix A – Sampling Frame*). Following this, interview data were transcribed as soon as practicably possible. Texts were annotated to add meaning (Boulton and Hammersley, 2006, Saldaña, 2013, Seidman, 2013). Details of the analytical activities are provided in section 4.3 for close inspection, but overall the approach was a hybrid (Saldaña, 2013), and incorporated elements from a range of research theorists (Corbin and Strauss, 2008, Silverman, 2011, Bazeley, 2013). In all, data were treated to two full stages of coding, reviewed and re-ordered, then clustered, categorised and reduced (Dey, 1993, Bryman and Burgess, 1994). Data were treated to two further semi-stages as a reorganising tool to avoid over-handling the data. Following data interpretation, and in response to the theoretical and methodological issues and contexts outlined, an holistic picture of a new (ethical) leadership emerged, and is thus presented in section 5.2 onwards. Whilst the new typology is comprehensive and rich, and in itself presents as a contribution, the conclusion purposefully pulls together the seams of the research to provide an overall picture of the efficacy and legitimacy of the leadership described by this cohort.

1.5.1 Explanation of contentious terms

There are several topical discussions regarding definitions in this thesis. The notions of ethics and morals, definitions surrounding ethical leadership and moral leadership are debated along with arguments concerning what distinguishes decision-making from ethical decision-making. Although the literature review discusses the etymological issues regarding the terms ethics and morals (see sections 2.3.1 and 2.3.2), it is important to precede those discussions by advising the reader that this is not a thesis on philosophy. A practical approach is taken regarding the understanding of ethics. Whilst it would seem useful to clarify philosophical roots, or simply adopt Pojman and Tramel's (2009) position that ethical theories are specific moral theories issuing from theoretical reflections on morality, I prefer to leave the debate open. In line with scholars (Jeannot, 1989, Winkler and Coombs, 1993, Knights and O'Leary, 2006) the terms will be used interchangeably.

Contention extends to the terms in their constructs. For many, moral leadership (Burns, 1978, Gini, 1998, von Weltzien Hoivik, 2002) is considered a separate entity from ethical leadership. Although Storr (2004) and Hansen (2010) have made attempts to delineate it, Dinh *et al.* (2014) believe it is embodied in ethical leadership. Whilst I enter these debates in sections 2.3.1 and 2.4.2, it is not my intention to delimit; but point out that this study concerns ethical leadership, not moral leadership. Given the previous argument regarding etymological roots it might be reasonable to argue that as corollary, the constructs are also indistinguishable? However, research on moral leadership appears scant in comparison to that of ethical leadership. This raises further questions regarding scholarly difference and construct legitimacy. Given this, moral leadership will be considered a distinct construct, but the notions of ethics and morals open to interpretation.

As noted earlier, decision-making and ethical decision-making are highly important features of this study; the latter is titular. As the manifestation of

leadership they represent what is *seen* by others. Like Elm and Radin (2012) I contend that the literature is unhelpful and inconclusive. For instance, ethical decisions are considered distinct by several scholars (Butterfield *et al.*, 2000, Salvador and Folger, 2009, De Cremer *et al.*, 2011), with ethical decision-making notably different. However, I have elected to keep an open mind to allow for the possibility that decision-making and ethical decision-making could be simultaneously special and no different (see sections 5.4.1.4 and 2.5.1).

According to the title, this study concerned '*prominent leaders in not-for-profit organisations*'. The word prominent encapsulates the status of the sample. The leaders chosen were conspicuous in their professional contexts, some more so than others (see section 4.1.2, particularly Figure 1). They are typified as elite or specialised in accordance with the work of Dexter (1970, 2006) and Littig (2009) . The term, as it is used here, does not describe social class, nor does it ascribe privilege. It refers to possession of knowledge and experience beyond the ordinary (Pfadenhauer, 2009, Meuser and Nagel, 2009). Furthermore, the word elite has not been used in the title because I did not wish to affiliate this research with elite leadership (which appears to concern executive coaching), nor the type of leadership which is to do with elite sports.

The title also states that the research concerns not-for-profit organisations. Whilst I attend fully to the debates surrounding what constitutes *not-for-profit* in section 4.1.4, I feel it important to explain usage from the outset. For the purposes of this research the term comprises the military, religious institutions, educational establishments, the government and charities. This decision was made because several terms were used in the literature, for instance, *nonprofit*, *NGOs*, and the *public sector*. My overriding rationale was to make the distinction that these professional contexts were values-expressive (Jeavons, 2005); profit was not the primary goal. Although Morrell and Hartley (2006) and Gill (2011) offer further definitional distinctions, I did not feel it useful to adopt them. I was keen for the data to reveal understandings and intersectoral nuances, rather than impose others' definitions. Indeed, findings would hint at a host of interrelated personal

and organisational operating conditions, definitional issues would be of little concern (see sections 5.5.2.2 and 5.6.1).

1.5.2 Limitations and biases; acknowledging weaknesses

I also acknowledge that there are a variety of limitations and biases, which necessitate explanation in advance of the details of the study. Of principal concern was sample validity. Indeed, the research design originally included a further ten respondents from different hierarchies in the studied sectors (five US and five UK). Additional respondents are thought to strengthen validity and reliability, offering further means of triangulation. But I had questions regarding the representativeness of this particular sample set. Firstly, I had difficulty finding direct followers, and of the five I interviewed in the USA, only two were *direct reports* (Charity Head-USA and Headmaster-USA). Whilst the remainder were in the same sectors as the corresponding leader, they were not specialists like their leader counterparts.

Had I used the follower data I would be assuming that the *followers* had witnessed the leaders in question carrying out their full range of leadership activities, and secondly that followers were familiar with the topic of this study. Hunter *et al.* (2007) admonish leadership scholars for assumptive research, which uses followers to corroborate leaders. Den Hartog (2015) and Voegtlin (2016) note that much of the knowledge in the field today is based upon the dyadic leader-follower relationship and rarely concerns perceptions and intentions, or wider ethical implications. As such, the use of the data did not sit well with me epistemologically, or ethically. How could I be sure that the *direct reports* were not using the interview as an opportunity to criticise their leader and/or their organisations? In light of the richness of the leader testimonies, in face of time constraints, and because the follower data did not add to the study, the five US interviews that I conducted remain unused (but securely stored). It is not in the scope of this project to examine this particular interface, although it is fully

recognised as an enterprise that could stem from this research. Moreover, had I included organisational others this would be an entirely different study.

In total, this research concerns ten leader interviews. I feel that the sample has validity, as will be outlined in section 4.1.3. It represents its own *sample universe* (Robinson, 2014). Baker and Edwards' (2012) debate concerning interview numbers is irrelevant here. I accept the collective views of Becker (2012) and Beitin (2012) in that the size was optimal and sufficient for this special study. As noted by Delaney (2007) and Cohen *et al.* (2011) it is the depth and scope of the interviews which render them highly significant. However, in light of there being only one opportunity to gather data, additional pressures regarding possible sampling errors were keenly felt by this researcher. Elite and specialised interviewing (Dexter, 2006) is unlike other interview techniques (as detailed in section 4.1.2), there would be little time to develop relationships (Kezar, 2003, Lilleker, 2003, Mikecz, 2012), nor would there be further opportunities to check meaning or validate transcripts. Whilst other measures to ensure the legitimacy, credibility and trustworthiness of the research were sought (see sections 4.2.2, 4.2.3, 4.2.4 and 6.1.8), it is arguably the presence of the sponsor/imprimatur, which initiated and sustained trust and reliability.

Close examination of *Appendix A – Sampling Frame* shows that there were three female and seven male leaders, this might suggest the possibility of examining gender differences. Given there was an imbalance in the numbers for comparison, and because this was not a gender study, difference was not sought in the data. It did appear, but not sufficiently to add to the scholarly debate. I do however, recognise gender as a limitation in regards to *positionality*, and *power* (see 4.1.8). Josselson (2013) warns that female interviewers may experience difficulties with male interviewees. Although I could attribute an uncomfortable interview to gender issues (see page 139), I suspect that I had chosen what Gläser and Laudel (2009) describe as a *bad expert*. Conversely, and of more concern was over-friendliness, a relaxed and trusting interviewee might be indiscreet. Because

the interviewer presents as the status subordinate, measures to initiate and maintain professional boundaries, although challenging, were fully attended to.

Bias is also a legitimate concern in interpretive, qualitative research. Whilst the mitigation of respondent and researcher bias is accounted for below and in sections 4.2.2 and 4.2.3, it is important to foreground and acknowledge researcher information, which might have potential to influence the study. I am confident to disclose that I am Christian and the wife of an army officer. Whilst this may mean that I have preferences which could inhibit impartial judgment (Lichtman, 2013), it also suggests that I have no intentions of eliminating or discounting presuppositions concerning myself, which could weaken my study. It might be reasonable to suggest that I might favour the military, religious or even female respondents. Moreover, as an educationalist I might also favour the educational leaders. Whilst there can be no guarantees that data has not been subconsciously affected, I accept Platt's (2012) view that as a researcher I cannot play 'a detached role while expecting the other party to reveal the self' (p20). Therefore, a deliberate approach underpinned by a strong research ethic was considered sufficient to counteract.

1.6 Ethical considerations, researcher stance and reflexivity

Williams (2010) contends that, since 'research is not only about something or someone, but *for* someone… this renders it morally vulnerable' (p256). Israel (2015) discusses the frustrations experienced by social scientists, noting that the tension between compliance and commitment to ethical conduct is tangible. If the consensus is that regulatory frameworks and ethics form filling do not guarantee good and virtuous researcher behaviour, then research integrity must extend to what occurs when no one else is watching. My intentions were to increase the sum of the good, assure trust, and behave with integrity. I believe I achieved this by satisfying organisational and professional demands, whilst also anticipating and responding to ethical challenges as they presented themselves (Israel, 2015). As

will be seen, the ethical credentials of this study were further upheld by balancing the 'pursuit of truth, and... subjects' rights and values' (Cohen *et al.*, 2011, p75).

Macfarlane (2010) advocates for 'a way of thinking and writing about research ethics that breaks the dominance of principalism' (p23) and claims that 'real research ethics... has nothing to do with seeking ethical approval' (p23). Informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity are the hallmarks of ethically salient research. But it is arguably the spirit in which these measures are carried out and researcher conduct relating to the dignity of the participant, which signifies ethicality. Measures taken here ranged from formal (explicit) standards of ethical research conduct, to informal (implicit) considerations, and encompassed everything in between. Consideration was made prior to conducting the study, at the beginning, during data collection (see section 4.2), analysis (see section 4.2.4) and reporting (see section 4.2.1), in addition to issues relating to the publishing of the study (Creswell, 2013). All formal University of Worcester procedures and those of the British Educational Research Association (2011) were followed in the first instance. Researcher responsibility during this study operated beyond guidance and governance frameworks. It was viewed as a personal and moral responsibility regarding autonomy and choice, wholly dependent upon the background, experience and personal values of the researcher. Consideration, attention and acknowledgment of researcher positionality were crucial factors during this research, principally in regards to the nature of the sample, and its acquisition; but latterly to do with the treatment of the data and reportage.

Whilst subjectivity is commonly viewed as problematic, and negative for researchers, this research celebrates its subjectivity by explicitly acknowledging the value-laden nature of the data. Complex meanings and understandings of the socially constructed world were teased from participants' views and experiences. Subjective meanings were negotiated and formed through interaction. There was 'a blatant sharing of identities and a common social positioning' (Davies and Dodd, 2002, p283). This work is unique and individual *because* of the research relationship. And although this could be considered a threat to moral legitimacy, I

adopted Wright's (2004) view, whereby subjectivity was considered a valuable asset to enhance quality and transparency. The research intention was to enlarge the scholarly picture, not begin with a set of assumptions and pre-conceived notions of the absolute truth (Creswell, 2009). I agree with Davies and Dodd (2002) who contend that 'knowledge can never be impartial, disinterested and value free' (p284). As such, my methodological approaches reflected a particular epistemological and ontological stance. This research stands in contrast to the *so-called* scientifically sound, extant quantitative leadership research field.

I also acknowledge that respondents do not hold static positions, and constructions 'are not mutually exclusive' (Foley, 2012, p310). Indeed, interviewees would also experience the constant negotiation of roles. My challenge was not only to keep a critical distance (Mikecz, 2012) but to also recognise assumptions or preconceived ideas about the person or narratives. I sought to notice, interact and ultimately understand 'the participants experience as fully as possible without judgment or interference' (Josselson, 2013, p29). I maintained my critical awareness to avoid 'getting sucked into a vortex of narcissism, pretentiousness and infinite regress' (Finlay and Gough, 2008, pxi, Finlay, 2012, p329). As such, a reflexive stance was adopted and applied as a research tactic.

1.7   Organisation of the thesis

Following this introduction, the thesis is organised into five further chapters. A critical and comprehensive literature review is provided to demonstrate my understandings regarding the current state of the leadership literature, but specifically how it interacts with ethics, decision-making and ethical decision-making. The literature review has been purposely structured to take into account and thus present key theoretical issues concerning the ethical dimensions of leadership, and its practice. Ontologies and epistemologies are challenged to reveal the shortcomings that are addressed later in the body of the research.

Chapter Three is a bridging chapter; it is both an extension of the literature review and support for the research design. I decided to include this mini chapter as a device to demonstrate the inherent issues in empirical studies. Because of the novel sample and method included in this study, it was important to precede my decisions with a comprehensive review of what others had done, and as corollary, what needed to be done here. Chapter Four concerns the research design, and sets up the mandate for the interview approach taken. It details sample selection, access, and how to conduct elite and specialised interviews, and also covers ethics more comprehensively. Chapter Four concludes by explaining the analytical activities and processes used to treat the data.

Chapter Five represents the findings as interpreted and is accompanied by the discussion. It is presented as a typology to reflect the nature of the data and to frame it in a manner which offers scholars and practitioners useful and actionable evidence to inform and support leadership practice. Raw data are woven through in support, and offer glimpses of the quality and richness of the leader testimonies. For the final chapter, I take a step back from the minutiae reported in the previous chapter, and re-marry the research aim and objectives with the data. Broad contributions are reported, and linked to the theoretical, and methodological gaps to provide an holistic picture of what it is like to lead ethically by those who see their leadership as a people orientated, ethical endeavour underpinned and motivated by concerns beyond themselves and their organisations.

In line with others (Plinio, 2009, Eisenbeiß, 2012, Den Hartog, 2015) I take the stand that current conceptions of ethical leadership are deliberately vague, and inadequate to explain the vagaries of leading ethically. This thesis is an exploitation of these weaknesses, and offers a reconceptualisation of ethical leadership to incorporate decision-making and ethical decision-making. I seek to present an holistic interpretation of leadership as envisioned by ethical individuals, *ergo* the leadership examined in this study is ethical.

Chapter Two - Theoretical precision, fusion and distinction

The aim of this chapter is to offer an overview of the current state of the leadership literature with specific reference to the interface with ethics. This chapter will encompass an examination of the evolution of thinking on leadership ethics, the historical development of the role of ethics and its function in decision-making in leadership. An exploration of competing ethical theoretical constructs and, as a corollary, an evaluation of the literature regarding leader ethical development/education is also provided. Definitions of leadership, ethics and ethical decision-making are debated in order to reveal the multifaceted ontologies at play. The review will show that no sole over-arching framework can fully explicate the complex, often-subjective truths and realities experienced by leaders. Decision-making and ethical decision-making models will be presented as static and counter-intuitive, only useful as post-hoc frameworks for understanding retrospective events. Whilst the literature is useful for collectively supporting the findings in Chapter Five, this review also highlights significant gaps and omissions.

It is organised purposefully as advised by Creswell (2009) to both support the research question and simultaneously underpin its validity, whilst also placing the study contextually within the literature. With this in mind, the review is presented as a chronology of leadership theories regarding the emergence of ethics. This is to allow for critical dialogue to ensue between historical, uncertain and fragmented conceptualisations. This approach seeks to, not only anchor the study, but also provide a firm basis for the advancement of ideas.

As mentioned earlier (see section 1.5.1), the term ethics has been used ambiguously and interchangeably with the term morals within the leadership literature, and this conceptual confusion warrants attention. As such, ethical leadership and other leadership constructs exhibiting an ethical dimension are compared and thus distinguished, and the ethical components of leadership similarly acknowledged. Leader behaviour, specifically decision-making is also

reviewed, and decision-making models scrutinised and evaluated in light of leader responses to ethical dilemmas and experiences in the wake of morally intense situations. Overall, the current ontologies and epistemologies are challenged, shortcomings reported to more accurately reflect the realities of ethical leadership and ethical decision-making. Moreover, the literature review addresses a further fundamental oversight, the debate regarding the development and education of ethical leaders.

2.1   The scope and organisation of the literature review

It is important to recognise that there are both theoretical and conceptual parameters to the study. Randolph (2009) considers the casting of the net 'as a critical step in conducting a review' (p4). Indeed, an organisational approach advocated by Hart (2001) and echoed by Randolph (2009) has been followed. Theoretical topics were scrutinised in relation to their historical and conceptual significance. Though Mertens (2009) recommends 'a researcher keeps an open mind throughout the literature review process' to enable the emergence of 'a more sophisticated and (often greatly) modified conceptual framework' (Mertens, 2009, p113), some boundaries had to be considered. The *coverage scenario* as described by Randolph (2009) is adopted here. It relates to both the criterion for inclusion and exclusion, and the selection of the literature sample. Work older than ten years is not otherwise included, unless a seminal or highly relevant text and written in the English language. Geographically, literatures were selected to reflect the research design, meaning a Western worldview was favoured due to differences in both Eastern philosophical and theoretical conceptions, although the latter are acknowledged.

Overall, the topic of ethical leadership straddles a variety of academic disciplines such psychology, business ethics, and political science. An initial examination of the literature at the intersection of leadership and ethics regarding these specific organisational contexts revealed considerable ambiguity. It would be fair to state that most of the not-for-profit sectors chosen for this study had

adapted their leadership theory from the general leadership literature. In summary, the literature examined and evaluated in this study was a purposive sample, chosen not only as 'central and pivotal articles' (Cooper, 1988, p109) but also to demonstrate what Boote and Beile (2005) describe as 'a thorough and sophisticated grasp of one's field of study... research that advances the collective understanding of important education issues' (p11). The literature review chapter begins by adopting a bird's eye view to fully appreciate the complexity at hand. It draws away from the intersections discussed earlier and repositions the lens above the field of leadership. The intention is to confirm that the ethical component of leadership is a crucial and important part of what leaders ought to be, and that to appreciate such processes and actions, we first need to understand what leadership is, and possibly what it is not.

2.2 The evolution of thinking on leadership; the implicit notion of ethics

According to Day and Antonakis (2012) 'leadership is one of social science's most examined phenomena…. easy to identify in practice' (p4-5). However as Rost (1991), Mendonca and Kanungo (2007), Bass and Bass (2009) and Palmer (2009) stress, it has been defined and conceptualised in many, sometimes arbitrary, and subjective ways. Washbush (2005) emphasises the scholarly dysfunction by claiming that the 'myth of leadership' (p1079) is in fact self-serving and confusing, and suffers from the problem of semantics. He joins a set of leadership scholars such as Ciulla (2002) and Carroll (2005) who question whether there is such a thing as leadership. Although Kort (2008) concurs, she adds that the term leadership has been simply defined and that only a refinement is warranted. For Ciulla (2002) it is 'about one person getting other people to do something' (p340); a view reflected in later representations regarding the 'process of influence' (Kort, 2008, Northouse, 2010, Day and Antonakis, 2012, Yukl, 2013). Indeed, it is the common denominator in most leadership classifications and is thus typified in Yukl's (2013, p7) definition:

> *'Leadership is a process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives'.*

However the above definition, although widely accepted, appears deficient. According to Jago (1982) , who commented on similar earlier manifestations of the definition, scholars could quite easily be describing and proscribing unethical leadership. This ambiguity means 'we are all free to define the term to suit our own needs' (Washbush, 2005, p1079).

Yukl's (2013) definition highlights the role of influencing, but surely leadership is not merely concerned about the direction and facilitation of organisational goals? It is also about being responsible for instituting standards of ethical conduct and moral values that in turn guide the behaviour of others (Gini, 2004, Grojean *et al.*, 2004); a crucial distinction. According to Kort (2008) , who quotes Ciulla (1998) , any definition of leadership should centre on 'how people lead (or how people should lead)' (p11). Therefore, further recognition of the importance of the normative components of leadership is needed. Indeed, many *good* or *great*, effective leaders have succeeded through actions and behaviour that could easily be considered 'reprehensible from the standpoint of ethics' (Kort, 2008, p412). Early leadership constructs are remiss in clarifying the important role that ethics plays, when it would seem that effective leaders could be tangentially good or great, and unethical.

2.2.1 *'Great men', trait and behavioural understandings of leadership*

At the turn of the twentieth century, history was being shaped through the lens of what Day and Antonakis (2012) describe as exceptional individuals. 'Great man' theory as popularised by Thomas Carlyle (1849) and Galton (1869) conceptualised leaders as those born to greatness, with 'great-making characteristics almost ready to hand' (Price, 2006, p65); heroic and male (Case *et al.*, 2011). But 'great man' theory has not stood the test of time (Price, 2006). Such theories have been superseded by 'trait-based' and behavioural theories of leadership, to explain

unique characterological elements. It would seem that leaders appeared to possess 'measurable and quantifiable property' 'in different amounts' (Jago, 1982, p316), which set them aside from others (Jago, 1982, Chemers, 2000). But, what exactly was being measured and how could scholars determine which specific characteristics were key to leader greatness?

According to scholars (Van Seters and Field, 1990, Chemers, 2000), Stogdill's (1948) prophetic statement remains unchallenged; no one trait has been identified as a universal predictor of leader effectiveness. Despite the never-ending lists of traits (Northouse, 2010), trait-based leadership theory remains in the lexicon of scientific leadership research because it is primarily concerned with the prediction of leader behaviour, although it is often added to later theories as explanatory variables (Van Seters and Field, 1990). Whilst it has enjoyed a 'long and checkered history' (Zaccaro, 2007, p6), certainly as the 'intellectual descendent' of 'great man theory' (Price, 2006, p65) it maintains some extant relevance (Dinh *et al.*, 2014); particularly if ethical leadership is about traits and needs (Brown and Treviño, 2006; De Hoogh and Den Hartog, 2008); albeit marginally (Den Hartog, 2015).

A closer inspection of trait-based leadership literature reveals several fundamentally limiting factors. As a predictive tool, traits have been shown to apply to short-term behaviour, with long-term consequences believed to be at the whim of more unstable traits (House and Aditya, 1997, Northouse, 2010). Trait-based leadership theory does not account for the moderating influence of situation (House and Aditya, 1997, Knights and O'Leary, 2006). Nor can it be considered a universal measure. Indeed, Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) noted that Stogdill (1948) had found that certain leaders (e.g. military) did not share traits with leaders from other professional settings. Furthermore, the absence of certain traits, or poor character could not fully explain ethical misconduct (Mihelič *et al.*, 2010). The theory was full of contradiction. It had some appeal, in that it might be able to distinguish leaders who were considered different, special or gifted. But this led to highly subjective determinations and interpretations (Northouse, 2010).

Since trait-based leadership theory provides 'minimal value to practicing leaders since most traits cannot be learned' (Van Seters and Field, 1990, p30) and replicative results have proven elusive (House and Aditya, 1997), leadership scholars have turned their attention towards theories that might reasonably absorb such shortcomings.

These early theoretical disappointments and failures (Jago, 1982, House and Aditya, 1997, Chemers, 2000, Day and Antonakis, 2012) shifted focus onto the diverse concept of leader behaviour, namely, the acts of leadership. However, clarity would elude the field once more. The research, according to Yukl (2013) produced 'a bewildering variety of behavior concepts… with divergent taxonomies' (p49). Theories of behavioural style leadership as described by Tseng *et al.* (2010) were concerned with behaviour patterns, and according to House and Aditya (1997) were largely inductive and lacked theoretical orientation (p420). As with trait theory, behavioural leadership theory could not encompass the dispositions and role demands of leaders, nor could it reflect the contexts within which leaders operated (House and Aditya, 1997). Overall, implicit normative leadership theories were vague on actualities, and although Chemers (2000) singles out dominance, assertiveness, intelligence, physical stature, and social sensitivity as stereotypical leadership traits, they are qualities not immediately associated with *good* or *great* leadership, or even *ethical* leadership for that matter.

2.2.2 The emergence of situation and contingency on leadership thinking

According to Jago (1982) and more recently Horner (1997) , leadership style was dynamic and ever-changing, no single approach might consistently produce better results (Gill, 2011). The process of leadership was complex and situation specific, as already intimated, each variable contingent upon the next. However, there were those (Fiedler, 1964, 1967, Fiedler and Garcia, 1987) whose work appeared to account for variation. Scholars (House, 1971, Vroom and Yetton, 1973, Fiedler, 1978) proposed a prototypical contingency theory of leadership as a dynamic reflection of how the leader and the organisation interacted. Leader behaviour was considered the independent variable, leader effectiveness the dependent variable,

with unchangeable conditions of operation as situational variables (Yukl, 2013). Whilst Gill (2011) asserts that effective leaders were capable of modifying leadership style to account for the situation, regardless of past success, Yukl (2013) warned that rapidly changing, complex contexts meant that leaders just did whatever worked, regardless of the situation.

But conceptions of contingency theory also fell short of either identifying the more desirable variables for effective leadership (Knights and O'Leary, 2006, Yukl, 2013), or providing the necessary understandings regarding those all-important situational variables (Northouse, 2010). Despite myriad conceptual weaknesses contingency leadership theory, and its cumulative contribution to the leadership field (House and Aditya, 1997) cannot be ignored (Ayman and Adams, 2012). It serves 'to remind leaders that it is essential to monitor changes in the situation and adjust their behavior in appropriate ways' (Yukl, 2013, p176). As a result scholars began to refocus on *patterns* of leader behaviour, their interconnections and as corollary, how leadership might be shaped by little known contextual factors (Eisenbeiß and Giessner, 2012, Yukl, 2013). As such, newer leadership theories (Avolio *et al.*, 2009a), or *new-genre theories* (Bryman, 1993, 1999) began to emerge in the 1970s and 1980s.

Of these, charismatic (House, 1976) and transformational leadership (Burns, 1978, Bass, 1985) became two of the most popular. According to Grojean *et al.* (2004) researchers moved beyond transactional approaches to leadership and began to focus on 'visionary, inspirational messages; emotional feelings; ideological and moral values; individualized attention; and intellectual stimulation' (Avolio *et al.*, 2009b, p428). The focus was on positive personal qualities, particularly, how a leader's conduct and character might influence followers' attitudes, behaviours and performance. House and Aditya (1997) claimed that charismatic leadership appeared to be both 'personalized (self-aggrandizing, exploitative, authoritarian) *and* socialized (altruistic, collectively orientated, and egalitarian)' (p441). It was simultaneously egotistical and altruistic (House and Howell, 1992, Grojean *et al.*, 2004). For Lindholm (1990) it was socially

undesirable and destructive. Given that Lord (2000) felt that it was dependent upon both the 'qualities of leaders and the willingness to respond to these attributes by subordinates' (p503), charismatic leadership might also be seen to induce and encourage unethical behaviour in followers (Grojean *et al.*, 2004).

Indeed extant research into the *dark side of charismatic leadership* (Conger and Kanungo, 1998) reminds us of those earlier warnings regarding the self-serving and destructive behaviours which undermine the legitimate interests of the organisation (Howell and Avolio, 1992, O'Connor *et al.*, 1995, Fogarty, 2010). Charismatic leaders could be seen as impulsive, unconventional, and prone to making riskier decisions (House and Aditya, 1997), introducing instability and uncertainty (House and Howell, 1992). It was as Ciulla (1995) summarised, both 'the best and the worst kind of leadership depending on whether you were looking at a Gandhi or a Charles Manson' (p16). Burns (2003) agreed, charismatic authority could appear confusing and undemocratic, a type of tyranny. Indeed, Dion (2012) believed that only specific conditions allowed charisma to emerge (crises). As such, charisma was 'rare and transitory' as Yukl (2013) described (p321). Whilst, charismatic leaders could shape organisational values, they did not always endure; charisma was short-term (Ciulla, 1999).

However, for others it was 'magical', 'an emotional bond', 'powerful, omniscient, and virtuous' (Hackett and Wang, 2012, p881). According to Howell and Avolio (1992) charismatic leaders had moral standards that emphasised the collective interests of all in the organisation. These leaders were described as *ethical charismatics*, individuals who, among a range of other hallmarks were driven by a vision of 'doing what's right' (Howell and Avolio, 1992, p44). They possessed and demonstrated the virtues of courage, fairness, and integrity. According to House (1976) charismatic leadership had the capacity to take moral righteousness and role modelling into account, and it could allow for those all-important situational influences. However, leaders were only really considered ethically charismatic if they created 'transformations in their organisations' which members would follow (Howell and Avolio, 1992, p52). If the views of Howell and

Avolio (1992) are accepted, then *ethical* charisma could be considered a dimension of *transformational leadership* (Ciulla, 1995, Lord, 2000, p503). Whereby the leader possessed the ability to transform followers' values through the creation of a sense of importance for, and willingness to, carry out organisational tasks rather than just compliance through self-interest. Leaders and followers transformed each other into moral agents (Dvir and Shamir, 2003, Dansereau *et al.*, 2013); they experienced a mutual raising of morality (Burns, 1978, Northouse, 2010, Van Wart, 2014). This *idealised influence* (Yammarino, 1993, Lord, 2000, Zhu *et al.*, 2015) represents a 'higher-level exchange involving emotions and values' (Northouse, 2010, Yukl, 2013, p321).

2.2.3   Progression from implicit to explicit; the reemergence of ethics

Does this represent a growing recognition that newer leadership theories, namely transformational leadership (Burns, 1978, Bass, 1985) might better account for the emotional and value laden components of leadership (Hannah *et al.*, 2014)? Certainly, the ethical dimensions of transformational leadership have more recently been recognised by a raft of scholars (Price, 2006, Brown and Treviño, 2006, Armstrong and Muenjohn, 2008, Zhu *et al.*, 2011, Kalshoven *et al.*, 2011b, Zhu *et al.*, 2015). They built on early work by Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) who claimed that transformational leaders had solid moral underpinnings. Ciulla (2004) agreed, she described Burns' (1978) original conception of transformational leadership as morally *good* leadership by those with very strong values. Simola *et al.* (2010) echoed the earlier sentiments of Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) and added that 'ethical issues have salience to the transformational leadership construct as a whole' (Simola *et al.*, 2010, p181).

Although Brown and Treviño (2006) and van Aswegen and Engelbrecht (2009) also argue that transformational leadership behaviours correspond with ethical behaviour, they, along with Giessner and van Quaquebeke (2010) warn that this does not guarantee a leader's moral propensity. A leader could be 'villainous or virtuous depending on their values' (Bass and Steidlmeier, 1999, p186). Indeed,

leadership influence may involve, to some extent, manipulation (Greenleaf, 1977, Ciulla, 1995); the conflict between deontological agency and behaviour (Price, 2006). If transformational leaders do not pay attention to the 'means', the 'ends' become corrupted (Ciulla, 1995), and the leadership is diminished (Hannah *et al.*, 2014). As such, transformational leadership appears more focused on the aspects and processes of change rather than on individuals (Van Wart, 2014). Price (2006) concludes that 'transformational leadership can be morally troubling regardless of whether the leaders who exercise it are true to their better selves' (p125). I agree with Den Hartog (2015) and Zhu *et al.* (2015) in that transformational leadership and ethical leadership cannot be wholly aligned.

As can be seen, scholars (Bass and Steidlmeier, 1999, Brown *et al.*, 2005) began to realise that they would need to enhance the transformational leadership construct by adopting a small conceptual distinction to reflect a more positive slant. *Authentic transformational leadership* (Bass and Steidlmeier, 1999) was created and represented a hybrid or conversion of pathways (Antonakis *et al.*, 2004b) to contrast with constructs such as unethical leadership (Brown and Mitchell, 2010) or pseudo-transformational leadership (Bass and Steidlmeier, 1999). The latter was typified by self-concern, exploitative, and power orientated behaviours (Zhu *et al.*, 2015). Similarly to Gill (2011) I question whether this change only superficially addressed what Treviño *et al.* (2014) called the ethical components of leadership. Price (2003) argues that although Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) attempt to link authenticity positively to values, there are still several problems. For leadership to be morally legitimate the values need to be altruistic in nature. In addition, authentic transformational leaders may have a distorted perception of 'other-regarding values...' (Price, 2006, p137-138). Indeed, Mumford and Fried (2014) warn scholars about making assumptions about follower needs. By shifting the focus to an ideological preoccupation with subordinate motivation critical issues such as ethical questioning and cultural conditionings in leadership risk being overlooked (Dion, 2012).

If, according to Burns (2003) 'bad leadership, implies no leadership' (p2), then the question is not 'what is leadership' or even morally legitimate leadership, but 'what is good leadership' or 'morally good and effective' leadership (Ciulla, 1998, p18)? Clarifications must be sought, as conceptions and definitions thus far have treated the ethical components of leadership as secondary, or background considerations; appendages to already established theoretical frameworks (Morrell and Hartley, 2006, Mayer *et al.*, 2009). Although, traditional leadership theories may have simultaneously complicated and advanced our understandings (House and Aditya, 1997) they still do not measure well against conceptions of ethical leadership (Van Wart, 2014). The primary fixation regarding personality variables and personal attributes remains (Zaccaro, 2007). We must determine not only what is ethically distinctive (Ciulla, 2005), but also identify and share practices which can meet the ethical challenges of the future (Rost, 1995). If 'normative theories of leadership such as transforming leadership…are not well developed in terms of their philosophic implications' then, 'they need more analysis as ethical theories…' (Ciulla, 1995, p17). If ethics is central to leadership, and detrimentally underplayed in leadership research as Ciulla (1998) and Wicks and Freeman (1998) suggest; taken with the evidence presented here, there needs to be fundamental change to foreground ethics.

2.3 *Defining a more explicit notion of ethics*

Scholarly interest in ethics as an *explicit* feature of leadership has increased as public confidence in political and corporate leaders has declined (Palmer, 2009, Yukl, 2013). Ciulla (1995) notes that 'the more defective our leaders are, the greater our longing to have highly ethical leaders' (p5). Certainly, ethics in leadership is not a new concept, and has been debated for centuries (Ciulla and Forsyth, 2011). Burns (1978) , and more recently Rost (1995) and Ciulla (1995) have recognised the multi-disciplinary nature of leadership, its constant and explicit relationship with ethics, and have thus intensified their analysis of ethical leadership (Ciulla and Forsyth, 2011).

For Rost (1995) and Treviño and Brown (2004) defining the notion of ethics is complex. For Ciulla (1995) ethics is not without effort, and for Plinio (2009) ethics is as individual as ethical questions can be. Millar and Poole (2011b) contend that ethical leadership is 'a mysterious, somewhat magical intangible for many academics and executives' (p2) in a leadership field described by Sankar (2003) as 'a thickly tangled web, where notions of values, ethics and morality have been leeched away, ignored, or depreciated as irrelevant' (p45). The ethics of leadership requires urgent contemporaneous scholarly attention (Rost, 1995, Millar and Poole, 2011b). But Levine and Boaks (2014) urge caution; if extant literature is misleading and self-perpetuating, then we need to 'ground this connection between leadership and ethics in a way that is not merely stipulative' (p227).

2.3.1 Definitional ambiguity

An examination of the literature regarding the definition of ethics harvests similar results to that of leadership. The only thing scholars can agree on regarding ethics in leadership is that there is little agreement. For a researcher this is both a blessing and a curse. The literature is fragmented (Ciulla, 1995), makes no sense (Rost, 1995), and is still in its infancy (Northouse, 2010). However, it is conditions such as these which offer scholars fresh opportunity to objectively assess the work that has gone before and provide a sound basis for the scholarly advancement proposed by Rost (1995) and more recently, Millar and Poole (2011b) . There is no doubt that there is a pressing *need* for ethical leadership in organisations (Kanungo and Mendonca, 1996, Mendonca and Kanungo, 2007). Less clear, are the understandings regarding ethics (Langlois, 2011). Dion (2012) notes that scholars take diametric approaches, some 'do not try to elaborate a philosophical link between ethical theories and ethical leadership' and others 'try to combine different ethical theories within the same leadership approach' (p4). The likelihood of establishing the superiority of one moral theory over another is highly improbable, since no perspective 'can be considered a complete account of ethical behaviour' (Crossan *et al.*, 2013, p569).

Ethics sits precariously in the leadership literature according to Brown and Mitchell (2010) and Donaldson and Dunfee (1994) . Definitions are truncated into normative (Bass and Steidlemeier, 1999; Ciulla, 2005; Northouse, 2010) (prescriptive), or social-scientific (Treviño, Hartman and Brown, 2000; Treviño, Brown and Hartman, 2003; Brown, Treviño and Harrison, 2005; Brown and Treviño, 2006) (descriptive), and are further characterised by Donaldson and Dunfee (1994) as the 'ought' and the 'is' (p253). Both approaches have spawned a wealth of normative and empirical research simultaneously remaining 'at a respectful distance from each other' (p254), whilst also demonstrating significant shortcomings. Indeed, the popular philosophical approaches as noted by Ciulla (1995) are 'frequently (and understandably) ignored or rejected' appearing 'obtuse and irrelevant' (p6) to both research and practice. However, preference for a socially scientific, largely positivist lens rooted in popular psychology, business and political science has not advanced the field either. Predictive tools to assess and measure the ethicality of potential leaders have done little to enlighten practical understanding of ethics *in situ*. According to Northouse (2010) this impasse simply sustains a community of researchers, or rather 'the writings of just a few people who have written texts that are strongly influenced by their personal opinions about the nature of leadership ethics and their view of the world' (Northouse, 2010, p394) at the expense of explicating leadership (Ciulla, 1995, Palmer, 2009). Wilson and McCalman (2017) go further still, and admonish the field for producing conceptual dead ends, and using familiar methodologies instead of asking the 'big' ethical questions (p151).

2.3.2 Reconciling the traditional notions of ethics and morals

Traditionally, ethics can be stylised as the whole domain of morality and moral philosophy, where morality governs certain customs, precepts and the practices of people and cultures. Moral philosophy is concerned with the philosophical or theoretical reflections on morality, and thus ethical theories are the specific moral theories issuing from such philosophical reflection (Pojman and Tramel, 2009). Ethics theoretically evaluates moral and immoral behaviour and establishes rules

that govern behaviour. It can be viewed from two prominent standpoints, the leaders' conduct (action) and character (virtues-based) (Northouse, 2010, Van Wart, 2014). The only real consensus regarding ethics in leadership is that it is most notably a normative issue (Giessner and van Quaquebeke, 2010), i.e. behavioural, resides in the conceptual realm occupied by moral principles and ethical considerations (Mendonca and Kanungo, 2007) stemming from moral philosophy (O'Fallon and Butterfield, 2005).

Unfortunately, an examination of the leadership literature shows that the terms ethics and morals have been used interchangeably by the majority of scholars (Jeannot, 1989, Winkler and Coombs, 1993, Knights and O'Leary, 2006, Maguad and Krone, 2009, Riggio *et al.*, 2010, Ciulla and Forsyth, 2011, Langlois, 2011, Johnson, 2012, Eisenbeiß, 2012). Ciulla and Forsyth (2011) contend that the perceived differences are just semantic, but others claim that etymological roots are different (Langlois, 2011). Sadly, when distinctions are drawn 'both scholars and ordinary people...rarely make it in the same way' (Ciulla and Forsyth, 2011, p230). For example, Strike (2007) described ethics as 'what is good' and morality as concerning 'what is right' (p9), warning that when ethics 'collapses into morality, the tendency is to disconnect morality from the nature of good communities and their goals and ideals' (p11). For Pojman and Tramel (2009) morality *is* said to aim at the good. Although good may be required for leadership, it isn't considered enough on its own (Hannah *et al.*, 2014, p604).

Because scholars have used terms interchangeably, several key issues have emerged in the literature. Despite apparent distinctions regarding the related constructs, there is still much confusion. For instance, Hackett and Wang (2012) claim that the ethical leadership and moral leadership exhibit specific differences (Storr, 2004, Hanson, 2006). Ciulla (1998) and Aronson (2001) state that ethical leadership is good leadership, that is 'morally good and effective' (Ciulla, 1998, p18). Gini (1998) holds that all leadership is moral leadership, both good and bad. To further confuse, the ethical leader has also been described as both moral person and moral manager (Treviño *et al.*, 2000, p128, Brown and Treviño, 2006). If it has

been impossible to disentangle the definitions, and how terms had been used, then this might reasonably extend to the constructs themselves? To offer parity with extant scholarly interpretations regarding philosophical origins, this research reflects the views of Ciulla and Forsyth (2011) in that the singular terms (ethics and morals) should not be used selectively in leadership research. Although what constitutes ethical leadership and moral leadership are ripe for clarification, this is not likely to be achieved through semantic means.

2.3.3 Situating normative ethics explicitly; leader conduct and consequentialism

Normative ethical theories are concerned with how one *should* behave, falling into consequentialist (teleological) and non-consequentialist (deontological) theories, or the conduct domain. The other broad area being character (Northouse, 2010). Consequentialism suggests that moral rightness is determined solely by outcomes or results. If the consequence is good, then the act is good, and vice versa. The two most important theories are: *egotistic hedonism or ethical egoism* (Mendonca and Kanungo, 2007) and *utilitarianism* (Knights and O'Leary, 2006, Northouse, 2010, Dion, 2012). The former is concerned when the act promotes the individual's best interests, meaning that all organisational members including the leader are motivated purely by self-interest (Knights and O'Leary, 2006, Dion, 2012). The latter is when the act maximizes pleasure for the greatest number of people, with minimum social cost. Although Ciulla (2005) regards this an essential part of a leader's decision-making mandate, and Dion (2012) contends that this is not an easy principle to apply in reality, Resick *et al.* (2006) feel that it deserves to be considered in defining ethical leadership.

That said, Donaldson and Dunfee (1994) and more recently Duignan (2006) claim that these theories are inadequate as frameworks to accurately reflect the complex, situation specific problems, encountered by leaders. Bauman (2011) discounts them completely, his accusation being that utilitarianism requires leader impartiality, and that this is impossible when the needs of a variety of stakeholders require consideration. Although this viewpoint is shared by Price (2008) , Duignan

(2006) also argues that as a solitary approach, it is not 'particularly concerned with the question of rights' (p81). Minorities could be disenfranchised or suffer for the sake of the majority (Knights and O'Leary, 2006) resulting in issues regarding leader power and self-interest. Dion (2012) notes that it is almost impossible to take into consideration the rights of all, especially 'the impact on millions of people, in various countries' (p11). Compounding these shortcomings, Johnson (2012) noted that biases could creep into decision-making if consequences were direct, and that because it is difficult to identify and evaluate 'potential costs and benefits, utilitarian decision makers sometimes reach different conclusions when faced with the same dilemma' (p156). On review, the approach appears to lack consistency, and when applied is much more complex than it appears. Real scrutiny reveals that in attempting to maximize the pleasure for/of all, one is assuming that all pleasure is in fact, equal.

2.3.4 The leader's moral obligation; rationality and universality

In the literature scholars juxtapose consequentialist theories with non-consequentialist theories, or deontological theories. Here the focus is not upon the consequence of the action but the duty or obligation of the leader. This approach to ethics incorporates the primary ideas of Kant (1724-1804), specifically his much-debated Categorical Imperative (universal law). Here we find that the basis of morality extends from *pure reason* and its application influences the process of ethical decision-making; the duty to act is independent of the outcome. Rationality and reason are valued over pleasure (Knights and O'Leary, 2006), and as Dion (2012) contends, 'the categorical imperative unconditionally requires a given behavior, without taking circumstances into account' (p13). This transfers to actions such as keeping a promise or remaining consistent, upholding the value of humanity (Resick *et al.*, 2006, Bauman, 2011). It is, however, considered by some to be a flawed theory (Solomon, 1993), and does not allow for events where duty can be over-ridden (Pojman and Tramel, 2009). Knights and O'Leary (2006) also claim that it 'separates the ethics of the act from the ethics of the agent and focuses on the act to the neglect of the agent' (p130).

However, Bowie (2000) argues that Kantian theory can provide the tools to construct a positive theory of leadership. Resick *et al.* (2006) believe it 'is embodied in the entire notion of ethical leadership...' (p348). In organisational terms it is about setting the ethical precedent (Ciulla and Forsyth, 2011), by enforcing ethical codes of conduct. However, the imposing of ethical codes in response to ethical dilemmas has been found singularly unsuccessful (Iltis, 2001, Treviño and Brown, 2004, Frisch and Huppenbauer, 2014) and wanting in practice (Bauman, 2011). Moreover, they are not the most effective way to promote integrity and moral awareness (Ludwig and Longenecker, 1993, De Cremer *et al.*, 2010b). Price (2000) claims that *ethically fallen* leaders knew exactly what they were doing, and that it was wrong, but did it anyway. Knights and O'Leary (2006) contend that 'it is difficult to see how rules and obligations can ever account for, or dispense with the need for continuous deliberations about the complexity of moral life' (p130). They lacked the necessary flexibility to mirror changes in organisational climate and culture.

This raises an important question regarding whether it is ever acceptable to break rules? According to Price (2008) rule breaking can be accommodated *if* the individual *is*, and can demonstrate that they are 'special' or if there is a higher-order (prima facie) duty. Whilst being 'special' resonates with historical understandings of leadership, especially *great man* theory, it also raises questions regarding *who* is special. How can we distinguish whether someone has moral superiority (Price, 2008), or judge which moral obligation can override another? Ciulla (2005) contends that leaders are no different from others in relation to moral standards. Our fixation regarding 'the personal morality of leaders may cause us to expect too much of them' (Palmer, 2009, p530). Leaders are 'fallible human beings who are prone to all of the same moral mistakes...we should not require moral perfection from them' (Palmer, 2009, p530).

More recently Dierksmeier (2013) has begun to challenge thinking regarding the 'over formulistic', 'narrow' view of Kant as 'a purely deontological thinker' (p597). He claims that scholars and business ethicists should consider

Kant as a source, not as 'a kind of disease in ethics' (Solomon, 1993, p208). To see only universalism, and deontology is to ignore his earlier work regarding ethics and morals within *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785). Dierksmeier (2013) argues for a recalibration between duty and virtue, a move away from the negative presentations of the Kantian theory of leadership (Bowie, 2000), where *Kantian moral theory* can reflect the more autonomous aspects of leadership. This is a view shared, in part by Levine and Boaks (2014) , who argue that in order to become a standalone framework, leadership would need to be connected 'theoretically and practically, in the right kind of relationship with human flourishing' (p238). How this might be achieved remains a unexplored territory (Levine and Boaks, 2014). Thus, a purely Kantian theory of leadership ethics remains resolutely on the sidelines.

2.3.5 Virtues, values, and moral character

Amongst the various western normative approaches virtue ethics is the oldest and based upon ancient Greek philosophy according to Bai and Morris (2014) . It traditionally concerns the teachings of Plato and Aristotle (Crossan *et al.*, 2013) and considered part of the *character domain* (Plinio, 2009, Northouse, 2010). Virtue ethics is, in essence the practice of virtue theory, which according to Price (2008) includes moral traits, the possession of good moral character, and is summarised by Whetstone (2005) as involving 'moral excellences and the absence, or at least suppression, of vices' (p368). Plinio (2009) and Northouse (2010) also claim that virtues correlate with the notions of leader disposition, or personal behaviour. According to Whetstone (2005) and Knights and O'Leary (2006) this ethical system is centred on the *agent,* and their judgment (Crossan *et al.*, 2013). Virtue ethics concerns those with 'high moral character' making 'good moral choices' (Johnson, 2012, p80).

Bright *et al.* (2014) offer a more comprehensive understanding of virtues; they detail five oft-cited assumptions, which have been summarised from their work below. The following constitutes most theories, whereby:

1. Virtue is a deep property of a person that defines human goodness.
2. Virtue is a capacity that a person can develop.
3. Virtue practices manifest through particular virtues, and flow from the person who has virtuous character.
4. Virtue always includes some degree of attentiveness to context and circumstance.
5. Virtue generally produces good outcomes.

Bright *et al.* (2014) note that social scientists diverge in their interpretation of virtue theory and virtue ethics. They argue that positivist psychologists have focused on definitions and the measurement of character, resulting in 'a trait-based account of character' (p449). Those who identify with positive organisational scholarship, instead consider the 'nature of virtue' (p449) associating virtuousness with virtuous action, and its perpetuation. Indeed, close examination of the leadership literature regarding virtue ethics transforms this underlying debate into polarised discussions regarding virtues, values and personality or character traits (Moore, 2005, Hackett and Wang, 2012). Grojean *et al.* (2004) opt for a description which belongs in the realm of social psychology. They contend that values are modes of behaviour, end states, or cognitive structures. This is a view shared by Wright and Quick (2011) whereby values are similarly untied to a particular moral code or standard.

Whilst Ciulla and Forsyth (2011) claim that virtues are separate from values and traits, Crossan *et al.* (2013) are unclear. Not only do they claim that virtues 'intrinsically *carry* value' but they also claim them to be 'demographic characteristics or other conceptualisations of personality traits' (Crossan *et al.*, 2013, p571). Virtues are thought to be reflective of the 'state of human character', and 'present to some degree at birth, though they can be acquired through education, self-learning and repetitive practice until their expression becomes habitual' (Hackett and Wang, 2012, p870). Indeed, Crossan *et al.* (2013) believe that when scholars speak of virtues they are in fact referring to the 'virtuous mean' (p570). This view resonates with many authors (Mintz, 1996, Duignan, 2006, Ciulla

and Forsyth, 2011, Levine and Boaks, 2014) who adopt the view that virtues are the optimal, desirable state between excess and deficiency. And according to Bright *et al.* (2014) , represent a point on a continuum where deliberation and judgment can be refined. For Riggio *et al.* (2010) virtues are 'characterological elements' which align with actions (Mihelič *et al.*, 2010) that enable us to live up to our values (Moore, 2005). The continuing semantic debate has been summarised by Hackett and Wang (2012) where most scholars just ignore the issue and attempt their own conceptions. Since terminology is used interchangeably or inappropriately, it makes it difficult to differentiate conceptual meanings and to find consensus.

Despite these problems, the virtue ethics approach is experiencing resurgence among certain leadership scholars (Whetstone, 2001, Hackett and Wang, 2012, McPherson, 2013). Some studies used the works of and Philippa Foot (1978, 2001) and Alasdair MacIntyre (2007). According to Whetstone (2005) the former concerns the connections between *eudemonia* (put simply, the notion of goodness or happiness) and virtue. Thus, as living things we may be defective or sound members of our species, whereby 'moral goodness' is considered a subclass of 'natural goodness' and that 'ways of life' are crucial for moral judgment (Cohen, 2010, p65). In a leadership context this could suggest that virtues could be cultivated or crushed in the crucible of leadership, upheld or abandoned due to the culture of the organisation. Indeed, Donaldson and Dunfee (1994) note that virtues are sensitive; that is 'understood differently from one culture to another' (p872). Whetstone (2005), Price (2008), Hackett and Wang (2012) and more recently Crossan *et al.* (2013) concur; specific social settings can reinforce virtuous or perhaps non-virtuous conduct.

For instance, Moore (2005) warns that capitalism erodes and effaces the concept of virtues, and according to MacIntyre (1968) provides the perfect conditions to develop 'the type of character that has a propensity to injustice' (pxiv). The pursuit of profit (as an *external good*) might well reinforce avarice in an individual (Moore, 2005), the system and vice versa. This notion has interesting

implications for the not-for-profit sector, whereby 'ways of life' (non pursuit of profit) might in fact better promote flourishing, i.e. striving toward achieving *excellence;* acting well. However, Beadle and Moore (2006) claim that MacIntyre makes no distinction between organisational type, suggesting that voluntary organisations are not exempt. They also drive for a desired *external good*. However, it is the tension between this and *internal goods* (aesthetic and intellectual stimulation derived from the exercise of the virtues), which mutually reinforces excellence. The profit motive is no different than that of any other *means*, and this preoccupation 'obscures rather than clarifies the underlying *ethos*…and the complex *telos'* (Solomon, 1993, p217). There is no 'business world', just people in business (Solomon, 1993, p219).

On review, Solomon's (1992) definition seems particularly apt, and appears to encompass and accommodate the contentious features of virtue theory, whereby virtues are:

> *'Both cultivated and maintained through dynamic interaction of individuals and groups in their environment and they in turn develop those virtues (and vices) that in turn motivate them to remain in the situations in which their virtues are supported, reinforced and not threatened' (p52).*

He suggests that virtues are moral qualities engendered only if they are practiced, and scholars concur (Riggio *et al.*, 2010, Ciulla and Forsyth, 2011, Ciulla, 2012, Hackett and Wang, 2012). Virtues are 'intentionally selected, deliberately strengthened, and behaviourally predictive' (Ciulla and Forsyth, 2011, p234). For McPherson (2013) they are habitual, and for others (Levine and Boaks, 2014, p230) a disposition, not a one off. So, which virtues are the most important to cultivate into a moral identity, and which merit what Price (2006) describes as higher ordering?

Kanungo and Mendonca (1996) and Riggio *et al.* (2010) advocate the cardinal virtues as the ethical framework for 'virtuous leadership' to address the weaknesses in the ethical leadership construct. Although Caldwell *et al.* (2015)

propose an Aristotelian approach, essential virtues are not discussed and they predicate their concept on *greatness*, rather than goodness. According to the literature, virtues are thought to stem from the Platonian and Aristotelian foundations of prudence (wisdom), justice, fortitude (courage) and temperance (moderation or self-control) (April *et al.*, 2011). Wisdom and prudence are considered intellectual (Duignan, 2006) and education-based, of a higher order than the others, which are moral and practice-based. However, where the intellectual virtues can be taught, the moral virtues must be lived to be learned (Pojman and Tramel, 2009), but not in a mindless fashion (Ciulla and Forsyth, 2011, Ciulla, 2012). Ethics is not without effort (Ciulla, 1995, Treviño and Brown, 2004), nor does it occur naturally (Wildermuth and Wildermuth, 2006). Common-sense and practical knowledge are inadequate to the task of making moral judgment (Ciulla, 1998).

2.3.6 Virtues in the organisational context; hierarchy and practice

Solomon (1993) also endorses an Aristotelian approach to business ethics. He outlines six 'ingredients': *community, excellence, role identity, holism, integrity and judgment*. On review of the literature, the most frequently mentioned was *integrity* (Solomon, 1993, Carlson and Perrewe, 1995, Treviño and Brown, 2004, Solomon, 2005, Resick *et al.*, 2006, Brown and Treviño, 2006, Kalshoven *et al.*, 2011b, Johnson, 2012, McPherson, 2013, Van Wart, 2014), with *honesty* a close second. For several integrity was considered a super-virtue, representing a synthesis of virtues (Pipkin, 2000) or *wholeness* (Solomon, 2005, p30). But despite its apparent holistic nature, Carlson and Perrewe (1995) and more recently Johnson (2012) found it necessary to supplement *integrity with justice*... then *courage, prudence, optimism, humility, reverence, and compassion*. Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) and Price (2006) argued along similar lines and teamed it with *honesty*. Eisenbeiß and Brodbeck (2014) also coupled *integrity* with *honesty,* but added *justice* to form the most common attributes or behaviours identified as hallmarks of ethical leadership. *Honesty* also featured in the work of Van Wart (2014) who added

trustworthiness, fairness, conscientiousness and prudence to their list of major emphases. Each study proposed a different cluster and hierarchy, and the list grew.

But, there were additional problems, whilst *integrity* could be considered a normative ideal (Palanski and Yammarino, 2009) both consistent and moral, it might also seem that the link between words and deeds would not always attend to the morality of the principles themselves. This conceptual blind spot was argued successfully by Ciulla (1998) who noted that Adolf Hitler was not only an effective leader but also one who had *integrity*. According to Solomon (2005) *integrity* could be overly idealistic, and may only really be tested in leaders when conditions demanded its exposure. Perhaps the virtuous leader was hiding in plain sight, only visible when a situation requiring the public display of virtues presented itself (Hackett and Wang, 2012)? Maybe as Price (2006) implied, it was the 'features of the of the situation' which were the behavioural stimuli 'not the character traits' themselves (p71).

Certainly, Price (2006) reminds us that 'experiments in social psychology teach us that many among the "virtuous" do not have the particular traits they think they have' (p71). He further argues that virtue theory has problematic implications; a leader might in fact hold inflated beliefs about their moral disposition; thinking themself beyond reproach. Price (2006) is unequivocal, 'leaders who are self-confident in the fact that they have superior motivation, knowledge and virtue are vulnerable to the mistaken belief that they are justified in making exceptions' (p73). For Johnson (2012) such faulty self-perceptions are a result of a lack of 'moral imagination – sensitivity to moral issues and options' (p55). Werhane *et al.* (2014) believed that self-deceit was a mechanism used to protect from negative self-revelation and that it represented the source of the 'what is morally amiss in our world' (p129). Leaders must take self-image into account to avoid ethical blindness; the gap between '*want* and *should*' must be reduced (Werhane *et al.*, 2014, p161).

An example of this mismatch is summarised by Riggio *et al.* (2010) who reported that 'some well-known religious and political leaders... railed against certain vices, but engaged in those same behaviours in private' (p236). This suggests that virtues must be practiced both in public and in private (Bowie, 2005). According to Johnson (2012) they need to be *woven into the inner life of leaders', 'persist over time',* to *'shape the way leaders see and behave', 'operate independently of the situation', but never abandoned; to 'help leaders live better lives'* (p80). In essence they ought to be vocational and holistic, practiced in pursuit of the 'good life for ourselves and others' (McPherson, 2013, p295). Although Palmer (2009) argues that ethical failures in a leader's personal life are not necessary failures in leadership, he also contends that when levels of tolerance are lowered it can lead to failure in other areas of life. Mostovicz *et al.* (2011) make the point that 'being fully ethical can only be aspirational... we cannot expect people who are imperfectly aware of their actions to act ethically in every situation' (p494). In fact 'no-one can be 100 per cent ethical 100 per cent of the time' (Wildermuth and Wildermuth, 2006). These statements challenge the very notion of the ethical leader. How perfect must one be to deserve the title (Palmer, 2009, Levine and Boaks, 2014) when 'we cannot expect every decision and action of a leader to be perfect' (Gini, 1998, p37)? How important is consistency in leader behaviour (in and out of the boardroom), and thus in decision-making?

2.3.7 Seeking epistemological clarity

A rudimentary glance at these normative theories reveals that they each have their limitations when it comes to applicability in modern organisational decision-making and as stand-alone frameworks for ethical leadership (Hackett and Wang, 2012, Crossan *et al.*, 2013, Van Wart, 2014). Badaracco (1997) asserts that 'each school of philosophy believes it has knockdown arguments against its adversaries, but none has vanquished the others. The debates are quite complex...but cast dim light on practical problems' (p37). Although Arjoon (2000) and Case *et al.* (2011) champion virtue theory as a comprehensive and powerful framework to revolutionise business conduct and provide 'the ultimate sustainable competitive

advantage' (Arjoon, 2000, p174), Beadle and Moore (2006) struggle with these internal arguments surrounding the drive for profit. Frameworks appear unable to accommodate the complex, ever-shifting, operational organisational boundaries of real-world ethical leadership (Northouse, 2010). Bauman (2011) adds further practical validity; noting that in crises virtue theory provides little guidance to a leader lacking in virtue.

Indeed, a growing number of scholars (Whetstone, 2001, Aronson, 2001, Zhu *et al.*, 2004, Whetstone, 2005, Ncube and Wasburn, 2006, Dion, 2012) have recognised the merits of what Johnson (2012) and Eisenbeiß (2012) describe as ethical pluralism, whereby many situations may have multiple *truths*. A meta-analysis of the literature (91 peer-reviewed articles from 10 respected journals) over a 10-year period from 1993 to 2003 relating to *ethics and leadership* reveals that scholars adopt a raft of approaches. McKee (2011) found that sixteen cited a virtue framework, nine used a deontological frame, and a further eleven were teleological, with a combined frame used by thirteen. The latter are becoming more common. For instance Whetstone (2005) , building on his earlier study (Whetstone, 2001) now proposes combining a virtue framework with deontological constraint and a teleological focus as a more fitting guide for applying normative ethical theories. Whilst this may appear to be an unnatural marriage, it is a credible complementary trinity which can more accurately reflect the complexity of organisational leadership *in situ*.

Ciulla and Forsyth (2011) describe the three normative theories as the 'three moral facets of ethical leaders' (p239). For Van Wart (2014) they are a combination of intent, means and ends, with specific *ethical pillars* (p28). Although Resick *et al.* (2006) also recognised the importance of combined ethical theories and highlighted the importance of each for defining ethical leadership, they stopped short of full endorsement, opting instead for a framework involving multiple levels of psychological processes.

Although Dion (2012) also espouses the benefits of a combined ethical frame he suggests that spiritual and religious (theological) concepts are also involved in such belief systems. This supports an earlier claim by Rost (1995) who claimed that 'many (most?) people do not use ethical frameworks to judge morality. They use religious beliefs, personal and cultural values, organisational mores, ideology, legal mandates, family upbringing, experience, and intuition' (p136). Organisations do not operate in isolation (Ncube and Wasburn, 2006), they are people-oriented, and thus their operation reflects the nuances and influences upon their members. Perhaps the time has come to reveal the true nature of the complex and myriad social conditionings which underpin ethical leader behaviour (Dion, 2012)?

2.3.8 The theological twist

To date, most of the literature reviewed at the intersection of ethics and leadership points to ethical and moral concepts and frameworks which on the surface appear areligious. A backward glance through the review of ethics and morals shows that it is possible to articulate and demonstrate values without the need to believe in or refer to a deity (Broom and Service, 2014). Everyone, believers and non-believers are said to have a set of 'core human instincts... more ancient than religiously motivated prosociality' (Norenzayan, 2014, p377). Moreover, those that profess to have no faith still subject themselves to a belief system whereby they filter their social behaviour. How they choose to describe this is a personal matter (Krishnakumar *et al.*, 2015).

In leadership research religion as influence on leader behaviour manifests in a number of ways. Theologians adopt a faith-based perspective; psychologists consider dimensions such as devotion, holiness, and prosocial behaviour (Mazereeuw-van der Duijn Schouten *et al.*, 2014). For sociologists the focus is on aspects such as social commitment (Holdcroft, 2006, p89). Others believe that facets of social science theory credit religion as having the strongest, most determining effect on societies and individuals (Kennedy and Lawton, 1998).

Ideologies are unhelpfully, multi- and inter-disciplinary. A review of the insubstantial literature related to leadership ethics and religion reveals the rise of a set of ambiguous definitions and characterisations. Religion and its aspects are referred to as *religiosity* (Weaver and Agle, 2002, Mazereeuw-van der Duijn Schouten *et al.*, 2014), related to *spirituality* (Johnson, 2012, Benefiel *et al.*, 2014, Krishnakumar *et al.*, 2015), characterised as *religiousness* (Kennedy and Lawton, 1998) or unequivocally to do with *formalised religious systems* (Broom and Service, 2014). As such, it is difficult to unpick definitions, and attribute particular approaches to how individuals identify with what they believe, or establish its importance in how they act.

Broadly speaking, world religions (e.g. Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism) are thought responsible for 'regulating moral affairs within a community' (Norenzayan, 2014, p373); whereby religiosity performs a variety of mediating and moderating roles (Parboteeah *et al.*, 2008). For Mazereeuw-van der Duijn Schouten *et al.* (2014) religiosity is simply 'what someone believes', 'their feelings toward religious beings, objects or institutions' (p440) reflected in their commitment to their religion. The behavioural component is manifested 'through activities such as church attendance, praying in private...' (Mazereeuw-van der Duijn Schouten *et al.*, 2014, p440). This *generic religiosity* (Weaver and Agle, 2002) spans a variety of academic disciplines with diverse viewpoints (Holdcroft, 2006), and according to Weaver and Agle (2002) does little to reveal the 'relevant elements of the phenomenon' (p80) in relation to ethical behaviour in organisations.

Although the conceptual ties regarding the influence of religion on behaviour are widely acknowledged (Kennedy and Lawton, 1998, Weaver and Agle, 2002, Parboteeah *et al.*, 2008), the small area of research on religiosity and ethics has produced mixed results (Weaver and Agle, 2002, Parboteeah *et al.*, 2008). Relations between religious orientation and ethical decision-making, and measures of religiosity and ethical judgment remain inconclusive. For instance, Weaver and Agle (2002) contend 'that religiosity does not automatically lead to

ethical behaviour' (p77) and that there is 'no difference between religious and non-religious when it comes to behaviour such as dishonesty or cheating' (Weaver and Agle, 2002, p79, Parboteeah *et al.*, 2008, p388). However, Mazereeuw-van der Duijn Schouten *et al.* (2014) report that although religiosity *is* positively associated with ethical behaviour (Kennedy and Lawton, 1998), it may simply present as one of a series of background factors, not the sole antecedent of an individual's values (Wright and Quick, 2011, p976).

But, religiosity is not to be confused with *spirituality* (Mazereeuw-van der Duijn Schouten *et al.*, 2014). Amongst the diverse definitions it is thought that spirituality might encompass more than one religious approach (Fry, 2003), feelings of closeness and interconnectedness with the world of living things (Fry, 2003), God (Reave, 2005), or a higher power or being (Fry, 2003). Perhaps this vague and all-encompassing definition is the reason why its popularity is on the increase. For many, religion and spirituality are considered separate constructs (Benefiel *et al.*, 2014, Krishnakumar *et al.*, 2015), for others there is overlap (Reave, 2005). Fernando (2011) and Benefiel *et al.* (2014) assert that for some scholars spirituality is devoid of religion, for others (Krishnakumar *et al.*, 2015) it can exist with or without religion. Religion is viewed as formal, strict and unyielding as opposed to the more intimate, emotive and adaptive (non-religious), even basic (Cavanagh and Bandsuch, 2002) characteristics of spirituality (Fernando, 2011).

It appears that people are more comfortable with describing themselves as spiritual rather than religious. Although the underlying cause for this is not clear (Krishnakumar *et al.*, 2015), it may 'be due to the perceived risks and complexities associated with promoting a religion-based leadership in the workplace' (Fernando, 2011, p485). Or perhaps it is rejected because it is not 'a neutral ground of moral principles shared by diversified people' (Ali and Gibbs, 1998, p1557). Indeed, there is 'still very limited scholarship that links religion with leadership' (Fernando, 2011, p484) in contrast to the growing research area of spirituality in the workplace. Although Cavanagh and Bandsuch (2002) credit

spirituality with the 'ability to stimulate and support good moral habits and personal virtue', they also contend that it 'is the most determinative test or the best benchmark for the appropriateness of a spirituality in the workplace' (p112). However, if it is not supported properly in the workplace it too can become divisive, generating distrust, leading to accusations of preferentialism (Cavanagh and Bandsuch, 2002).

Yet the role of religion regarding the characterisation of spirituality in the workplace cannot be discounted; work, after all is a concept rooted firmly in the Judeo-Christian tradition (Fernando, 2011). Chan *et al.* (2011) and Benefiel *et al.* (2014) offer the Rule of St Benedict (RSB) as relevant and significant for today's ethical leaders. For Benefiel *et al.* (2014) St Benedict's (c. 480-543) teachings 'influenced the Christian West, both in the monastic, and in the lay understandings of the holiness of labor' (p176). The RSB is described as 'a useful framework for re-instilling ethical leadership' (Chan *et al.*, 2011, p227). It represents a set of guiding principles which align with several leadership qualities and functions such as personal accountability, encouragement for desired behaviour and discouragement of wrong doing, role modelling, cultivating an ethical environment, coupled with attending to the interests of others. Furthermore, and most significantly Chan *et al.* (2011) conclude that the RSB engenders moral decision-making.

Other scholars (Hicks, 2005, Parboteeah *et al.*, 2008, Eisenbeiß, 2012) have also found clear links between religion and ethics, particularly in relation to values and norms (which mediate and moderate behaviours). Despite this, Broom and Service (2014) believe academics have failed to recognise the importance of religion. Indeed, Kennedy and Lawton (1998) believe it to be a worthy addition in business ethics studies, especially in regard to moral reasoning. More recently, Longenecker *et al.* (2004) found evidence that religion was a significant factor in business ethical decision-making specifically between 'devoutly-held religious commitment and ethical judgment' (p382). Although it is beginning to be included in research studies, those same studies suffer from methodological and definitional

ambiguities and a narrow focus on specific religions, families of religions, or categories of behaviour applied across religions.

As can be observed, the scholarly emphasis of the research reviewed here is resolutely Western, and this decision extends to the theological focus which is overtly Judeo-Christian. The majority (seven of the ten) leaders spoken to for this study identified with these principles. Although there are studies (Eisenbeiß, 2012, Eisenbeiß and Brodbeck, 2014) which include Eastern perspectives (Starratt, 2005, Banerjea, 2010, Wright and Quick, 2011, Bai and Morris, 2014) as complement to Western approaches, the Eastern perspective is not one explored here. Although the inclusion of multiple religious traditions as a broadening of perspectives are not being discounted, I merely prioritise them as less relevant than the issues surrounding the value set(s) the leaders in my study revealed. The aim is not to 'Christianise' leadership as noted by Hicks (2005) , but to accept and acknowledge that certain theological frameworks have been favoured. Dion (2012) warns that if we do not include spiritual and religious values and beliefs we run the risk of discounting other ways of framing and practicing ethical leadership. According to Sirico (2000) a 'divorce between the world of business and the world of faith would be disastrous in both arenas' (p2). By disregarding religion, we disregard all social science (Broom and Service, 2014, p52).

2.4   The ethical leadership construct

Early conceptualisations of ethics in leadership have presented as relating vaguely to leader attributions and styles, whereas *new genre* (Bryman, 1993, 1999) theories such as transformational leadership (Burns, 1978, Bass, 1998, Bass and Steidlmeier, 1999, Burns, 2003) and charismatic leadership (House, 1976), although predominantly normative in nature (Rost, 1995, Ciulla, 1995, Bass, 1998) have revealed stronger ethical connections. In the challenging context of modern, pressurised leadership these established theories appear outgrown (Jago, 1982), have fallen short (Zaccaro and Horn, 2003), seem old, and appear 'two-dimensional' (Klenke, 2008). Ethical scandals in profit and not-for-profit

organisations have re-invigorated scholarly attention (Toor and Ofori, 2009). Scholars are pursuing alternative approaches, and moving to new levels of integration (Zaccaro and Horn, 2003, Washbush, 2005, Avolio, 2007, Dansereau *et al.*, 2013). Fresh methods and measures are warranted to fill the large gaps that exist in legitimate areas within the domain of leadership (Jago, 1982). Evidence of this is provided by Dinh *et al.* (2014) who believe that there are four leadership theories which appear to have the capability to address reported shortcomings.

Part of this new wave of perspectives was ethical leadership (Treviño *et al.*, 2000, Treviño *et al.*, 2003, Brown *et al.*, 2005). Others to emerge included authentic leadership (Luthans and Avolio, 2003, Gardner *et al.*, 2005), spiritual leadership (Fry, 2003, Reave, 2005) and servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977). Although the latter is not entirely new, it made the list because it was thought to share a 'common interest in positive, humanistic behaviors' (Dinh *et al.*, 2014, p41).

Whilst the ethical leadership construct would posit ethics as the sole and explicit focus of leadership (Mayer *et al.*, 2009), the construct as incepted by Brown *et al.* (2005) bears little resemblance to the seminal qualitative study conducted by Treviño *et al.* (2003) which arguably paved the way. The authors asserted that ethical leadership was much 'more than just traits' (p5). Ethical leaders were people-orientated, their ethical actions and traits visible, they set the ethical standards, had ethical awareness and finally, their decision-making processes were public and fair (Treviño *et al.*, 2003). A further comprehensive and insightful article (Treviño and Brown, 2004) helped to dispel some of the myths surrounding business ethics management. However, this work was predicated on a social scientific approach to frame ethical decision-making. Earlier adopters of this theoretical lens included Grojean *et al.* (2004) who examined the critical role of leader values, and their responsibility in establishing an organisational climate regarding ethics. Social learning theory was used to understand 'why leader behaviour is influential in facilitating individual ethical behavior' (p228). Authors such as Brown *et al.* (2005) followed suit and the descriptive perspective was

embraced. The leadership literature took a different turn, and this set the theoretical tone for much of what followed.

The ethical leadership construct (Brown *et al.*, 2005) was incepted as a means of determining the ethical characteristics of leaders (Treviño, 1986) by identifying personality-based antecedents and consequences, and examining how these would relate to the nomological network (Brown *et al.*, 2005). The now predominant social-scientific approach to ethical leadership was to provide a deductive theoretical basis for explaining why and how ethical leaders influence their followers. This *moral manager* aspect symbolised the proactive efforts and actions which characterised a person's ethics (Toor and Ofori, 2009). Individuals learned when they paid attention to, assimilated and thus emulated the attitudes, values and behaviours of credible and attractive role models (Brown and Treviño, 2006). According to Mayer *et al.* (2009) this *moral person* was a collection of specific attributes; they were fair, and just, and ethically principled as perceived by others (Toor and Ofori, 2009). For a construct entitled ethical leadership there was little discussion regarding ethics and surprisingly, no proper explication of leadership either (Den Hartog, 2015). Brown *et al.* (2005) defined their ethical leadership construct as:

> '*the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making' (p120).*

Notably, and key to their definition was the term 'normatively appropriate', which suggested that classical ethical theory was to provide the conceptual framework. But instead, they used it loosely to cover leader traits such as honesty, trustworthiness, fairness and care. The general consensus was that this definition was deliberately vague (Brown *et al.*, 2005, Plinio, 2009, Eisenbeiß, 2012, Den Hartog, 2015). Whilst Eisenbeiß (2012) claimed that this allowed for cultural interpretation it also raised questions regarding the universality of the *norms* in question. Indeed, Eisenbeiß (2012) and Tenbrunsel and Smith‐Crowe (2008) called for a minimum set of reference points to avoid what Riggio *et al.* (2010)

described as cultural relativism. But Hunter *et al.* (2007) had already warned that this would render studies assumptive of the fact that the subordinate had witnessed, recognised and thus emulated leader behaviour. Indeed, Mendonca and Kanungo (2007) contended that leadership existed without followers' perceptions, it did not have to be *seen*.

Despite the theoretical issues noted here Brown and Treviño's (2005) definition has been widely accepted by social-scientific scholars, and has become the foundation for the ethical leadership field. Indeed, Brown and Treviño (2006) have since compared their own construct with transformational, spiritual, and authentic leadership and explored what they described as situational influences on ethical leadership. Different components, sub-dimensions (Kalshoven *et al.*, 2011b) or within-cluster trait differences (Resick *et al.*, 2006, De Hoogh and Den Hartog, 2008, Martin *et al.*, 2009) have been offered by a variety of scholars. For instance, Ruiz *et al.* (2011) focused on the duality of *moral person, moral manager* and connected them explicitly to virtuous behaviour and *eudaimonia.* The field diverged further; scholars chose to approach ethical leadership in different ways. Yukl *et al.* (2013) exploited the flexibility of both the definition and the construct domain. Others (Keating *et al.*, 2007, Resick *et al.*, 2011) focused on cultural contexts and influences. As a result the field is now fragmented (Grover *et al.*, 2012). Scholars were not building on previous work, nor were they addressing outstanding concerns. Minor aspects were being conflated at the expense of dealing with fundamental problems.

2.4.1 Social learning theory as epistemological framework

Heavy reliance on the philosophical lens had resulted in a multitude of studies questioning how leaders *ought* to behave (Avey *et al.*, 2011). But once the ethical leadership construct (Brown *et al.*, 2005) was incepted, scholarly focus began to shift to what Eisenbeiß (2012) and Eisenbeiß and Brodbeck (2014) described as Western-based empirically descriptive studies designed by management scholars to explain, prevent and predict leader behaviour. These understandings were

sought in the psychological and sociological sciences. General social learning theory was the preferred framework for scholars (Brown and Treviño, 2006, Brown and Treviño, 2014). The theories of Albert Bandura (1986, 1997) were used by others to help explain how leaders interacted with their social environment (Grojean *et al.*, 2004, Brown *et al.*, 2005, Eisenbeiß and Giessner, 2012, Resick *et al.*, 2013). Kohlberg's (1969) model of moral development was also a favourite (Treviño and Brown, 2004, Treviño *et al.*, 2006, Jordan *et al.*, 2011, Eisenbeiß, 2012). Giessner and van Quaquebeke (2010) diversified, applying Fiske's Relational Models Theory to attend to the normative aspects of the leader-follower relationship. On review, each new approach adopted a new lens, there appeared to be no cumulative value to the research.

Brown *et al.* (2005) used a social learning perspective to describe how leaders influenced followers' ethical conduct through role modelling salient behaviour. Ideal role models would be attractive i.e. have power and status, but also demonstrate care and concern, treating others fairly. They would have credibility, be trustworthy, and practice what they preached (Brown and Treviño, 2006). Employee behaviour was learned and reinforced from 'a broad range of psychological matching processes, including observational learning, imitation, and identification' (Brown *et al.*, 2005, p119), either directly experienced or through vicarious means. Acceptable or unacceptable behaviour would be moderated and regulated by witnessing how others were treated by the organisation.

On reflection there are two problems with this ideology, firstly, there is an assumption that the leader's values are congruent with those of the follower; that there is organisational fit. Secondly, as noted by Brown *et al.* (2005) 'most employees look outside themselves to significant others for ethical guidance' (p117). As such, there were other sources of ethical role models, for instance childhood models and workplace mentors etc., that could contribute to moral identity (Brown and Treviño, 2014). Social learning theory might provide a broad understanding of how followers learned ethical behaviour, but it neglected to address the underlying roots regarding the leader's behaviour. It fails to be explicit

about what is being transmitted, and how. Furthermore, and according to Stouten *et al.* (2012) the adoption of social learning theory proposes that 'followers truly care about the leaders motive to be ethical' (p4).

Jordan *et al.* (2011) examined the association and relationship between the leader's cognitive moral development (CMD) and the follower's perception of ethical leadership. Although they acknowledge gender differences in decision-making, they found it necessary to supplement their framework with that of Bandura (1986) . Therefore, Kohlberg's (1969) model of CMD is inadequate to fully explain the ethical decision-making components of ethical leadership, especially in relation to how individuals 'transform and displace' previous structures of ethical reasoning. As such, scholars adopted different theoretical lenses. Relational Models Theory (Fiske, 1991, 1992) was applied to understand the relational components of normative behaviour (Giessner and van Quaquebeke, 2010). It would provide 'a comprehensive and exhaustive taxonomy of social relations...across cultures... and directly addresses coordination norms that define the boundaries of acceptable moral behavior' (p45). However, it was highly complex; there were four *universal* innate mental models (cognitive schemas), communal sharing, authority ranking, equality matching and market pricing. The argument was that individuals might use a combination of these models in a number of ways; favour one to govern over the others, depending on circumstance. Although the links to ethical leadership are credible, there are flaws acknowledged by the authors, which meant it might not be applicable in not-for-profit contexts. Furthermore, Giessner and van Quaquebeke (2010) assumed that each leader/follower relationship used one primary mental model of interaction and coordination. Overall, the model is weak but could be more useful for explaining unethical leadership.

Whilst social scientific theories are not without value, studies have done little to explain the origin of the leader's ethical disposition. Instead, attention shifted away from the leader toward the *trickle-down* of ethical leadership through the dyadic leader-follower relationship (Ruiz *et al.*, 2011). But as Walumbwa *et al.* (2011) found, even this was insufficiently addressed, especially when exploring

the impact on follower performance. As reported earlier, leadership existed without followers' perceptions, rendering this line of enquiry highly questionable (Mendonca and Kanungo, 2007). But the role of social learning theory to explain ethical leadership cannot be discounted. Although research has focused on followers' perceptions, the framework could more easily be applied to understand how leaders learned their ethical behaviour; *how did they become moral*? What influenced them (sociologically, philosophically and theologically)? Surely ethical leadership is about leaders being aware of, and understanding their personal moral identity, how it originated and might be initiated (De Cremer *et al.*, 2010b, Stouten *et al.*, 2012)?

Mayer *et al.* (2012) adopt a social cognitive approach to explaining the association between moral identity and ethical leadership. They speak of *symbolisation*, and *internalisation*; symbolisation is typified as a self-awareness of one's inner thoughts and feelings, relating to the possession of moral traits through moral actions, and internalisation, relates to embeddedness. Here, the strength of one's moral identity moderates moral reasoning. Although their work is showing promising signs of being able to accommodate a variety of other theoretical viewpoints, the authors freely admit that their conceptualisation has weaknesses. Unfortunately, this renders social theory, like the other ideological frameworks (philosophy and theology) inadequate as standalone to accommodate the complex, interpersonal and dynamic elements, which constitute an ethical leader. As such, there needs to be 'more collaboration between normative and descriptive approaches in ethics research' and 'specification of the relevant norms' (Eisenbeiß, 2012, p791).

In terms of this research, the flawed, but undeniably normative ethical leadership construct as conceptualised by Brown *et al.* (2005) is considered as an overarching construct (Kalshoven *et al.*, 2011b). Social learning theory clearly explains ethical disposition in some way; but how exactly is ripe for discussion. I contend, like Eisenbeiß (2012) that the shortcomings outlined offer room for interpretation. Since an examination of the literature has shown that normative

conduits as opposed to the social scientific and descriptive best channel the actualities of leadership in challenging ethical times, the adoption of social learning theory as sole framework is rejected, but the collective sociological contribution is acknowledged as relevant. I believe that to describe influences on leaders in purely sociological terms may deny the importance given to the other frameworks by leaders themselves. This research adopts a hybrid ideological combination, extended from the work of Whetstone (2001, 2005) and Resick *et al.* (2006) who advocated a tripartite deontological, teleological and virtue ethics approach. A more recent study by Eisenbeiß (2012) incorporating religion as a further orientation is also considered to set the conceptual and theoretical tone, and fuse current conceptions with real-life organisational behaviour. It is my view that, whilst imperfect, the definitions and constructs can encompass multiple, interwoven, often-subjective truths and realities. This is required to reveal the underlying moral commitments of leadership (Broom and Service, 2014). Indeed, new practices are required to meet the ethical challenges of the future (Hackett and Wang, 2012).

2.4.2 Similarities and differences across the new perspectives

I have argued in section 2.2.2 that specific new genre leadership theories have normative tendencies and according to Yukl (2013) several also share attributes with the ethical leadership construct. This raises interesting questions regarding the distinctiveness of ethical leadership. Spiritual leadership (Fry, 2003, Reave, 2005), authentic leadership (Luthans and Avolio, 2003, Avolio *et al.*, 2004, Gardner *et al.*, 2005), the much older servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977) and transforming leadership (Burns, 1978) are thought to share characteristics. The latter has already been described and acknowledged as being implicitly ethical (Northouse, 2010) and showing partial overlap (Brown *et al.*, 2005). Transformational leadership appeals to ideals and moral values and influences as a means of elevating and transforming behaviour both individually and collectively. Burns' (1978, 2003) work puts ethics firmly at the forefront of scholarly discussions (Northouse, 2010). A transformational leader is described as 'a leader

with an ethical orientation' (Brown and Treviño, 2006, p599). But this simplistic statement does not fully account for all that an ethical leader could be seen to do (Brown *et al.*, 2005). It does not address the *moral manager* component of ethical leadership (Mayer et al., 2009). According to Yukl (2013) 'transformational behaviours could be used in a manipulative way' (p353). Therefore, it can not be wholly congruent with ethical leadership.

Around the late 1970s another leadership construct was garnering interest. Servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977) was for some, a natural extension to transformational leadership (Stone and Patterson, 2005); both displayed normative tendencies and were concerned with the elevation of followers (Ciulla, 1998). However, servant leadership referred primarily to leadership *as service to others* (Stone and Patterson, 2005). Nurturing, defending and empowering employees enabled them to become happier, healthier, wiser and more responsible (Yukl, 2013). Servant leaders were moral agents who, in giving up personal rights (Russell, 2001), put the moral welfare of their followers before all else. All were recognised as equal stakeholders in the life of the organisation (Northouse, 2010). Followers were motivated and inspired to become servant leaders (autonomous moral agents) themselves, and were provided the necessary resources for meaningful work in order to flourish. According to Reed *et al.* (2011) such a leader was not just a servant leader, but in fact an ethical leader.

Servant leadership remains popular, it is considered contemporaneously relevant (Russell, 2001) and is enjoying a resurgence. This may be in response to the rise of self-interested, unethical leaders (Russell, 2001) or because it has not been uniformly defined (Northouse, 2010). It is shown to demonstrate affinity with several central orientations of ethical leadership identified by Eisenbeiß (2012) ; it is humane, concerned with justice, responsibility, and moderation. Thus, it is affiliated to love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment and service, and activated within the context of servant leadership (Stone and Patterson, 2005). Although not overtly theological, it has religious inclinations. Unlike ethical leadership servant leadership is wholly welfare-driven leadership, in that the

decision-making prioritises all stakeholders. For Yukl (2013) this is problematic. It means conflict with certain types of organisational objectives such as task or product (Stone and Patterson, 2005) resulting in overly complex and difficult decisions; meaning that the *moral manager* dimension of ethical leadership is backgrounded in favour of the *moral person.*

Frisch and Huppenbauer (2014) state that this is also the case for the authentic leadership construct (Luthans and Avolio, 2003, Avolio *et al.*, 2004, Gardner *et al.*, 2005). Again, it is 'strong on the *moral person* dimension of ethical leadership' (Toor and Ofori, 2009, p537), but the *moral manager* aspect is only partially addressed (Walumbwa *et al.*, 2008). Whilst 'ethical leadership goes beyond these competing concepts' (Frisch and Huppenbauer, 2014, p38), authentic leadership is for some (Northouse, 2010), an extension of authentic transformational leadership (Bass and Steidlmeier, 1999). For instance, it was incepted to promote the positive aspects of authentic leadership, and according to Yukl (2013) 'attempts to integrate earlier ideas about effective leadership and ethical leadership' (p351). For Hannah *et al.* (2011b) authentic leadership is both 'theoretically and empirically distinguished from ethical leadership' (p563). Although there are 'features of authentic leadership not captured in operational definitions of ethical leadership' such as 'self-awareness, relational transparency, and balanced processing' (Walumbwa *et al.*, 2008, p103) they appear to share the role modelling aspects of social learning theory (Hannah *et al.*, 2011b), and an internalised moral perspective (Walumbwa *et al.*, 2008, Gardner *et al.*, 2011).

Whilst the construct appears inherently moral (May *et al.*, 2003) there is little explicit mention of ethical theory in the literature. Although Dion (2012) notes that 'the philosophical notion of authenticity has a long history' (Dion, 2012, p6), I agree that it is a chequered one. The notion of authenticity can be distorted; appear narcissistic like charisma, or seem overly idealistic like integrity. It is not listed as a key similarity with ethical leadership, that is reserved for both integrity and altruism, and thus their emphases are unequivocally different (Brown and Treviño, 2006).

Although moral leadership (Burns, 1978, Gini, 1998, von Weltzien Hoivik, 2002) is not part of the new wave of perspectives in leadership theory, it warrants inclusion. Earlier debates regarding the etymological roots of ethics and morals spill into their respective leadership constructs. Hanson (2006) acknowledges the difficulties of defining and understanding moral leadership, not just at cultural or national level but globally. A recent, extensive and critical review of qualitative leadership theory post 2000 by Dinh *et al.* (2014) does not include moral leadership. Instead of being given a classification it is subsumed into a collective category with ethical leadership.

Moral leadership is considered 'the kind of leadership that operates at need and value levels higher than those of the follower' and 'can exploit conflict and tension within persons' value structures' (Burns, 1978, p42). Gini (1998) describes it as 'the spirit of morality… awakened in the individual only through the witness and conduct of a moral person… role modeling' (p29). It flows like ethical leadership from the values derived from 'religions, cultural and social norms, philosophies and legal systems… moral and ethical leadership is doing what is right' (Maguad and Krone, 2009, p210). It would transcend rule and policy compliance (Maguad and Krone, 2009). Moral leadership was the embodiment of that pillar of ethical leadership, the *moral person*.

But Hackett and Wang (2012) disagreed, they felt moral leadership was distinct from ethical leadership. Analysis of the evidence they submit from Storr (2004) is at best tenuous and more worryingly misrepresented. She describes moral leadership as *what they do,* encompassing role modelling, the demonstration and communication of ethics and values, influencing and inspiring, and rewarding and disciplining. She envisages moral leadership as a separate concept, but acknowledges that the theoretical concepts are too close to merit distinction. Hanson (2006) offers a stronger case for distinction, claiming that 'moral leadership is about leading an organisation or people to accomplish an explicitly *moral purpose'* (p292). This raises several interesting questions. If purposes are

not moral, then according to Burns (2003) they are immoral or unethical. Is the pursuit of profit a moral purpose?

If, as Hannah *et al.* (2014) contends morality is required for leadership, what type and how much; could there be leadership without it? Indeed, Hanson (2006) argues that moral leaders are a rarity, but ethical leaders are commonly found in most societies, 'individuals of conscience' leading organisations 'to accomplish its core purposes using ethical means' (p291-292). Similarly to the arguments concerning etymological roots, ethical and moral leadership appear difficult to unravel, opinions are divided, and judging by the very small literature, scholars have already withdrawn from the debate to explore less semantically challenged areas of interest.

Spiritual leadership is one such area. It is thought to enhance 'the intrinsic motivation of followers by creating conditions that increase their sense of spiritual meaning in the work' (Yukl, 2013, p350). The commitment to work and values are mutually important; the latter may entail values found in major religions, but is not exclusive to them. Spiritual leadership is defined by (Fry, 2003) as:

> *'Comprising the values, attitudes, and behaviors that are necessary to intrinsically motivate one's self and others so that they have a sense of spiritual survival through calling and membership' (p694-695).*

It is to do with calling and membership, vision (ethos), values fit, high levels of employee wellbeing, organisational commitment, equating to the transcendence of self, and fellowship (Fernando, 2011, Yukl, 2013). Fry (2003) also identifies two major qualities, of spiritual leadership, altruistic love and hope/faith. The former includes a raft of specific characteristics, such as integrity, honesty, courage, trust and humility. It is notionally 'inclusive of the religious- and ethics and values-based approaches to leadership' (Fry, 2003, p696) and 'takes followers beyond self-interest' (Gill, 2011, p313). The construct has been recently updated by Reave (2005) who focuses more on the leader's characterological elements and behaviour (integrity and altruism). It is for this reason, and the considerate leadership style (concern for others) that deems spiritual leadership consistent

aspects of ethical leadership (Brown and Treviño, 2006, p600, Avey *et al.*, 2011), transformational leadership, and servant leadership (Fernando, 2011). However, there are perceived differences, the visionary aspects of spiritual leadership are not reflected in understandings of ethical leadership (Brown and Treviño, 2006, Den Hartog, 2015). Furthermore, ethical leaders are not exclusively driven by spiritual motives (a calling), 'they might also be driven by more pragmatic concerns' (Brown and Treviño, 2006, p600) or transactional mechanisms (Den Hartog, 2015).

It is clear that the revival of interest in leadership ethics and the inception of the ethical leadership construct (Brown *et al.*, 2005) has meant that scholars have enjoyed a new benchmark with which to compare previous conceptions. These demonstrations of similarity and distinction, appear to increase confusion, but it is important to explore connections and interdependencies (Campbell, 2007). Interrelationships can be key, important and necessary for advancing understandings (Dinh *et al.*, 2014). Ethical leadership, authentic leadership, servant leadership, transformational leadership and spiritual leadership are all forms of leadership which promote 'positive outcomes for leaders, followers and organisations' (Toor and Ofori, 2009, p536). Each appears to possess the desired characteristics and traits concerned with appropriate follower behaviour creating a positive organisational climate as embodiment of the *moral person* aspect of the ethical leadership construct. However, it is the *moral manager* function as advocate and enforcer of ethical conduct, which allows ethical leadership to stand out as conceptually distinct (Toor and Ofori, 2009, Den Hartog, 2015).

2.4.3 Unethical leadership

Whilst ethical leadership has received much attention (Brown and Treviño, 2006), unethical leadership is an under-researched area (Mayer *et al.*, 2010, Eisenbeiß and Brodbeck, 2014). Unethical behaviour has existed as long as there have been human beings. But due to our fast paced, increasingly more complex personal and organisational lives, lapses in ethical decision-making have increased (Toor and

Ofori, 2009). The leadership literature review has shown that there are leadership theories, which can conceptually accommodate unethical behaviour. Great-man theory (Carlyle, 1849, Galton, 1869), perceptions of trait theory, charismatic leadership (House, 1976) and transformational leadership (Burns, 1978, Bass, 1985, Burns, 2003) explicitly so. The penultimate recognised in the literature as having a 'dark side' (Conger, 1990, 1999). Indeed, possession of the qualities and characteristics listed in the newer genre leadership theories do not in themselves guarantee ethically salient leader behaviour.

Much like the ethical leadership literature, scholars from behavioural business ethics and psychology have been persistent in trying to clarify distinctions. As before, efforts have been focused on the identification of specific characteristics regarding individual transgressors and the antecedents of unethical behaviour (Brown and Mitchell, 2010). According to Eisenbeiß and Brodbeck (2014) the collective body of work on unethical leadership is populated with streams of research on related topics such as *toxic leadership* (Whicker, 1996, Lipman-Blumen, 2005, Tavanti, 2011) and *destructive leadership* (Einarsen *et al.*, 2007, Goldman, 2009). This review however, concerns itself primarily with the construct as defined and clarified by Brown and Mitchell (2010) . Unethical leadership is thus typified:

> *'As behaviours conducted and decisions made by organizational leaders that are illegal and/or violate moral standards, and those that impose processes and structures that promote unethical conduct by followers' (p588).*

The definition is twofold; in the first instance it concerns the leader, then it is to do with fostering corrupt and unethical acts. When considered in conjunction with the accepted ethical leadership construct (Brown *et al.*, 2005), unethical leadership is to do with leader behaviour *inconsistent* with the perceived societal norms. Again, this research is concerned with, to some extent the antecedents of such behaviour, but as Kaptein (2011) recommends, it should also concern the influences and factors which encourage leaders to behave outside their personal and professional ethical boundaries.

According to Mihelič *et al.* (2010) opportunities for unethical behaviour are endless and being realised more frequently. Behaviour can be conscious or unconscious; the latter concerns ethically silent or neutral leadership (Treviño *et al.*, 2000, Treviño *et al.*, 2003, Toor and Ofori, 2009). This is when individuals fail to provide leadership when ethics are vital, they are unaware of their ethical blindness, or their failure to engage in ethical deliberation (Werhane *et al.*, 2014). Whilst Winston (2007) and Brown and Mitchell (2010) believe unethical leadership is caused by high-pressure contexts, Ludwig and Longenecker (1993) believe that ethical violations might be due to non-competitive pressures. Indeed, Werhane *et al.* (2014) found that unnecessary failures were brought about by avoidable 'personal, interrelational, organisational, or cultural obstacles' (p2). Moreover, 'unethical leaders were perceived to lack enduring values… make decisions arbitrarily and chose actions depending on what best matches their interests in a given situation' (Eisenbeiß and Brodbeck, 2014, p350). Unethical leadership was generally characterised as the antithesis of ethical leadership and chiefly in terms of negative traits. Typical behaviour included egoism, dishonesty, corruption, inhumanity and manipulation according to Resick *et al.* (2011) . Actions included disregarding the needs and wishes of employees, lying, bullying and cheating and causing harm to others (Boddy *et al.*, 2010, Boddy *et al.*, 2011).

This leads us to question whether modern society is suffering from a plague of bad leadership, and how resourceful organisations have ended up with such poor leaders in the first place (Boddy *et al.*, 2010, Boddy *et al.*, 2011)? According to Rossy (2011) leaders are imperfect human beings given to making mistakes. They are subject to impropriety ranging from subtle but complex ethical dilemmas to violations and breaches knowingly made (Price, 2000, 2006). Often leaders with strong personal integrity and intelligence succumb to temptation, which causes them to abandon principles in the wake of success (Ludwig and Longenecker, 1993, Bowie, 2005). But temptations are ubiquitous (Ludwig and Longenecker, 1993) and for leaders, present on a much grander scale than the ethical challenges that we all face (Price, 2000). Perhaps, given all these pressures we expect too much of our leaders (Ciulla, 2005, Palmer, 2009)?

In the wake of recent ethical transgressions attention has shifted to the practice of regulating ethical failures. Organisations began instituting clearer, more stringent ethical standards (Kaptein, 2011). According to Kaptein (2011) most measures are assumptive. Firstly, that individuals behave unethically because they do not understand what is expected of them, and secondly that the existence of 'new' ethical standards will prevent such behaviour. Codes can be perceived as reactive and superficial (Treviño and Brown, 2004), producing cynical responses resulting in more unethical behaviour (Lager, 2011, Treviño *et al.*, 2014). Moreover, Treviño and Brown (2004) and Kaptein (2011) both recall a caveat noted by Mitchell *et al.* (1996) wherein 'the mere existence of an ethics program does not imply that it is effective' (p858). Ethics training is almost always focused on conformity, regulation and legislation. Employees are taught how to 'skirt intention' and avoid penalty (Lager, 2011, p192). Organisations neglect to adopt preventative measures such as increasing moral awareness or improving organisational cultures to mitigate unethical behaviour (De Cremer *et al.*, 2010b). Werhane *et al.* (2014) agree, the focus needs to be on changing leader and follower mindsets through individual and organisational sensemaking, where ethics is integrated through the organisation's culture.

According to Mayer *et al.* (2010) leaders must 'set the ethical tone for the organisation by enacting practices, policies and procedures that help facilitate the display of ethical behavior and reduce the likelihood of misconduct' (p8). Indeed, ethical organisational culture and climate are important factors in the moderation of leader decision-making (Treviño *et al.*, 2014). The former concerns the organisational conditions in place to aid ethical or unethical behaviour; the latter, pertains to the conditions for such behaviours. Kaptein (2008, 2011) has begun to explore the dimensions of ethical culture, particularly embeddedness as a moderator of ethical behaviour. His research shows how ethical role modelling, the capability and commitment to behave ethically and the reinforcing of such behaviour, coupled with openness to discuss ethical issues is negatively related to unethical behaviour.

April *et al.* (2010, 2011) also concerned themselves with the written and unwritten practices and rules which inform responsible leader conduct and behaviour. They found that the most important enablers were an individual's upbringing, spirituality, their mentors and role models. The top three, of the six constraints were identified as the possession of a bottom-line mentality, organisational influences and fear. They developed a hierarchy of ten practical actions for individuals to enact in support their moral disposition. The top five recommendations were, *to act in accordance with personal values and beliefs*, *increase self-awareness*, *develop and make use of and value own support network*, and *religion/spirituality*. According to April *et al.* (2010, 2011) respondents drew strength from their upbringing, defining moments, spirituality etc., these crucibles of character formation when reflected upon, were responsible for developing their internal powers. Powers, which would engage in the most important, visible manifestation of a leader's ethical disposition, their decision-making.

2.5   Leadership and the ethics of decision-making

As the title suggests this study concerns itself with the act of leader decision-making. Here, the literature is reflective of the disciplinary boundaries of the ethical leadership literature; falling into normative ethical, and descriptive delineations (O'Fallon and Butterfield, 2005). The former relates to understandings regarding an individual's ethical system, and how we *ought* to make moral decisions (Kaspar, 2015). The latter is to do with (ethical) decision-making models predominantly embedded within the realms of psychology, social psychology and business (organisational) psychology. This particular body of work is termed ethical behaviour research (Pimentel *et al.*, 2010), or behavioural ethics (Treviño *et al.*, 2006, De Cremer *et al.*, 2010a, De Cremer *et al.*, 2011) and is more concerned with antecedent conditions, decision-making processes, and their consequences. Elm and Radin (2012) note that the majority of ethical decision-making research is focused on deviant behaviour. Once again, scholarly attention moves from positive organisational behaviour toward a preoccupation with the negative aspects of leadership.

But new ground is being broken, ethical decision-making research is evolving in the area of neuroethics (Reynolds, 2006b, Salvador and Folger, 2009). Neurocognitive approaches concern the way in which the brain receives, processes, interprets and acts on stimuli and accounts for both intuitive and deliberate ethical decision-making. I have reviewed this new work because it challenges current conceptions of both decision-making and ethical decision-making, and hypothesises regarding the variety of underlying mechanisms at play (Elm and Radin, 2012). Ethical decision-making can be both rational and intuitive, involve post-hoc sense-making, and be expedited in complex situations under time pressures (Woiceshyn, 2011). This review opens the debate by examining whether decision-making can be distinctly *ethical*, and is followed by an analysis of the key decision-making models, and concludes by offering a fusion of the literatures regarding ethical leadership and ethical decision-making. Finally, these elements are discussed in relation to how leader education needs to change in order to promote and develop positive ethical leader behaviour.

2.5.1 Ethical decision-making: special or no different?

In the ethical decision-making literature what constitutes an ethical decision is a complex collection of opposing views. Scholars believe it is biologically distinct, whilst others believe it concerns the nature of the response to moral dilemmas, and how moral intensity affects moral reasoning. For Jones (1991) an ethical decision is one, which 'is both legal and morally acceptable to the larger community' (p367). Whilst this description appears vague and relativistic, it suggests that ethical decisions are distinct. Different systems or areas of the brain are connected or *tapped* depending on the type of decision (ethical or non-ethical). Ethical decision-making appears to be 'dissociable from other forms of "thinking"' (Salvador and Folger, 2009, p5).

Ethical decision-making involves the acknowledgment of responsibility. It can be risky, contestable, alienating, and jeopardize careers. Ethical decision-making is high-stakes decision-making writ large. According to Guy (1990) it is

only when the stakes are high that decision-makers invest time in more thorough deliberations. As such, it is being more frequently employed to address the knotty issues and ethical challenges of modern organisational life (Elm and Radin, 2012). However, Elm and Radin (2012) also acknowledge a host of inconsistencies and contradictions in the literature, including their own findings regarding the distinctiveness of ethical decision-making. Arguably, the answer is to accept that there is a point at which the decision becomes ethical, the person making the decision recognises that there is a moral component; it is 'seen' (De Cremer *et al.*, 2011, pS2) through examination of the features of the situation itself (Bartlett, 2003). The neural mechanisms required for recognising the moral dimensions of a situation have been found distinct from other types of cognition (Salvador and Folger, 2009).

As such, the first component, or problem recognition stage acknowledges that the status quo has been disturbed, and is dependent on personal biases and situational factors (Pimentel *et al.*, 2010). Where the nature of the dilemma, primary individual-level variables, namely gender, age, and level of experience, organisational characteristics, climate and culture determine the extent to which the leader recognises the situation as an ethical dilemma. These initial deliberations are thought to be highly instructive (Kaspar, 2015) and have serious implications regarding the outcome of the decision (Treviño *et al.*, 2006, 2010, Caughron *et al.*, 2011). However, ethical decision-making models and conceptualisations rarely focus on this crucial stage of ethical decision-making (Butterfield *et al.*, 2000, Jordan, 2009, Selart and Johansen, 2011). Whilst Jones (1991) and Rest (1986) do acknowledge its importance, according it step one of the interpretive process, it rests on the assumption that the leader possesses this skill, is morally literate and capable of moral reasoning and rational thinking (Jones, 1991). However, failure to recognise the moral elements means the decision-maker employs a different schemata (Jordan, 2009). The consequences are overlooked, the individual does not 'know' they are a moral agent, that their decision will affect others, and that they have volition (Jones, 1991, Reynolds, 2006a). Palazzo *et al.* (2012) and Werhane *et al.* (2014) refer to this as *ethical*

blindness, an inability to recognise self-deception. In essence, people are temporarily unable to access their moral systems and thus deviate from their own values and principles; it is unintended unethicality (Tenbrunsel and Smith‑Crowe, 2008).

But there are measures to mediate contextual factors and limit unintended consequences. Caughron *et al.* (2011) refers to the *sensemaking* process, it allows space for moral sensitivity, or moral awareness (Rest, 1986, Jones, 1991). It is reinforced by a range of micro-events triggered by the salience and vividness of the moral issue. During deliberations, multiple possible outcomes and consequences are considered (Jordan, 2009) as large amounts of stimuli are encoded, recalled; some ignored, others rejected. Salient items are kept, and reinforce pre-existing schemata. All the information about a given situation provides a cognitive structure, and for Jordan (2009) the individual develops and reinforces a dominant decision pattern and increases expertise in moral recognition (May and Pauli, 2002). As such, an ethical leader becomes highly attuned to moral situations, and practiced at dealing in charged circumstances (Lincoln and Holmes, 2010).

Dane and Sonenshein (2015) describe this type of attunement as *ethical expertise*; it is 'the degree to which one is knowledgeable about and skilled at applying moral values within a given work context' (p75). Such individuals are viewed as expert decision-makers, capable of solving problems more effectively and reliably. Close inspection of their proposed model reveals strong similarities with Rest's (1986) four component model, although this is not fully acknowledged. According to Dane and Sonenshein (2015) the most notable addition is the focus on *ethical expertise* and its 'schema-level features' (p79) which are thought to guide human attention. Schemata are influenced by the leaders' learned experiences, moral identity, and interaction with others. Once triggered they shape the resulting decision, and according to Werhane (2008) these can be resolved in a variety of ways. Whilst earlier research proposed that schemata were ingrained (Jordan, 2009, Lincoln and Holmes, 2010), inflexible, and summarily reinforced,

Dane and Sonenshein (2015) suggest that it is the breadth and type of experience which is crucial. This allows new schemata to develop and allows for flexibility in pre-existing schemata. They further describe the ability to reconstruct schemata as a form of divergent cognitive thinking which results in solutions 'that satisfies all moral claims and duties pertinent to the dilemma' (p82).

For Jones (1991) a key feature of any dilemma is its moral intensity. Treviño *et al.* (2006) describe this as a subdivision of research into moral awareness along with ethical sensitivity. It can be generalised as 'a multidimensional construct that relates to the moral issue itself and not to characteristics of the decision maker or the situational context within which the decision maker is located' (Barnett, 2001, p1039). It focuses on the moral issue, not the moral agent (Jones, 1991, p373) and issues may have high, or low levels of intensity. It equates to six dimensions, *the magnitude of consequences, concentration of effect, probability of effect, temporal immediacy, social consensus, and proximity* (Jones, 1991). Arguably, a decision becomes ethical due to the scale of the moral issue, particularly in relation to doing harm and social consensus (Reynolds, 2006a), although the latter has been thought the strongest predictor (Morris and McDonald, 1995, Lincoln and Holmes, 2010).

2.5.2 The problem with decision-making models for ethical dilemmas

According to Schminke *et al.* (2010) ethical decision-making models fall into a series of categories. Scholars have used rational/linear models, models that focus on individuals (Kohlberg, 1969, Rest, 1986), models that include situational effects (Ferrell and Gresham, 1985, Treviño, 1986), models that focus on the ethical issue (Jones, 1991) and models that focus on resolving conflict (McDevitt *et al.*, 2007). The most often cited and used (descriptive) ethical decision-making models in the leadership literature belongs to Rest (1986). He proposed a four component analysis, whereby the moral agent must (1) recognise the moral issue, (2) make a moral judgment, (3) resolve to place moral concerns ahead of other concerns and (4) act on the moral concerns. Treviño (1986) and Jones (1991) followed with

similar conceptualisations. Treviño (1986) developed the *Person-Situation Interactionist* model of ethical decision-making, which according to Strong and Mayer (1992) suggests a relationship between the moral development of the individual and the ethical decision-making process. It relies upon Kohlberg's (1969) model of cognitive moral development (CMD) to underpin the aspects relating to the stages of moral judgment and provides an 'inductive social science theory base rather than the more common deductive philosophical base' (Treviño, 1986, p608). Although Ford and Richardson (1994) describe this framework as plausible, their comprehensive review neglects Treviño's (1986) model. Bartlett (2003) however does not, and reveals fundamental weaknesses regarding 'the limited description of the ethical decision-making process offered by Kohlberg's (1969) stages of CMD', the result is 'a less than satisfactory framework for understanding ethical decision-making at work' (p233). He concludes by offering advice, but suggests that scholars focus on a more comprehensive work values/ethical decision-making framework.

Jones (1991) developed the Issue-Contingent Model, building on Rest's (1986) original conceptualisation. It is considered a complex manifestation (Schminke *et al.*, 2010), and a synthesis of selected frameworks (Ferrell and Gresham, 1985, Treviño, 1986, Rest, 1986, Hunt and Vitell, 1986, Dubinsky and Loken, 1989), but has been used mainly in a marketing context. The precursor to most of these models was a conceptualisation called the Normative Decision Model (Vroom and Yetton, 1973), a five stage procedure evolving from contingency leadership theory (House, 1971, Fiedler, 1978). It seemingly accommodated for the situational variables, which influenced the decision-making process. But, according to Yukl (2013) it is highly assumptive of the role of subordinates, the quality of their information to aid decision-making, and whether they trust the leader. The model is accompanied by a set of assumptive decision-rules negating the original simplicity, which instead render the model complex and difficult to apply. Yukl (1990, 2013) has since downscaled the model to one of his own making to include autocratic, consultative and joint decisions. But he makes a further mistake, in labelling the decision quality in his first stage 'not important', he denies

the relativistic and subjective nature of others' perceptions; surely for someone somewhere a decision has relevance?

Comprehensive reviews of the ethical decision-making empirical literature have been carried out by scholars (Ford and Richardson, 1994, O'Fallon and Butterfield, 2005) and span collectively from 1978 to 2003. Craft (2013) has produced the most recent manifestation to encompasses 2004 to 2011. The two most recent studies helpfully use identical categorisations and pinpoint specific dependent variable foci. Interestingly, moral intensity, gender philosophy/value orientation, and codes of ethics all feature highly for studies carried out pre-2004, but the most contemporary review identifies personality, gender, education/employment/experience, and cultural values/nationality as receiving the most attention from the field. Although a distinct shift in variable importance is obvious, there is consensus. I agree with Martin and Parmar (2012) in that Rest's (1986) ethical decision-making model supplemented with Jones's (1991) Moral Intensity Construct is the most useful. As discussed in the previous section, when augmented it might allow for the normative elements of decision-making.

But the applicability of even Jones's (1991) model is questionable when it comes to leaders who typify their decision-making as a gut feeling or instinct (Schminke *et al.*, 2010). Scholars have focused on slow and deliberate decision-making where time is not a moderating factor. Decision-making is murky and messy (Burns, 1978), and fraught with a unique set of constraints and enablers at every turn (Martin and Parmar, 2012). Few studies have considered intuitional or fast subconscious decision-making (Martin and Parmar, 2012), but fewer still have attempted integration (Thiel *et al.*, 2012). Ethical decision-making is not just a rational process (Woiceshyn, 2011) carried out by rational actors (Palazzo *et al.*, 2012), decisions can be made intuitively outside of conscious awareness. This notion is supported by Reynolds (2006b) and Salvador and Folger (2009) who discuss the dual process model of ethical decision-making; where automatic, intuitive processing is coupled with high-order conscious reasoning.

Intuition or the 'knowing what is right' is the most common form of ethical decision-making (Reynolds, 2006b, Yukl, 2013). It falls into the category of non-rational decision-making (Schminke *et al.*, 2010). For Kaspar (2015) it has no decision procedure, it is a deliberately open theory which favours plural moral rationalisations. It does however, rely on the recognition that a moral situation exists. For instance, when new circumstances present themselves we search our cognitive stores for similar events and apply what best fits; unaware that we may be simply reinforcing familiarity (Werhane *et al.*, 2014). This shortcutting becomes a habit in absence of the full rational process. Whilst it has its value, especially when there is no time for deliberation and little information, intuition as a process can no more stand-alone than rational, linear, or stage-to-stage models. As such, new studies have begun to integrate the two, prioritise the 'fast' process and incorporate ideas around the importance of expertise and experience (Shanteau, 1988, Dane and Sonenshein, 2015) in effective fast processing (Martin and Parmar, 2012). But the manner in which these systems interact remains both an area of contention (Woiceshyn, 2011, Martin and Parmar, 2012) and one of great interest.

Arguably, the polar opposite to intuitive, fast, leader decision-making is indecisiveness. The decision-maker is paralysed, in a decisional prison (Elaydi, 2006), either undecided-comfortable or undecided-uncomfortable (Jones, 1989). Burns (1978) in his seminal text *Leadership* describes leaders who would evade the large decisions by making small ones, engaging in activities to satisfy themselves, to relieve their own conflict and strain. He also identified another unconducive, even more rare response to the decision; surrender. Tactics such as these along with deferring decisions, or choosing indecision might be characterised as non-commitment. However Cooke and Slack (1991) note that the do-nothing option can sometimes be the best option; as a reasoned decision in itself. Werhane *et al.* (2014) instead sees moral evasion; a decision-maker after a quiet exit, foregoing and forgetting, passively accepting, and thus demonstrating a lack of courage. Elaydi (2006) notes that acquiescence 'is toxic to a leader's ability to perform' (p1372). Failure to address biases and inadequate mindsets means

that leaders put themselves and their organisations in danger (Werhane *et al.*, 2014).

Ethical decision-making models as all-encompassing expressions of the process of decision-making are undeniably flawed (Schriesheim, 2003). Indeed, it may well be naïve to assume that such complex scenarios can be explained in a series of assumptive steps in the first place. After all, 'it is impossible to obtain a snapshot of the factors that account for ethical decisions' (Pimentel *et al.*, 2010, p366). Of those examined, two sequential cognitive based models have stood the test of time and continue to be used e.g. Rest (1986) and Jones (1991) . But according to a review carried out by Whittier *et al.* (2006) such ethical decision-making models have two major drawbacks; they 'should have a focus on real-world applicability or ecological validity' and 'have the capability of actually recommending decisions' (p245). Models not only lack efficacy, but they also focus too readily on *what* a moral agent thinks, not *how* (Reynolds, 2006b). Although the role of intuition, mindfulness and sensemaking interrelate with the notion of ethical expertise, i.e. the role of experience in ethical decision-making, there needs to be a stronger focus on what leaders actually do, rather than what they ought to (Zeni *et al.*, 2016). Research must move away from contexts such as marketing and business psychology and canvass individuals who actually face morally intense situations.

I agree with Pimentel *et al.* (2010) in that ethical decision-making models lack integration and ethical foresight. They also neglect to anticipate how a 'wild card' or time constraints can influence ethical decisions (McDevitt *et al.*, 2007). As has been suggested, the focus needs to shift away from the slow preferences of historical models. The interconnections between fast and slow systems of deliberation need to be better understood (Martin and Parmar, 2012). Rational theories have all too readily dominated the study of ethical decision-making (Thiel *et al.*, 2012). Bartlett (2003) and more recently Woiceshyn (2011) suggest 'studying ethical decision-making explicitly', by examining how 'people handle ethical dilemmas', interviewing executives 'in one industry at a time…with a track

record of... success that are recognized as principled or ethical decision-makers, by their peers or experts' (p320). Ethical decision-making models may provide retrospective framing, but it is unlikely that leaders would consult models in the heat of deliberation (Schriesheim, 2003).

2.5.3 Ethical decision-making and ethical leadership: conceptual fusion

In reality, ethical decision-making is multifaceted in nature (Thiel *et al.*, 2012) and dependent upon recognition of the ethical issue, without this the decision is not ethical. Therefore, the crucial aspect of ethical decision-making rests on the skill, expertise, experience and ethical disposition of the leader (moral agent) to recognise the ethical implications. Put simply, this stimulus sets off a series of events, influenced by causal factors, which culminate in an ethical decision (Thiel *et al.*, 2012).

This review has revealed that for some scholars ethics seems almost external to both ethical leadership and ethical decision-making, whereby the processes and models are the focus. Little is made of the complex, interpersonal dynamics (Eisenbeiß, 2012) at the interface between ethical leadership (leadership ethics) and ethical decision-making. This study does not wish to restrict decision-making to a model, or rational theories, but to understand more fully the constraints and enablers (April *et al.*, 2010, 2011) to high stakes, morally intense decision-making, when time is not a luxury and the welfare of others is of primary concern. It is a messy and murky process 'of successive approximations-of continuous refinement of purpose' (Burns, 1978, p384). Ethical decision-making is meaningfully special and different from other decision-making processes (Elm and Radin, 2012), and presents as the actionable and visible manifestation of ethical leadership. It extends from perceptions of the 'appropriateness of the leader's behavior in workplace relationships' and 'rests on the perceived ethicality of a leader's decisions' (Thiel *et al.*, 2012, p52). Ethical leadership and ethical decision-making are thus, symbiotic in nature.

I believe that to fully understand ethical leadership and ethical decision-making, ethical pluralism must be embraced. Both normative and descriptive approaches are equally relevant (Eisenbeiß, 2012). A tripartite (teleological, deontological and virtue) framework adopted by Whetstone (2005) and further endorsed by Resick *et al.* (2006) is considered as fraternal to theological influences on leader disposition and behaviour. I accept the contribution of the sociological lens, its descriptive nature in providing understandings regarding the means by which leaders may have acquired influences. However, it seems unable to fully accommodate the origin of the influences themselves, or how individuals fail to notice gradual deteriorations in ethical conduct, and how departure from good practice paves the way for a shift in norms (Drumwright *et al.*, 2015).

2.5.4   Conclusion to theoretical literature

This chapter has presented as a comprehensive journey through the notion of ethics in leadership. It began in the broad domain of leadership where ethics emerged as either implicitly normative or attributable through lists of characteristics. The latter were typified as descriptive leadership theories such as trait and behavioural conceptions and were relied upon to explain qualities that leaders possessed. But they were not able to accommodate the all-important situational factors which influenced leader behaviour, or to reflect situation-specific complexity. This inability to provide the necessary understandings, coupled with recent public transgressions by leaders prompted scholars to re-examine the nature and role of ethics in leadership. Furthermore, the explicit and fundamental nature of ethics was beginning to be recognised as crucial, value-laden components of leadership (Hannah *et al.*, 2014).

On the surface, new genre leadership theories appeared to solve the theoretical issues, and seemed able to embody positive leadership behaviour, but close inspection saw them accommodate unsalient behaviour. The descriptive elements of theories such as transformational and charismatic leadership did little to explicate or foreground the underlying normative philosophic origins. This

fixation meant that scholars were superficially making room for ethics, but not really determining *what* made leaders ethically distinctive. Whilst this literature review has explored philosophical ethical and moral theory, demonstrating how they are integrated with the leadership literature, it has found them delineated, and delimited by definitional ambiguity, with descriptive and normative approaches splitting the field. Normative theories (deontology, teleology and virtue ethics) were also found deficient as sole framework, but as a trinity they represented a strong, more fitting guide for understanding how leaders might frame their behaviour. But even this hybrid fell short of explicating the spiritual and religious concepts involved in beliefs and values systems.

The difficulty in finding an all-encompassing theoretical framework to explain ethics in leadership appeared to be solved by Treviño *et al.* (2003) who developed and tested a construct entitled ethical leadership. They adopted a sociological framework and although they claimed that ethical leadership was more than just traits, the construct was essentially, personality-based. A definition was produced which appeared normative in nature, but involved no classical ethical theory. In leaving the construct deliberately vague it was simultaneously strengthened and weakened. Whilst social learning theory would appear to accommodate all learned behaviour; meaning that philosophical, theological and sociological influences could be included, exactly which of these frameworks, or combinations contributed to the *moral person* remains unresolved. As an overarching framework it was adequate, but as a means of understanding the often-subjective truths and realities of leader decision-making, it lacked precision.

The leader decision-making literature, specifically relating to ethics has also been examined here. Again, a similar delineation between normative and descriptive approaches was evident. Although new ground has been broken in the area of neuroethics, it remains autonomous with the major focus of ethical decision-making in leadership still centred around two popular models (Rest, 1986, Jones, 1991). Whilst both include essential pre-cursors to decision-making such as the recognition of the moral issue and the role of moral intensity, they

were found assumptive regarding the nature of decisions. Not all decisions were found to be rational, but also instinctual. As such, decision-making could be a dual process, both intuitive and reasoned. This study accepts that, although useful, sequential or cognitive based decision-making models are not adequate to demonstrate the underlying formative influences, constraints and enablers which affect the decision-making process. It is a process undeniably difficult to 'capture in static models' (Martin and Parmar, 2012, p303). Therefore, to further scholarship we need to make 'explicit the role of the individual and the environment...as well as the range of speed and reasons available' (Martin and Parmar, 2012, p303).

Theoretical issues addressed in this study:

- This study acknowledges the contribution of Brown *et al.* (2005) and positions the hybrid philosophical frameworks of Whetstone (2001, 2005) and Resick *et al.* (2006) alongside theological concepts (Eisenbeiß, 2012). It is accepted that there may be crossover with the broad and vague parameters of the ethical leadership construct with its social theory underpinnings. I take the stance that the latter is not sufficient to provide the deeper understandings needed to further the field.
- More needs to be understood about the enablers and constraints (April *et al.*, 2010, 2011) to ethical decision-making, especially in relation to alternative professional contexts.

These foci are necessary to more fully understand the special challenges (ethical) leaders face in 'time pressured and stress-loaded contexts' (Thomas and Walker, 2011, p102), and to help develop future ethical leaders. Leadership research has led to few significant improvements in leader education, selection or preparation. Schriesheim (2003) argues that 'leadership research is in fact irrelevant, for leader development...we look for the wrong things. We look for statistical significance...our theories, are not clearly valid' and in addition they and our 'models, and frameworks are highly complex' (p182). Ineffective, short-term,

episodic, unconnected leadership development programmes do little to educate, develop or prepare our burgeoning leaders for future challenges (Day, 2011, Drumwright *et al.*, 2015) at the sharp end (Thomas and Walker, 2011).

Ethics training clearly needs to go beyond MBA classrooms (Knights and O'Leary, 2006) and formal ethics programs (Kaptein *et al.*, 2005). Whilst 'many new programs are oriented toward helping managers become more effective at work and life in general' they 'do not directly target the area of ethics and leadership' (Northouse, 2010, p395), nor do they attend to the more worrying or risky elements of decision-making (Werhane *et al.*, 2014). Perhaps more innovative ethics training can help individuals readjust, and 'develop an enhanced understanding of the ethical stakes involved in their leadership practices and to increase their ethical awareness' (Langlois and Lapointe, 2010, p160). Given recent scandals, I agree with Elmuti *et al.* (2005) in that our need has never been so great.

We must use the 'crucibles of leadership: experiences, often unexpected and traumatic, always intense, that will cause leaders to stop in their tracks and question who they are and what really matters' (Gill, 2011, p347). There needs to be a practical and more holistic approach (Elmuti *et al.*, 2005) which utilises leader's life stories, trigger events, and where leaders have the opportunity to be active participants in their own narrative to self-construct (Avolio and Hannah, 2008). Leader candidates must be challenged on the grounding of their ethical principles and moral values, but to do this they need to possess a degree of self-awareness (Starratt, 2004, Gill, 2011). If, according to Langlois and Lapointe (2010) ethical foundations are already present in leaders, then we need to think about how these moral schemas can be activated to become automatic (Ritter, 2006). This reaffirms the notion that 'moral character is infinitely trainable through habit forming practices' (Millar and Poole, 2011c, p253). Therefore, leadership development in regards to ethics needs to focus on supporting an individual's personal ethical foundations as a matter of perpetual constancy. After

all, as has been argued, leadership skills and abilities are not a natural endowment (Elmuti *et al.*, 2005); leaders are made, not born.

Chapter Three – Methodological shortcomings: the case for qualitative research

This chapter is concerned primarily with the methodologies and methods used in past studies and the issues they raise. This examination of leadership, ethical leadership and ethical decision-making studies seeks to provide support for the research design explored in Chapter Four. Although I draw attention to the predilection for quantitative, positivist approaches, I also evaluate and discuss the scholarly movement towards qualitative methods. As such, this chapter presents as the foundation for the operational details more fully attended to later in this thesis, but also offers balance regarding extant empirical studies.

3.1 *Worldviews in leadership research*

Social scientists have made significant contributions to leadership research, but studies continue to provide conflicting evidence, rendering the usefulness of leadership research highly questionable. Chemers (2000) understands that research is very much influenced by methodological trends and fashions. Hunter *et al.* (2007) note that preoccupation with large, inappropriate sample sizes, and complex quantitative analytical methods have resulted in 'a self-confirming cycle' (p443). Heavy reliance upon the 'traditional social science repertoire of quantitative methodologies' has produced 'conveniently summarised' results 'in the form of time- and context-free generalisations' (Klenke, 2008, p3). The focus has been on 'isolated effects of leaders or followers at one or another level of analysis' (Dinh *et al.*, 2014, p37). Ciulla (1995) contends that, 'leadership researchers are frustrated... trying to do science but they know they aren't doing good science' (p9). Scholars are summarily ignoring each other's contributions (House and Aditya, 1997), sustaining themselves at the expense of explicating leadership. The nuances and social dynamics of specific behaviours are neglected in favour of generic leadership functions, tested in a piece-meal fashion (Dinh *et al.*, 2014).

We need to take the long view, find common themes, and integrate perspectives. Leadership is a complex phenomenon, quantitative approaches in the study of human behaviour, positivist assumptions and a concern for control limits the capacity to take every day experiences into account (Cohen *et al.*, 2011). Such approaches lack the intimacy, depth, expression and understandings which exemplify the hallmarks of qualitative, interpretive research. Parry *et al.* (2014) note that despite promotion by qualitative champions (Conger, 1998, Bryman, 2004, Klenke, 2008), qualitative approaches are still not sufficiently appreciated. They are often considered a preparatory method, 'nothing more than anecdotal, impressionistic analyses... providing a stream of research questions... amenable to quantitative research' (Bryman, 2004, p764). The seminal study conducted by Treviño *et al.* (2003) is case in point. After qualitatively generating avenues for investigation into ethical leadership scholars (Brown *et al.*, 2005) opted for quantitative testing and validation and the field followed.

Klenke (2008) and Brooks and Normore (2015) suggest that leadership scholars must move away from the application of inappropriate positivist traditions. The preoccupation with generalisability has resulted in sterile findings, with crucial, seemingly irrelevant information filtered out in favour of the 'presence and frequency of static terms' (Conger, 1998, p109). The focus needs to shift to *how* the work refines, deepens or refutes ideas for research and practice, and transferability (Brooks and Normore, 2015). Hunter *et al.* (2007) summarises thus:

> *'If we concede that leadership is a complex phenomenon, then... correlational analysis will simply not answer our research questions and we will be forced to apply more sophisticated analytical approaches' (p443).*

Qualitative research has much to offer leadership studies (Conger, 1998). It could be argued that there is no, one, unifying definition of leadership for a reason; it is a complex, symbolic, and dynamic. One-dimensional, single-level perspectives are incapable of capturing or measuring attitudes, intentions, or interactions. Whilst some leadership scholars (Thach and Thompson, 2007, De Hoogh and Den

Hartog, 2008, Thompson *et al.*, 2010) have responded, the advice has largely gone unheeded.

3.1.1 Leadership research, and the quest for empirical certainty

Empirical leadership research emerged through disciplines such as psychology and management, and may have begun as an exploration of the physical and personality characteristics of leaders by psychologists. But it has developed into a field intent on prediction, and control. Increased complexity (Dinh *et al.*, 2014), the greater use of more, seemingly objective measures (Jago, 1982) has overshadowed simplicity. Although early methodological approaches involved testing linear relationships, single traits and how they were interrelated, they failed to recognise how and why leaders might adapt behaviour for different situations (Yukl, 2013). According to Parry (1998) leadership was ever-changing and integrative, but leadership research which purported to take context and situation into consideration still failed to show how multiple situational variables might interact, or their moderating effects (Yukl, 2013). The assumptive and predictive nature of the espoused interactions remained a concern (Schoonhoven, 1981).

Yukl (2013) describes survey research limitations as serious, contending that alternative methods are needed, recommending, 'observations, incident diaries, and interviews with leaders and followers' (p325). It seems that little has changed since Karmel (1978) described pre-developed measures and approaches to leadership as assumptive, constraining and limiting; driven by the forces of operationalisation and an *a priori* outcome. Scholars were measuring attitudes about behaviour, rather than the behaviour itself (Conger, 1998). The reproduction of a contrived version of the social construction denies the emergence of unexpected data (Alvesson, 1996). By continuing to test in sterile, time and context free conditions (Gray, 2009) scholars overlook 'the significance of dynamic event-level processes that create the uncertainty and variability that characterize leadership behaviour' (Dinh *et al.*, 2014, p53). If they cannot be developed and tested without complete confidence, then they are not the correct

fit (Antonakis *et al.*, 2004a). Such studies, with their contaminated instruments (Karmel, 1978) will continue to cyclically reaffirm similar constructs, relationships and methodologies, resulting in a body of work built upon dubious foundations (Hunter *et al.*, 2007).

> *'Leadership researchers have been engaged for some time in a collective mea culpa about the dominance and limitations of the questionnaire in their field. Now it is time to do something about it, particularly at a juncture at which new theoretical approaches and influences appear to be influencing the field more and more' (Bryman, 2011b, p26).*

3.1.2 Ethical leadership studies; scales ad infinitum

In order to support my methodological approaches I felt it important to get an overview of the current state of empirical research at the intersection of ethics and leadership. Similarly to general leadership research, the overt intention appeared to concern the measurement of antecedents, outcomes and processes, with scales developed and employed to predict and assess behaviour. The ethical leadership construct as incepted by Brown *et al.* (2005) would be measured by such a scale. The Ethical Leadership Scale (ELS) was developed as a result of earlier, extensive qualitative research by Treviño *et al.* (2003) . Despite the fact that the ELS (Brown *et al.*, 2005) was borne of sound qualitative principles and according to the authors, could tap 'the full domain of ethical leadership' (p123) an examination of extant empirical ethical leadership research finds the opposite is true (Zhu *et al.*, 2015, p90).

Yukl *et al.* (2013) critiqued a range of scales, and found that the Ethical Leadership Survey (ELS) (Brown *et al.*, 2005), the Perceived Leader Integrity Scale (Craig and Gustafson, 1998), the Ethical Leadership at Work Questionnaire (De Hoogh and Den Hartog, 2008) and other instruments related to ethical values and behaviours, such as the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) (Walumbwa *et al.*, 2008), all showed limitations. The ELS omitted crucial aspects of ethical leadership, but included others not wholly relevant, and although the ALQ was

found to overlap with the ELS, it could not cover all the components of ethical leadership. However, the greatest shortcoming, present in all three scales was related to the vague and ambiguous wording of items, especially the use of negative descriptors, to skew answers and thus results.

It became evident that the ELS could not stand as sole measure for ethical leadership. Thus, the boom and bust cycle described by Schriesheim and Cogliser (2009) began in earnest. Jordan *et al.* (2011) used the ELS with Rest's Defining Issues Test (1979) to establish whether follower perceptions of ethical leadership were dependent upon the cognitive moral development of the leader. Avey *et al.* (2011) used it with a three-item scale measuring self-esteem (Judge *et al.*, 2003) as a moderating influence, and credited themselves with enhancing ethical leadership construct validation by offering specific conditions where ethical leadership might matter for followers. Toor and Ofori (2009) used it in conjunction with the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) designed by Avolio and Bass (2004) to measure peer and subordinate perceptions of the Full Range Leadership Model, along with the Organizational Description Questionnaire (Bass and Avolio, 1993) to measure organisational culture.

Walumbwa and Schaubroeck (2009) also teamed the ELS with the MLQ, then added the 'Big Five' Inventory (Goldberg, 1990) personality test; a seven-item scale measuring psychological safety (Edmondson, 1999), and a six-item scale to rate voice behaviour (Van Dyne and LePine, 1998). They insisted that two personality characteristics could independently predict the extent to which subordinates viewed leaders as ethical. Kalshoven *et al.* (2011b) replicated, then extended this study and used another combination of ELS with the Leader Member Exchange (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995) tool to control biasing in the relationship between leader and follower. Although they freely admitted that their correlations lacked stability, they nonetheless, validated their findings by expressing a parity with others who had also tenuously linked leadership styles with personality.

In order to assess the role of ethical climate between ethical leadership and employee misconduct, Mayer *et al.* (2010) utilised the ELS along with a scale to measure ethical climate and an anti-social behaviour measure (Robinson and O'Leary-Kelly, 1998). A further multidimensional tool was developed by Kalshoven *et al.* (2011b) entitled The Ethical Leadership at Work (ELW) Questionnaire to assess the conduct of managers based on seven behaviours related to ethical leadership in business administration. Langlois *et al.* (2014) finding it incomplete suggested their own iteration, the Ethical Leadership Questionnaire (ELQ). On review, and like many others, it lacked validity as it was based upon a pre-defined conception of what constituted an ethical dilemma. The field remains replete with scales and measures, which have been developed from pre-determined boundaries, or 'bolt-ons' to assess an increasingly complex range of variables within and across ethics related leadership theories.

Similar issues were found in empirical virtue ethics studies. Despite a normative nature they were subjected to positivist treatment. Shanahan and Hyman (2003) compounded problems during preliminary scale development by offering their sample of marketing students course credit. Although, Neubert *et al.* (2009) did not canvass students, their study was also ethically questionable. They used cash incentives and a third party company to recruit 'willing and interested participants' (p162) to complete a total of five scales to establish *the virtuous influence of ethical leadership behaviour*. But they were too optimistic regarding the potential generalisability of their work. Their sample was flawed to the extent that it appeared both single source, and demographically uniform; they would be unwise to claim that their insights applied to more culturally diverse settings.

Common source bias was not an issue for Stouten *et al.* (2013) who canvassed a range of individuals drawn from Europe and the US in their study regarding ethicality. Their multi-method, multi-source approach did not include leaders, only employees, co-workers, supervisors and a student cohort for the final study of four. Although, Riggio *et al.* (2010) relied solely upon subordinate perceptions of leaders for the development of their Leadership Virtues

Questionnaire (LVQ) their study fell short of providing a complete picture of leader character, and thus compares unfavourably against other-rated measurement instruments.

Myriad instruments fail to firstly, cover the full domain of ethical leadership, and secondly, appear too reliant upon a descriptive approach (Zhu *et al.*, 2015). Wicks and Freeman (1998) note that 'in talking about things as they exist' (p125) and documenting facts, we simply report, when in contrast we ought to find, interpret and challenge. They further contend that 'The World Is "Out There" but Not "Objective"' (p126), and that researchers should instead employ methods, which provide the most compelling answers to research questions. Whilst it is worth bearing in mind that most of the assumptions spoken of here are not likely to result in 'the neutralization of an entire leadership theory' (Hunter *et al.*, 2007, p443), they challenge the foundational stability of the current research field.

3.1.3 Ethical decision-making studies; presets, scenarios and samples

Ethical decision-making studies do not fare much better. Bartlett (2003) notes that little has changed despite calls for more sophisticated methodologies. O'Fallon and Butterfield (2005) note two overriding problems; scholars continue to use convenient student samples (Langlois, 2011), and test ethical decision-making using scenarios. Over 55% of studies in the field of moral theory and administration rely on data gathered in this way despite strong criticism (Langlois, 2011). It is undergraduates at US Universities who are most frequently canvassed by scholars (Morris and McDonald, 1995, Barnett, 2001, May and Pauli, 2002, Detert *et al.*, 2008, Stenmark and Mumford, 2011). Whilst Strong and Mayer (1992) and Reynolds (2006a) prefer MBA students, Stenmark and Mumford (2011) and Barnett (2001) canvassed undergraduates. I question whether a youthful (average age 19.66 years), inexperienced respondent cohort was appropriate for research regarding ethical leadership or leader ethical decision-making.

The use of student cohorts also appeared to be ethically questionable. Leitsch (2004) relied upon accounting students to return a survey consisting of four hypothetical scenarios and related questions regarding MI. Participation in the study was an alternative to an assignment for the class. Although she did not offer cash incentives like Ruedy and Schweitzer (2011) , this is ethically questionable research. Of the research examined, few scholars openly discuss research ethics.

Barnett (2001) was more explicit about his shortcomings; he admitted that his student sample was a limitation, and that the scenarios were not actual ethical situations. Although, he sensibly concluded that his results were suggestive, like others, he justified his methods by claiming that this was common practice in business ethics research. An examination of earlier studies by Morris and McDonald (1995) regarding MI also bear out this claim. Frey (2000) and Butterfield *et al.* (2000) also used scenarios in their qualitative study regarding moral awareness. Although they recognised the potential bias concerning the lack of generalisability, and concerns regarding anonymity, they did not concede that the scenarios themselves had potential to distort results. Instead, like Watley and May (2004) and more recently Elango *et al.* (2010) they justified their method by claiming, like Barnett (2001) that scenarios were widely used.

It would take a further five years for Butterfield to learn, through a joint comprehensive review of the ethical decision-making literature, that scenarios could be biased. An ethical dilemma was not necessarily an ethical dilemma for every respondent; context was not communal (O'Fallon and Butterfield, 2005). Narrow scenarios had the potential to 'impact the researchers ability to manipulate the variables of interest, which in turn could result in response biases' (O'Fallon and Butterfield, 2005, p404). Despite these issues, scenarios remained in use, often in the guise of vignettes. Jordan's (2009) mixed method study concerning moral awareness, is case in point. Although her study concerned business managers and academic professors, in a for-profit, not-for-profit comparison, the pre-testing and selection of the vignettes were carried out on MBA

and doctoral students. They were deliberately easy to understand and simple because she assumed that more complex vignettes would have resulted in the managers being able to show superior performance. Surely this ability to show contrast across the sample could have revealed nuance?

Reynolds (2006a) and Lincoln and Holmes (2010) made no such mistake. The former manipulated variables in the scenario to alter moral intensity (MI), and the latter used five scenarios, each varying in ethical intensity. However, there were other problems; Lincoln and Holmes (2010) posed questions with presumptive Likert scale responses and although their US Navy chaplain sample appeared impressive (n=352), it could be argued that their respondents already possessed a heightened level of cognitive moral development; a crucial (untested) variable. Frey (2000) also examined MI, and like Jordan (2009) used vignettes, justifying their use as a novel and sensitive approach. Although Frey (2000) admits that his data was predisposed, he did not account for this in his analysis.

Despite the concerns outlined here regarding sample appropriateness and scenario use, both Reynolds (2006a) and Woiceshyn (2011) continue to advocate the use of vignettes; but issue a caveat. Vignettes or scenarios should be used in conjunction with a variety of supporting methods to accommodate for their methodological shortcomings. And whilst these could include journaling, observations and interviews to verify and extend findings, like others, I believe that countermeasures do not attend to the underlying issue, i.e. the questionability of scenarios (O'Fallon and Butterfield, 2005). They are assumptive on a variety of levels as argued, and unnecessary when it is possible to simply ask a veritable ethical decision-maker to identify and reflect on an ethical dilemma they had actually experienced. Indeed, there are scholars (Westaby *et al.*, 2010, Selart and Johansen, 2011) who took the trouble to canvass actual decision-makers, but sadly these studies fall short of achieving their objectives due to other issues regarding research design.

Woiceshyn (2011) recommends scholars focus on specific industries (i.e. setting specific) to enable cross comparisons, and break away from this cycle of sample convenience. Study participants ought to be drawn from 'managers or executives...that are recognised as principled or ethical decision-makers, by their peers or experts' (Woiceshyn, 2011, p320) to advance the field.

3.1.4 *Distinctive qualitative approaches in leadership research*

Historically, qualitative research in leadership has included single or multiple case study designs using the qualitative interview, participant observations or research using documents (Bryman, 2011b). There have also been studies conducted using grounded theory, ethnography and historiometry. But these alternative methods are less popular because they require a 'prolonged engagement with research participants' (Klenke, 2008, p185). Grounded theory is underutilised in leadership research on account of its time consuming nature and that it involves the views of a large number of participants (Creswell, 2013). It is concerned principally with the building of theory from data (Corbin and Strauss, 2008), and is thus more commonly seen in research areas where 'there is lack of theory and concepts to describe and explain what is going on' (Robson, 2006, p90). Although there are crossover features with this study in terms of data collection methods, divergence is evident in the methods of analysis.

According to Creswell (2013) and Parry *et al.* (2014) strict proponents of grounded theory would employ specific, systematic and selective coding. Further analytical integration and verification of the empirical materials would result in *well-developed* categories in terms of properties, dimensions and variation (Corbin and Strauss, 2008) following *saturation*. If the quest is to bridge the gap between deductive theory and statistical abstraction as stated by Hart (2006) then grounded theory 'is a fruitful direction for researchers to take' (Kempster and Parry, 2011, p106). Parry (1998) has been a long-term advocate for grounded theory in leadership research, calling for scholars to recognise its ability to discover, develop and verify theory concerning issues relating to human

behaviour. Since it is difficult to fully adopt such a theory, scholars tend to carry out partial grounded theory (Parry, 1998) which is designed to accommodate the tension between enabling nuanced and contextualised richness to emerge, and the need to satisfy the demands of the broader scientific community (Kempster and Parry, 2011). For this study, the shortfalls regarding grounded theory as approach appeared too significant; there would be no possibility of substantive participant engagement or replicability, nor would there be maximum internal variety in subjects (Glaser, 1978).

Creswell (2013) contends that, if the aim of grounded theory 'is to develop a theory' (p93) then the aim of ethnography is to study and describe 'the behaviours of a culture-sharing group' (p95). According to Klenke (2008) and Creswell (2013) ethnography not only demands immersion in the setting but also requires a 'high regard… for explaining behavior from the emic perspective' (Klenke, 2008, p205); a crucial focus in this study. Creswell (2013) deems it appropriate for adoption if the research question concerns the exploration of 'beliefs, language, behaviors, and issues of power, resistance and dominance' (p70). Certainly, an ethnographic design is especially relevant if the group under investigation is neither mainstream, nor familiar, as is the case here.

But it is the distinctive features of ethnography which render it unsuitable here. For Creswell (2013) the researcher ought to have a background in cultural anthropology and a prolonged access to the sample and setting. In this study some of the respondents were retired, no longer in their natural habitats. Furthermore, there was no observation of their day-to-day leadership, no 'getting… into 'the field' and staying there' (Robson, 2006, p187). There would be no opportunity for the researcher to participate as a group member, nor would there be opportunity to 'become one of them' (Packer, 2011, p212). Whilst ethnography possesses redeeming features for the qualitative study of leadership, and has the potential to reveal undiscovered aspects 'which interviewees may be unaware of, or which for other reasons, they find difficult to articulate' (Alvesson, 1996, p467), it was not adopted here. I would argue that other approaches can produce similar benefits

and take the view that it is the nature of the questioning, the relationship with participants, that enables such revelations.

Of the three qualitative approaches discussed here, historiometry appears to be the least well known. Klenke (2008) states that it concerns the examination of biographical materials of prominent individuals. Parry *et al.* (2014) describes it as emphasising 'the leader, rather than leadership' (p134). For instance, leader personality profiles might be scrutinised alongside primary and secondary sources (e.g. speeches, publications, or correspondence) to provide a more complete picture. Although Parry *et al.* (2014) admire the meta-analytic properties of historiometric research, they also recognise several critical methodological issues; theory, sources, controls, samples, predictors and criteria. Such issues were also identified by Klenke (2008) who specifically criticised historiometric leadership studies for informational gaps (lack of historical data), low validity and limited theoretical applicability.

However, it is my belief that the quality of the historic sources renders the method questionable. Heavy reliance on historical records and secondary sources may not always be accurate or sufficient for making inferences about the leader (Shamir, 2011, Parry *et al.*, 2014). Furthermore, since genuine historiometric studies typically involve highly specialised statistical and psychometric analysis, whereby qualitative data is quantified (Parry *et al.*, 2014); historiometric studies cannot truly be characterised as qualitative research. In addition, historiometric research, like ethnographic research is considered more suitable for adoption in studies which take account of, and seek to evolve over time. Although Robson (2006) does not discount the adoption of 'hybrid' strategies (p90), he does remind researchers that it is the research question which is directive. Klenke (2008) agrees, noting that Simonton (2003) is in favour only when the research question cannot be answered in any other way. Whilst it was possible for me to access historiometric data regarding several of the respondents to corroborate testimonies; I could not find information on them all. As such, historiometry is

rejected as sole method on account of its unclear typology (Klenke, 2008) and universal unsuitability.

This study seeks to adopt a particular philosophical, ideological and epistemological stance, an approach that goes beyond data gathering techniques. As such, I felt compelled to reject a mixed method approach. To incorporate positivist methodologies would be to accept the legitimacy and necessity of quantitative verification. This is a viewpoint supported by Klenke (2008) who contends that 'different methods reflect epistemological debates about the status of data produced' (p157). Although combining methods can, according to Mason (2006) facilitate outside the box thinking, enable theorising beyond the micro and meso, extend qualitative explanation, and provide stronger inferences; it can also present additional challenges. Not only must a researcher be skilled in both methods, but they must also be able to reconcile the opposing epistemological and ontological stances inherent in mixed method design (Klenke, 2008); the latter was paramount here. There was no desire to appear unfaithful to the underlying tenets of the research, nor as consequence, devalue the data. The intention was to seek new meanings, not to cyclically reaffirm or corroborate what had already been done.

3.1.5 Qualitative studies in leadership, ethics and decision-making

As seen earlier (sections 3.1.1, 3.1.2 and 3.1.3) extant empirical ethical leadership research appears predominantly positivist in character, but its methodological origins can be traced to a seminal piece of qualitative research carried out by Treviño *et al.* (2003) . The authors justify the use of an inductive qualitative methodology (Conger, 1998) claiming that, not only is the ethical leadership phenomenon complex, and likely to possess symbolic and subjective aspects, but it is also difficult to capture with other methodologies. They conducted 40 semi-structured interviews, 20 with corporate ethics/compliance officers and 20 with senior executives representing large American companies. The latter were members of the 'top management team' and entirely male (Treviño *et al.*, 2003,

p9); all but one of the industries/contexts were commercial enterprises. Despite the limitations regarding sample diversity this groundbreaking study provided new insights. Ethical leaders were accordingly, people-orientated, their actions and traits were visible. They set standards and demonstrated accountability, and crucially, ethical awareness influenced decision-making.

Treviño *et al.* (2003) criticised the leadership literature at the time for being too focused on characteristics. They noted that extant constructs such as Burns' (1978) transformational leadership did not reflect, nor emphasise a leader's concern for people, or how important exemplar role modelling was for ethical leader behaviour. Ethical leadership included adherence to principles, and the reinforcing of standards. This values-based and fair approach was transmitted through the leader's exceptional communication skills, and decision-making. Ethical leaders possessed broad self-awareness, and a concern for community and society, and were capable of seeing beyond short-term goals. In effect, they could understand the ends, but were also concerned with the means. Whilst the research had tangible, important implications, it was weak on actuals. There was no expansion of stakeholders, community or society, and only a cursory mention of decision-making. Moreover, Treviño *et al.* (2003) recommended that their results be used to:

> *'Develop more complex and precise measures of the ethical dimension of executive leadership... Survey methodologies can better answer questions, such as which dimensions of executive ethical leadership are most important and how they work together, what factors influence the development of ethical leadership in executives, and what organizational and employee outcomes it influences' (p30).*

Sadly, the authors followed their own advice and conducted a further study (Brown *et al.*, 2005). Its explicit intention was to develop and test an ethical leadership scale (ELS). The original qualitative study appeared to be,what Bryman (2004) described as purely preparatory. Furthermore, the follow-up study with its 48-item survey only warranted qualitative attention to uncover whether the newly devised ELS would be up to the task. This involved carrying out 20 in-depth interviews with MBA students at two large American universities. The respondents

were asked to describe a supervisor they regarded as an ethical leader. The authors concluded that they had developed a content valid instrument. They did not seek a comparable sample, or consider canvassing senior executives from not-for-profit organisations. Opportunities to uncover additional dimensions were ignored. Brown *et al.* (2005) dispensed with qualitative methods. The survey would now undergo a comprehensive process of quantitative validation involving further unsuitable respondents, from a variety of inappropriate settings.

This was a key paradigm shift and it resulted in a plethora of quantitative studies. Quietly though, qualitative researchers (Morgan and Thiagarajan, 2009, Resick *et al.*, 2011, April *et al.*, 2011, Heres and Lasthuizen, 2012, Eisenbeiß, 2012, Frisch and Huppenbauer, 2014) were carrying out research designed to enlarge, not reduce the scholarly picture. Resick *et al.* (2011) used 'qualitative methods to explore culture-specific behaviors and characteristics of ethical and unethical leadership' (p 440). They pooled from six societies (USA, Ireland, Germany, the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong, and the Republic of China; Taiwan) to enable a 'more complete and differentiated perspective on beliefs about ethical leadership across and within cultures…which does not restrict responses to a pre-defined list of attributes' (p437). Due to the nature of the research and its insights, they suggested that the findings could be 'critical for developing systems of mentoring and development in context, rather than attempting to implement a one size fits all approach' (p452). Although their study was a departure from their previous quantitative body of work (Resick *et al.*, 2006, Keating *et al.*, 2007, Martin *et al.*, 2009), it also relied upon a well-worn respondent pool known as *The Project GLOBE* (Global Leadership and Organisational Effectiveness) cultural clusters. This framework was devised as a result of extensive data gathered in the mid-1990s, to explore and group societies with similar cultural characteristics and dominant leadership preferences. But its use in their most recent study (Resick *et al.*, 2011) remains questionable. Of the six societies canvassed by Resick *et al.* (2011) , only three were actually in the ten global clusters. Are the GLOBE data clusters still reliable, and current for use in more recent work given recent political, and economic changes?

Of the scholars to explore cultural understandings without reliance upon the GLOBE data, Morgan and Thiagarajan (2009) conducted a phenomenological (pilot) study to offer new conceptualisations regarding ethics, common-sense and rationality, they found ethics to be 'internal to each person though influenced by culture and nature' (p487). Heres and Lasthuizen (2012) adopted a multi-dimensional qualitative approach, canvassing from public, private and hybrid sectors to elicit perceptual differences across and between the contexts. Their study sought to provide a more detailed explication of what ethical leadership *should* look like. Whilst they found that the *moral person*, *moral manager* components of ethical leadership, as described by Treviño *et al.* (2000) were 'universally stable' (Heres and Lasthuizen, 2012, p460), there was concern regarding how the 'components' were 'interpreted and enacted' (p460). Their final recommendation was to develop a context-sensitive measurement instrument to meet these needs. Sadly, confirming Bryman's (2004) well-worn criticism that qualitative research lacked cumulativeness and appeared preparatory.

Frisch and Huppenbauer (2014) attempted to clarify the meaning of 'normatively appropriate behavior' (Brown *et al.*, 2005, p120). They examined its impact on stakeholders by identifying further antecedents and consequences of ethical leadership. They carried out 17 qualitative face-to-face interviews with mainly Swiss executives from a variety of commercial companies who were thought to possess 'an outstanding ethical reputation' (p27). According to the authors, key to their success was the adoption of a qualitative exploratory approach which enabled them to make claims regarding the importance of the ethical leader's role models, how they influenced ethical leader behaviour, and that ethical leadership was an internal perspective. This was in contrast to extant research where the focus had been on the importance of leaders *as* role models for employee behaviour. This felt like a return to the original methodological principles of Treviño *et al.* (2003) . Although Frisch and Huppenbauer (2014) felt that their methods were capable of deepening understandings, and could provide new hypotheses to explore, the study revealed methodological shortcomings, rendering it ungeneralisable; the sample arguably unrepresentative.

Such issues were also echoed in the work of April et al. (2010, 2011). Their qualitative study regarding the enablers and stumbling blocks to leading ethically concerned the views of 646 middle managers that were also enrolled on MBA programmes at two South African Universities. On the surface this appeared to be a significant departure from the use of pre-scripted scenarios. But close examination of the data revealed that the respondents simply used and reflected the language of a provided definition. Although this could cast doubt on the trustworthiness of the data, the results were impressive. Arguably, the study could have been made more robust had they simply asked respondents to conceptualise ethics for themselves instead of providing a definition heavily punctuated with explicit terminology, and biased towards the eventual outcomes.

3.1.6 Analytical issues across the paradigms

Quantitative methods have been found to be the least successful way to reveal 'the elusive and intangible quality of social phenomena' (Cohen *et al.*, 2011, p7). Although Cohen *et al.* (2011) contend that 'most concepts in education... are simply not reducible to numerical analysis. Statistics... combine refinement of process with crudity of concept', they also believe that 'its use is entirely dependent upon fitness for purpose' (p604). My argument is not regarding the use of statistical analysis *per se*. But rather the data derived from such research is flawed *before* it is analysed (Alvesson, 1996) due to the methodological issues highlighted in the previous sections.

In the quantitative analysis of data, the focus switches to operationalising (Antonakis *et al.*, 2004a). Descriptive, correlational and inferential statistical analysis have been the mainstay of the quantitative researcher (Mertens, 2009). A cross-section of ethical leadership and [ethical] decision-making studies show a reliance on particular analytical methods. Component factor analysis (Kalshoven *et al.*, 2011b), confirmatory factor analysis (Jordan, 2009, Kalshoven *et al.*, 2011a, Yukl *et al.*, 2013, Brown and Treviño, 2014), multiple regression analysis (Barnett, 2001, Elango *et al.*, 2010, Lincoln and Holmes, 2010, Yukl *et al.*, 2013), analysis of

variance (Martin *et al.*, 2009, Stouten *et al.*, 2013), multivariate analysis of variance (Keating *et al.*, 2007), structural equation modelling (Brown *et al.*, 2005, Mahsud *et al.*, 2010, Piccolo *et al.*, 2010, Ruiz *et al.*, 2011, Mayer *et al.*, 2012, Resick *et al.*, 2013) and combinations (Resick *et al.*, 2006, Avey *et al.*, 2011) have been used to test, refine, and reduce. Researchers have become overloaded with data, obsessed with techniques and the power of computational methods (Denscombe, 2007).

The resulting data is definitively presented in large tables or in complex diagrams suggesting certainty and significance. Such studies rarely appeal to readers, are complex and inaccessible. Often the research concludes with recommendations to carry out further deeper analysis (Jordan *et al.*, 2011, Brown and Treviño, 2014), extend tools (Mahsud *et al.*, 2010) or more sensibly, include or adopt a qualitative approach (Ruiz *et al.*, 2011, Mayer *et al.*, 2012). Unlike qualitative research, these studies concern themselves with the business of generalisation, leader selection and behaviour prediction.

Although I have argued that qualitative research may appear more appropriate to understand 'the perspectives and behaviours of leaders in business, politics and society as a whole' (Harvey, 2011, p432), scholars appear vague regarding their analytical procedures. Those to avoid any detail included Bowen (2002) , April *et al.* (2011) and Eisenbeiß (2012) . Despite their claims to a phenomenological study, Morgan and Thiagarajan (2009) adopted a constant comparative method of analysis, then numerically transformed the data and statistically tested it; they provided no justification. Several others (Athanasopoulou, 2012, Frisch and Huppenbauer, 2014) opted for a grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) approach to data analysis involving theoretical saturation. A few (Elm and Radin, 2012, Eisenbeiß and Brodbeck, 2014) supplemented grounded theory with thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998) or coded following the work of Miles and Huberman (1994) .

Frick (2009) was more forthcoming, although his phenomenological study detailed procedures, making claims for an 'organised, disciplined, systematic and

rigorous study' (p56) he did not align his processes to particular theorists. In contrast, analytical rigour was reflected in the seminal study by Treviño *et al.* (2003) who followed an interpretative approach outlined by Boyatzis (1998) . On review, thematic coding, sorting and then categorical grouping was common and ranged from the basic (Thach and Thompson, 2007) to the complex, with some (Heres and Lasthuizen, 2012, Frisch and Huppenbauer, 2014, Eisenbeiß and Brodbeck, 2014) also employing computer coding and analysis (MAXQDA and Atlas.ti) to cope with large bodies of textual data. Whilst substantial textual data were also produced during this study, it was decided that in order to remain truthful to the epistemological stance, data would be treated by hand.

3.1.7 Summary of the issues

In accordance with scholars Karmel (1978) , Conger (1998) and Hunter *et al.* (2007) I agree that the insights offered by alterative research approaches have been sacrificed for empirical certainty. Instead of work centred on innovative designs more reflective of the realism of the field (Jago, 1982, Mumford and Fried, 2014) linear conceptions and models have been favoured. Isolated variables, context free data, and bland results have been roundly criticised for sustaining a coterie of leadership scholars (Ciulla, 1995, House and Aditya, 1997). The over-use and assumptive nature of self-reporting surveys and scales to measure and thus predict leader behaviour have fallen short of explicating the nature of ethical leadership (Zhu *et al.*, 2015). A further analysis of a cross section of quantitative ethical leadership studies has also revealed that scholars were fully aware of their shortcomings in relation to source bias (Piccolo *et al.*, 2010, Ruiz *et al.*, 2011, Avey *et al.*, 2011, Brown and Treviño, 2014), method bias (Avey *et al.*, 2011, Kalshoven *et al.*, 2011b), response bias (Mayer *et al.*, 2009, Kalshoven *et al.*, 2011b) and unmeasured or erroneous variables (Avey *et al.*, 2011, Ruiz *et al.*, 2011). As such, these issues and those below point to questionable internal and external validity.

The over-riding issues covered in this chapter reveal sample inappropriateness and flawed research tools (O'Fallon and Butterfield, 2005,

Langlois, 2011). There are a long lists of scholars who conveniently canvassed students (see 3.1.3) instead of seeking principled ethical leaders as recommended by Woiceshyn (2011) . Although some (Barnett, 2001) recognised their own limitations; research behaviour has not changed. The propensity to use scenarios and vignettes as tools to elucidate ethical decision-making remains debatable (O'Fallon and Butterfield, 2005). These have been found assumptive of the sample and were found to include pre-loaded situation-specific variables and biased language. Why ask '*what would you do in these circumstances*', when it is possible to ask, '*what experiences have you had, what did you do and why*' to expert leaders from new contexts? This study was not interested in the purification, replication and manipulation of data. It concerned the interpretation of experiences, rather than a 'pruned, synthetic version of a whole' (Cohen *et al.*, 2011, p15).

This research sets out to revitalise the field by resetting a notional counter at the seminal work of Treviño *et al.* (2003) . To employ insightful, qualitative and progressive research approaches to attend to what they did not. As recommended in this empirical review, I have sought a more appropriate sample as directed by the research question. I reject the use of assumptive tools and measures and scenarios, and instead seek to balance underlying epistemological, ontological and axiological assumptions. There will be no attempt to purify, replicate and manipulate data. In keeping with the views of Klenke (2008) I believe that "certitude" is often overplayed, and that 'scientific objectivity is regarded as an impossible stance as our values and biases permeate all aspects of the research process' (p14). Moreover, the leadership phenomena cannot be reduced to certain and definitive answers that presumably constitute knowledge' (Klenke, 2008, p47). I concur with Northouse (2010) who observed that this research area is 'still in an early stage of development', and that 'few studies have been done that directly address the nature of ethical leadership' (p405). Unfortunately, the field still

> '*relies on the writings of a few individuals whose work has been primarily descriptive and anecdotal...There remains a strong need for research that can advance our understandings of the role ethics plays in the leadership process*' (Northouse, 2010, p405).

Chapter Four - Studying up: the view from the executive suite

This chapter is concerned primarily with the research design as directed by the research question; '***What is the role of ethics in not-for-profit leadership'***. The focus now shifts to how the research objectives were fulfilled. That is the means and legitimacy by which current understandings have been advanced regarding the ethical challenges of leadership in specified settings through the use of qualitative interviewing with *elite and specialised* respondents. A critical approach was taken regarding the methodological decisions as foregrounded in Chapter Three, and through the processes of operationalisation and orientation (Cohen *et al.*, 2011) the practicalities, feasibility and defensibility of the research were addressed.

This chapter offers an account of the research design, and methods. *Elite and specialised interviewing* (Dexter, 2006) will be confirmed as the most appropriate data collection instrument for this study. All decisions regarding the type, fitness and selection of the sample are debated and the trustworthiness of the research established. The fit between the methods used and what was needed to answer the research question will be validated. Measures taken to strengthen the credibility of the research, recognition regarding the criticality of ethics, researcher reflexivity and positionality will be substantiated. The chapter concludes with a full account of the analytical activities, stages and decisions taken to arrive at the findings, which are presented in Chapter Five.

4.1 A summary of the approach

In direct response to the appeals in Chapter Three, and supported by the views of scholars such as Collinson and Grint (2005) this research takes its own approach to increasing the field's methodological diversity. This approach was not fully conceptualised at first. Similarly to Robson (2006) it emerged as the research question evolved, and the data collection took place. The design was flexible and interactive, and on the surface displayed the hallmarks of an interpretive,

qualitative enquiry. Although not explicitly labelled as such, the study concerned a specific set of individuals in a small range of settings with a common interest (Robson, 2006). The title '**Ethical decision-making: Learning from prominent leaders in not-for-profit organisations**' was, in itself directive regarding the methodological choices and assumptions.

The literature review revealed a variety of methodological gaps in the leadership, ethical leadership and decision-making literature (see Chapter Two). Ethics was found superficially addressed in previous conceptions of leadership. The ethical leadership construct (Brown *et al.*, 2005) appeared vague and unreflective of the complexity of leader ideological underpinnings. Ethical decision-making models were also found both unrealistic and conceptually disconnected from the ethical leadership literature. Empirical studies revealed a field built on weakness. The *so-called* input-output model as described by Bryman (2004) generated results that lacked true meaning, substance and practical utility. New methods were needed to explore alternative leadership conceptualisations (Hunter *et al*, (2007). Researchers had either reproduced attitudes about behaviour to reaffirm over-tested constructs, or rejected those same theories and hypotheses out of hand (Alvesson, 1996). This research moves away from the administration of scales, instruments and convenient student samples toward new understandings from neglected or excluded groups.

As such, ten leaders' opinions were sought through semi-structured interviews. It was hoped that 'participants should be likely to generate rich, dense, focused information on the research question' (Cleary *et al.*, 2014, p473). Respondents were instead, drawn from a variety of professional organisations described as not-for-profit, as defined in section 4.1.4. Five American and five British leaders were selected, one each from the military, government, charitable organisations, clergy and educational institutions (*Appendix A – Sampling Frame*). Some were recruited through personal contacts, others recommended and accessed through a military imprimatur. This diverse sample provided opportunity to extend the research boundaries beyond the comprehensively examined

commercial sector (Morrell and Hartley, 2006, Thach and Thompson, 2007), but might also explicate cultural differences.

Gill (2011) observed that the cultural gap was being closed by 'greater commercialization of services' (p49). He believed there were fundamental sectoral differences in leadership between '*business, politics, public service, higher education, charities and the armed forces*' (p38). But leadership research was not reflecting such nuance; few scholars were looking across sectors (Jurkiewicz and Massey Jr, 1998, Kaptein *et al.*, 2005, Morrell and Hartley, 2006). For example, Morrell and Hartley (2006) focused on measuring the ethical values of local politicians, and Jurkiewicz and Massey Jr (1998) used a complex scale to detect and predict differences between effective, and non-effective, *nonprofit* executives. Others offered comparisons between for-profit and not-for-profit sectors (Thach and Thompson, 2007, van der Wal *et al.*, 2008), with Athanasopoulou (2012) focusing on the perceived differences between non-profit, and for-profit. Since a variety of terms were used to describe organisations, and the majority of these studies displayed the familiar quantitative methodological limitations of the wider field; results were difficult to trust.

In contrast, the research design for this study offered several unique opportunities to advance current understandings regarding the ethical challenges of leadership. Opinions were sought from *prominent* American and British leaders in sectors such as *political/public service, education, charities, the armed forces and the clergy*. It will be argued that *elite and specialised interviewing* (Dexter, 1970, 2006), a variant of in-depth qualitative interviewing would provide a more appropriate framework with which to understand the nature of ethical leadership and ethical decision-making in morally intense situations. Although the justification for the use of elite and specialised interviewing stems from the research question, it is important to understand *how* this novel approach might differ from traditional mainstream conceptualisations of the interview as method.

4.1.1 Qualitative interviewing in leadership research

According to Klenke (2008) qualitative interviewing falls into a broad category of major qualitative traditions in leadership research along with case studies, content analysis, and mixed methods research. However it 'goes beyond mere fact gathering and attempts to construct meaning and interpretation in the context of conversation' (Klenke, 2008, p120). For Kvale (1996) the qualitative research interview provides opportunity to understand and interpret the *life world* of the interviewee. Descriptions of specific events are captured in a non-directive way to reflect possible ambiguities and contradictions to produce new insights and awareness. Moreover, the interpersonal dynamic of the interview is acknowledged as the means to produce enriching and insightful understandings regarding the interview topic. Packer (2011) contends that it is not 'an ordinary conversation' (p46); it is planned and commonly conducted between relative strangers 'for people who are not present' (p48). Interviews are 'ubiquitous', 'a premier experiential conduit of the electronic age' and resonate with 'modern temper' (Gubrium and Holstein, 2012, p30). As a research instrument, they are flexible and applicable to a range of research topics, and can yield data that can be treated in a variety of analytical ways (Bryman, 2011b).

In spite of the seemingly privileged position interviewing holds for conducting systematic social inquiry, leadership scholars have resisted widespread adoption (Klenke, 2008). This reluctance could be due to a lack of consensual definition (Welch *et al.*, 2002, Klenke, 2008) and certain limitations in the literature (Richards, 1996), whereby the practicalities and instructional aspects of interviewing are prioritised (Klenke, 2008, Harvey, 2010). Alvesson (1996) contends that the problems are more serious; the interview is not a data collection tool, but simply a 'scene for a conversation' (p465). Interview statements merely 'provide uncertain, but often interesting clues for the understanding of social reality and ideas, beliefs, values and other aspects of "subjectivities"' (Alvesson, 1996, p466). He describes them as too context-dependent and positively biased, claiming that they rely upon researcher judgment, and one's capacity for reflection

to uncover *truths*. However, I contend that these are in fact universal research issues, and not confined to the interview as method. Alvesson (1996) called for

> *'A more open kind of study, in which complex social relations and processes are treated as such and not transformed into unrecognizability through the application of standardized measures and abstract categories' (p464).*

Bryman (2011b) reports that scholars have begun to respond; methodological diversity is on the increase. Brooks and Normore (2015) agree, noting that a paradigm shift has occurred, specifically in the field of educational leadership where qualitative interviews have been favoured for some time (Ribbins, 2007, Brooks and Normore, 2015). For Conger (1998) however, it is observation not interviewing which requires promotion, describing the former as 'a powerful methodology for not only uncovering data either distorted in interviews or else not accessible through interviews' (p112). He recommends that observation be used as part of an overall field strategy combined with other approaches, or as a validity check. Arguably, this renders observation in need of additional support; seemingly inadequate as a standalone method (Bryman, 2011b). Indeed, Bryman (2011a) discourages observation as sole method in leadership research, noting that, not only does it require a great time investment by both researcher and respondent, but there is also a lack of clarity regarding what is actually being observed (acts of leadership).

Another seemingly attractive, flexible research method, which on the surface could elicit these much sought after deeper meanings is the Delphi method. It displays characteristics which make it suitable for use in this study. According to Brady (2015) it emphasises and acknowledges philosophical origins to understand a phenomenon in greater depth. It is not concerned with a generalisable sample, but involves a set of topic *experts*. Indeed, it could be argued that the traditional data collection tool in the standard Delphi method is not unlike the semi-structured interview schedule used here in this study. Moreover, sampling procedures for this study appear similar to how expert 'panellists' are selected for the Delphi method. But, there is significant disparity, Delphi studies are

characteristically repetitive, include waves of feedback and seek consensus. Although later applications of the method claim to have eliminated this restriction, the Delphi method is typically intensive and controlled (Landeta, 2006).

Other approaches were also considered. Borer and Fontana (2012) champion *postmodern epistemologies*, whereby respondents are given the opportunity to speak freely, *existential moments*, *epiphanies* and hidden feelings are revealed, explored and appreciated. Although Kvale (1996) sought not to label the interview as a post-modern method he acknowledged that this approach had the potential to uncover 'previously taken-for-granted values and customs' (p4) and attend to the 'multiplicity of meanings in local contexts' (p42). Although the interview approach chosen in this study displays some characteristics that provide 'narratives that ennoble human experiences while facilitating civic transformation in the public (and private) spheres' (Denzin, 1997, p277), I believe this is not the only way to acquire knowledge through personal views, develop intimacy or gain multiple perspectives.

Similarly to Johnson and Rowlands (2012) I also believe that '"deep" information, knowledge on the lived experience, values and decisions, occupational ideology, cultural knowledge or perspective' (p100) can be obtained through in-depth interviewing. Oppenheim (2005) claims that the method preserves the subjective views of the respondents, whilst Kvale (1996) acknowledges that 'the value of the knowledge produced depends on the context and the use of the knowledge' (p72). Not only is deep information explicitly sought here but this research also concerns the understandings of an identified group of *elite and specialised* leaders. As will be explained, this interview approach became a retrospective perfect-fit, uniquely capable of attending to the environment and status of the chosen social group.

4.1.2 Elite and specialised interviewing as method

According to Welch *et al.* (2002) 'elite interviewing has not been a mainstream issue on in-depth interviewing' (p613), or even more broadly as a qualitative method of choice for social researchers or leadership scholars. It sits under the broad umbrella of qualitative interviewing parallel to what Richards (1996) calls non-elite interviewing. Its methodological roots can be found in disciplines such as anthropology, political science, and journalism (Kezar, 2003); where interviews with the rich and powerful are a longstanding tradition (Gilding, 2010). A small, but rich literature has begun to develop in the last two decades according to Harvey (2011) . Dexter's (1970, 2006) pioneering text '*Elite and specialised interviewing*' has stimulated interest, provided valuable insights for interviewing elites and also serves as a useful framework for those wishing to canvass elites. But according to Hertz and Imber (1995) interest has not translated into widespread adoption by leadership scholars. As will be seen in this chapter, there are a plethora of theoretical papers, but few empirical leadership studies despite the innumerable benefits.

There are distinct advantages of *studying up* (Nader, 1972, Hunter, 1995). Delaney (2007) argues that 'you gain a unique opportunity to understand the worldview of those who wield a significant influence on society' and that such research produces 'textural depth as well as empirical strength' (p208). Goldman and Swayze (2012) agree, elites have information other staff do not, are more familiar with organisational structures, policies and plans, and full of insights into events about which we know little (Lilleker, 2003). They are in possession of what Beamer (2002) and Bogner *et al.* (2009) describe as inner workings or machinations, information not possible to access in any other way; they are holders of *contextual knowledge.* Pfadenhauer (2009) suggests that not only do such individuals possess this 'exclusive knowledge stock' (p83) but they also have responsibility and are accountable for their own behaviour and those of their organisational members. Their unique position renders the data first hand and topic specific (Tansey, 2007).

Now, this is not to de-value non-elites, but if the desire is to improve the understanding of leadership as a process in the contexts outlined, then this approach when done properly has the ability to generate highly reliable and valid data (Beamer, 2002). Speaking to such individuals can provide quality insights and unexpected revelations for both researcher and researched (Peabody *et al.*, 1990). Since most research involves the *ordinary* an imbalance has occurred regarding the nature of knowledge in this field. Elite studies can rebalance this asymmetry (Ostrander, 1993, Mikecz, 2012). As Delaney (2007) notes 'there are many excellent studies of elite status and influence… there is still a paucity of scholarship that actually involves talking to elites' (p219).

Welch *et al.* (2002) contend that elite interviewing has not gathered momentum because, among other shortcomings, there are definitional issues. This is echoed across the literature (Littig, 2009, Harvey, 2011, Goldman and Swayze, 2012, Mikecz, 2012). Some scholars (Welch *et al.*, 2002) argue that the term *elite* is in fact relative. Goldman and Swayze (2012) have traced the origins of the term *elite* in social studies and found that it began as a functional definition to identify 'power elites' such as high-level professionals, e.g. judges, military officers and business leaders. Contemporary definitions include those with power and privilege (Welch *et al.*, 2002) with advantaged access or control over resources. An organisational elite (Delaney, 2007) can also be someone with elevated knowledge, money, and status in society. Mikecz (2012) agrees; it is the ability to influence that separates elite and non-elite; a key definitional boundary in this study. Although Bogner and Menz (2009) and Harvey (2011) continue to bemoan the lack of a clear-cut definition this has meant that scholars have enjoyed the freedom to not only shape definitions to match their respondents, but to use the term broadly to compare with those who have researched similar groups (Harvey, 2011).

Meuser and Nagel (2009) for example, conceptualise such an interview as an opportunity to gain *expert* knowledge as opposed to 'everyday knowledge' (p29). They refer to Alfred Schütz's (1964) distinctions between expert and layperson, but also draw attention to what might be considered specialised

knowledge. This is gained 'through activity... socially institutionalized and linked to a specific context and its functional requirements' (Meuser and Nagel, 2009, p24), as opposed to professional knowledge. They also argue that although special respondents can provide important background information, they do not have an expert opinion forged through a position of occupational status. Pfadenhauer (2009) concurs; specialists acquire their knowledge through *secondary socialisation processes* (p82). Although Bogner and Menz (2009) contend that all human beings are in fact experts of their own lives, and that differences are not absolute, they believe that it is the social relevance of this knowledge which characterises expertise. Following this line of argumentation, Littig (2009) summarises thus:

> *'If the expertise (that is specific interpretive knowledge ("know-why") and procedural knowledge ("know-how") in a particular occupational or professional field) is central to the area of research, then the interview can be regarded as an expert interview' (p107).*

There is further distinction between experts and specialists, scholars believe that it is the concept of power, its extent or rather how it is exercised which further characterises an elite (Scott, 2008, Littig, 2009). Littig (2009) illustrates the subtle differences which are reproduced in Figure 1. She further describes both elites and experts as having formative and interpretive power. However elites possess more formative power (Pierce, 2008, Littig, 2009); they take the higher decisions, and can influence 'outcomes without becoming directly involved' (Pierce, 2008, p119). Conversely, experts have more significant interpretative power, whereby the decisions are less far reaching, and involve negotiation.
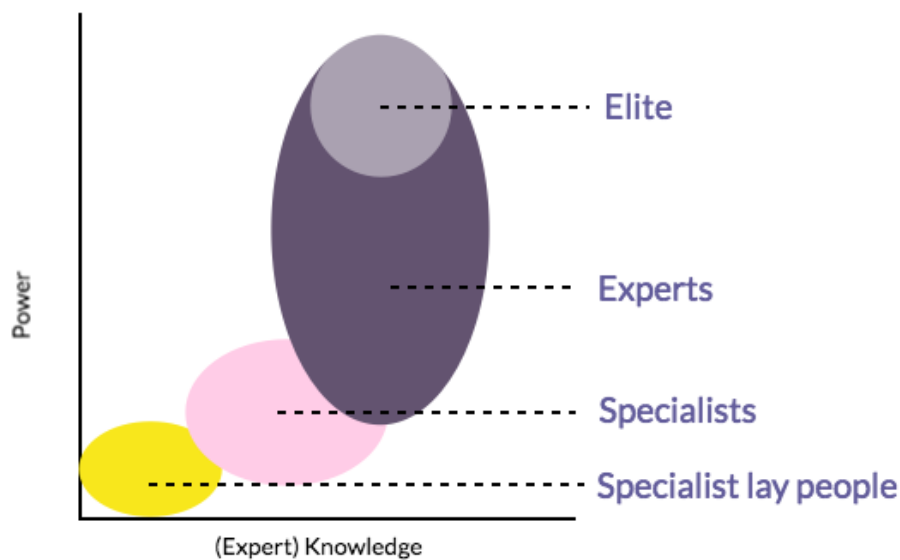
Figure 1 Differentiating between experts and the elite

If this lens were applied here the respondents for this study might appear to fall into several categories. For instance, both educationalists and Vicar-General-USA might be specialists, with the remainder considered elite (*Appendix A – Sampling Frame*) as described by Meuser and Nagel (2009) . What is contestable, is whether any of my respondents could also be described as '*ultra-elite* the thin layer of individuals with the greatest influence prestige and power in an institutional sphere' (Zuckerman, 1972, p159). Although Mikecz (2012) claims that his respondents (Estonian prime ministers and government ministers) were not *ultra-elite*, I believe him to be modest, and like a few of my respondents, his sample represented 'the very top of elite hierarchy' (Delaney, 2007, p211).

The debates surrounding the definition of elites continues (Harvey, 2010, 2011). Not only do 'definitional squabbles...vary across a range of literatures' (Rice, 2010, p71) but definitional boundaries are also on the move (Neal and McLaughlin, 2009, Harvey, 2010). Since 'elite status is not static' (Harvey, 2010, p3) scholars (Riesman, 1964, Dexter, 1970, Kezar, 2003, Dexter, 2006) have wisely decided to shift focus from the nature of the respondent to the nature of the interview. Indeed, Dexter (2006) reiterates Riesman's (1964) unease with the term elite and its 'connotations of superiority' (p528). In finding 'no other term' that could

adequately describe the approach used when 'important people in exposed positions' (Riesman, 1964, p528) were to be research respondents, Dexter (2006) instead offered his own definition, and noted like Kezar (2003) , that it was the interview which was distinct, not the informant. Whereby,

> *'The investigator is willing, and often eager to let the interviewee teach him what the problem, the question, the situation, is-to the limits, of course, of the interviewer's ability to perceive relationships to his basic problems, whatever they may be' (Dexter, 2006, p19).*

4.1.3 Selecting, locating and determining the sample

Robustness of the sampling strategy is a pressing concern for social scientific researchers (Cohen *et al.*, 2011). Decisions made in this regard affect the overall quality of the research. However the populace should always be determined and directed by the research question, and account for the 'temporal, spatial and situational influences, that is the context of the study' (Marshall, 1996, p524). Because this study sought to explore ethical decision-making by learning from prominent leaders in not-for-profit organisations, the nature of the sample was to some extent, determined. It would be selective, that is non-probability, ungeneralisable but representative (Klenke, 2008). The sample was unequivocally convenient and opportunistic. It was built specifically and deliberately for the needs and purposes of the research (Gentles *et al.*, 2015); that is to canvass information-rich informants (Wengraf, 2001). It is therefore unambiguous, not arbitrary (Wengraf, 2001) and does not represent any group other than itself (Cohen *et al.*, 2011).

Following provisional decisions (Robinson, 2014) such as geographic considerations, and identification of sub-groups (professional settings), leaders were then identified iteratively and in an ongoing fashion (Gentles *et al.*, 2015). The approach appeared to overlap with several sampling types as described by Patton (1990) . The most readily available respondents were chosen for this study. Following initial contact they appeared to be individuals who manifested the phenomenon (Wengraf, 2001); that is *bona fide* ethical leaders. Because they were

also prominent, experienced leaders as recommended by Davies (2001) and Woiceshyn (2011) the sample was *intense.* In addition, the sample also had the potential to offer insights regarding the construct in question, as such; it could be considered *theory-based and/or operational.* According to Robinson (2014) the sample might also be considered *homogeneous.* The UK and US leaders shared a demographic group (all were elite or specialised), appeared to possess a specific characteristic or trait (had an ethical disposition), and seemingly shared a past life experience (i.e. had made ethically challenging/morally intense decisions). This combination of properties constituted a *sample universe* (Robinson, 2014), and permits this study to make its claims for credibility. Although Fogelman and Comber (2007) do not on principle recommend this type of sample despite its typicality, they contend, like Bryman (2012) that it has validity if it is clearly justified and explained, as is the case here.

However Beamer (2002) and Tansey (2007) issue a caveat, this type of sample can be risky. In adopting informal selection processes researchers sacrifice generalisability for depth of information. But I contend that mechanical methods to determine who should be interviewed were neither possible nor suitable. Sampling cannot be an issue if I adopt the epistemological position that elite interviewing requires 'special study', and that individuals should be selected and protected as directed by the research question (Welch *et al.*, 2002, p626). Moreover, the value of the research does not solely stand on the quality of its respondents; size also matters.

There is much debate regarding the 'epistemology of numbers' (Baker and Edwards, 2012), or optimal size (Beitin, 2012). Cohen *et al.* (2011) state that 'there is no clear-cut answer' and that the nature of the research question, the style of the study, and 'the population under scrutiny' (p93) are the crucial factors. Beitin (2012) advises that the 'sample should be as big as you can manage within the practical constraints and resources available to you' (p136). Although he also notes that it is preferable to have a small probability sample which is free from bias than a large unrepresentative sample, I would contend that few samples, if

any are able to make such claims. I agree with Becker (2012) in that 'one interview is sometimes quite sufficient to establish that something is possible, which may be all you need as evidence' (p15). Indeed, it is the quality of the interaction which counts (Kvale, 1996). But his research does not rely on one interview, there are ten in-depth qualitative interviews ranging from 48 minutes, to 1 hour 46 minutes. The time gathering the required data (interview length) not the notion of saturation, gives the sample scientific significance (Cohen *et al.*, 2011).

4.1.4 Differentiating the sectors

Though there are challenges in every sector (Winston, 2007, Gill, 2011), in for not-for-profits the stakes are higher (Jurkiewicz and Massey Jr, 1998, Rothschild and Milofsky, 2006). Government, schools, the voluntary sector, charities, and the military also compete for survival in challenging economic conditions. These sector leaders must 'appear trustworthy and ethical to survive' (Jurkiewicz and Massey Jr, 1998, p175). And whilst these sectors may vary in form and function (Thach and Thompson, 2007, p358) they are commonly considered a force for public good (Jeavons, 2005, Thach and Thompson, 2007). Such organisations appear 'values expressive' (Jeavons, 2005, p205); able to project their ideals through organisational visions, missions and values.

Although not-for-profits attract a different kind of leader, with different characteristics (Rothschild and Milofsky, 2006, Gill, 2011) they are not immune from ethical challenges. Recent scandals in the Catholic Church (Jeavons, 2005), the politician's expenses scandal (Pattie and Johnston, 2012), and questionable military behaviour (Jackson (Col), 2005, Kerr, 2008) has tested public faith in not-for-profit leadership. Bryson (1988) , Klingner (1993) , Jurkiewicz and Massey Jr (1998) and Rothschild and Milofsky (2006) all note how these types of organisations have had to adopt for-profit practices to cope with the pressures of *organisational isomorphism* (DiMaggio and Powell, 2002). This additional emphasis on corporate values has obfuscated public service values, and according to van der Wal *et al.* (2008) some organisations have become 'monstrous moral

hybrids' (p466), creating new ethical tensions. The evidence shows that current societal influences have meant that not-for-profit settings are changing, and that leadership is being severely tested. The dearth of studies have rendered this niche ripe for investigation.

I took the decision to describe the chosen sectors collectively as not-for-profit to convey the fact that profit was not the primary organisational motive, but I also accept that these organisations require funding to operate. In the UK and the USA, the military, state schools, and government are supported by public funds, via taxation. Charities and religious institutions acquire their revenue from donors, regulated in the USA by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), and in the UK by the Charities Commission. Although it could be argued that particular organisations in this group may sell services and products to support their mission (Rothschild and Milofsky, 2006), it is acknowledged that differences significantly outweigh similarities. Thach and Thompson (2007) summarise Fottler (1981) stating that 'values, incentives, and internal and external constraints are key institutional differences' (p358). For example, not-for-profit employees' performance is considered on merit, inducements are limited or non-existent, with individuals more likely to adhere to formalised rules and procedures (Thach and Thompson, 2007). In summary, there is considerable and fundamental distinction in the types of individuals who lead these organisations, their leadership, and the operational environments (Jeavons, 2005).

Gill (2011) however, discriminates between the sectors. Noting differences in *political leadership*, *leadership in the public sector*, *educational leadership*, *leadership in the not-for-profit sector* and *leadership in the armed forces*. In discussing political leadership, he draws attention to status, values, power and decision-making; describing it as 'individual agency' (Gill, 2011, p44). Morrell and Hartley (2006) also make distinction; politicians are elected, not appointed, and have a duty to the electorate, they are different than for-profit leaders. Still, the research is nascent, with studies in government and politics largely compliance focused (Kaptein *et al.*, 2005, Pelletier and Bligh, 2006).

The public sector is also a discrete and separate entity; it is 'the instrument of elected politicians for pursuing their visions and missions' (Gill, 2011, p48). Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe (2004) contend that demands to modernise, high public expectations and commercial competition have put new demands on leadership in this sector. Although Gill (2011) refers only to the National Health Service (NHS), his definition could easily encompass schools and the armed forces. He contends that people see their jobs as vocational; their prime motivation is 'to make a difference to society or the quality of people's lives' (p50). For Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe (2004) leadership in these unique contexts 'is not a choice, but a moral and financial imperative' (p176). Indeed, the NHS, schools and the military all bear such hallmarks, but they also encounter particular trials and limitations which distinguish them from the private sector (Gill, 2011), and possibly one another.

The NHS is predicated on the value of life. Medical professionals deal almost entirely with individuals who are in a vulnerable state. This intimacy results in a context which is already value-laden. Engelhardt Jr (2002) argues that medical ethics is a separate and distinct field of the philosophy of medicine, reincarnated as bioethics. According to Hedgecoe (2004) it is 'constructed in such a way as to ignore the role of social and cultural factors', and represents 'universal ethical principles' (p125). Ethical leadership in the healthcare setting could transcend cultural difference; therefore contextual or cultural differences might be difficult to discern. In contrast, Clouser (1974) believes medical ethics is no different in its methods and principles. Although his views may appear somewhat out-dated, unable to accommodate modern biomedical challenges, there are those (Drane, 2001) who believe theoretical bioethics still has a place. I believe that if the setting is value-laden, and the profession is guided by its own ethical field, with universality a given, then there is strong argument for exclusion of the NHS in this study. However, there was one additional unqualifying reason to omit the NHS; healthcare is a private and for-profit concern in the USA, therefore it could not act as counterpart for this study.

Schools were highly appropriate settings for seeking respondents for this study, from an educational leadership perspective, and in relation to ethics. However, Heck and Hallinger (2005) summarise the findings of Greenfield (1968) and Bates (1980) noting that 'contextual, moral, and ethical issues… thinking and action' (p231) have not been examined. There are a lack of studies that focus on the 'intrapersonal struggle… between personal morality and organizational directives or professional expectations' (Frick, 2009, p54). Possible reasons for this are two-fold; the educational leadership literature generally mirrors that of the wider leadership field, theoretically according to Heck and Hallinger (2005) , and methodologically. Educational leadership scholars have embraced those same empirical practises, resulting in work which has not built upon previous knowledge. Hodges and Howieson (2017) warn that it is unadvisable to import leadership theories and frameworks from the corporate world, the third sector is sophisticated and nuanced, and requires bespoke approaches to account for differences in ethos and culture. The call is for a tighter focus on 'social justice' and 'social transformation', with a 'de-emphasis on the value of 'scientific' study' (Heck and Hallinger, 2005, p234-236).

But there is hope; research is beginning to show promise in 'addressing blind spots in our knowledge and disciplinary practice' (Heck and Hallinger, 2005, p238). Bush (2009) concurs, noting that educationalists and researchers have begun to understand the paradigm shift. Like Duignan (2006) he believes that the educational environment has become more complex. A demographically diverse society has resulted in the need for more tolerant and democratic schools (Shapiro and Stefkovich, 2011). Educational leaders face profound and sustained challenges on a daily basis (Starratt, 2004, Duignan, 2006, Bush, 2009, Gill, 2011); there is a moral responsibility beyond simply responding. Moral dilemmas and decision-making can be life-changing (Shapiro and Gross, 2013, p3). Indeed, ethical educational leadership involves cultivating an environment where leaders demonstrate and uphold moral virtues – and these are cultivated in the students (Starratt, 2004, Duignan, 2006). Duignan (2006) summarises the views of Conger

(1994) and Bhindi and Duignan (1997) stating that it is 'time to reclaim the moral, ethical and spiritual domains of leadership' (p15).

Of all of the not-for-profit sectors chosen for this research charities face the greatest tensions between pursuing their mission, and financial viability (Gill, 2011); they must operate beyond regulation. Helmig *et al.* (2009) states that

> '*In the face of adverse publicity in the case of charitable funding scandals there is a need for charities to demonstrate that they are not only applying the highest standards to the resources at their disposal but they can be clearly seen to behaving appropriately' (p1).*

Recently, charities have attracted attention regarding fundraising abuses and the appropriateness of the high salaries paid to their chiefs (Morgan, 2015). They normally attract individuals who are not motivated by high salaries, or career development opportunities; relationships are not generally considered transactional (Gill, 2011). This is particularly true of the charity leaders for this study; founders are different. According to Light (2005) they are exceptional individuals. For Mair and Marti (2006) they are social entrepreneurs who incepted their charities 'to alleviate social problems and catalyse social transformation' (p37). Like Barensden and Gardner (2004) my charity leaders had 'compelling personal histories', 'distinctive… beliefs', and 'impressive accomplishments in the face of odds' (p50). But they might also be egoistic, driven by power, high ideals or missionary zeal if effective mechanisms were not in place to counter less desirable behaviour (Zahra *et al.*, 2009).

Of the other prominent leaders being examined in this study, religious leaders have not escaped attention regarding unethical behaviour (Jeavons, 2005, Resick *et al.*, 2006, Sama and Shoaf, 2008). Arguably, this is a time of moral uncertainty; the public have high expectations regarding professions (e.g. physicians, priests and lawyers) which serve as moral communities (Sama and Shoaf, 2008). Despite a pure primary motivation, a focus on altruism in organisational terms (Drury, 2003), explicit rules (theological tenets), regulations, and processes (doctrine) to help members lead moral lives, some leaders opted to

ignore morally abhorrent behaviour. As such, religious leaders provide an interesting avenue to research since the literature here is almost non-existent.

The final sector examined in this study is the military. According to Gill (2011) 'highly dynamic and unpredictable situations' (Gill, 2011, p58) have resulted in the military operating in asymmetric ethical conditions. Operational contexts have become more diverse, varying from combat to peacekeeping. According to Wong *et al.* (2003) military leadership has unique characteristics, and that 'more in-depth knowledge of the military and the issues facing the military' (p658) are necessary. Although military leadership research has, like educational research focussed on studies whereby traditional leadership theories like action centred leadership (Adair, 1973), servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977), transformational leadership (Burns, 1978, Bass, 1985, Burns, 2003) and charismatic leadership (House, 1976, House and Howell, 1992) have been applied, context specific understandings have not been advanced (Wong *et al.*, 2003).

Ethical leadership in the military is particularly important; decision-making is highly consequential (Zheng *et al.*, 2015, Heyler *et al.*, 2016). Military failure can result in destruction; of the state and its peoples (Huntley, 2003); *lethality* sets the military apart from other organisations (Jennings and Hannah, 2011, Gill, 2011). Soldiers can make bad decisions, but according to Barnes and Doty (2010) 'unethical behaviour is not a "rank" issue but a leader issue' (p92). For the purposes of this research, the focus is not on the morality of engagement in a particular conflict or *jus ad bellum.* This study pertains to the notion of *jus in bello*, the soldier's conduct (Jennings and Hannah, 2011). It attends to matters of values and virtues, how they are derived, how they influence judgement, specifically, how two exemplary military leaders understand what is morally significant to them. Up to now, ethical reflection has been overlooked in favour of compliance (Huntley, 2003). The deontological and competency based *what* of military engagement has been favoured instead of the *why* of ethical conduct (Ulmer Jr (Lt Gen), 1998, Allen, 2015).

As advised by Fogelman and Comber (2007) I checked the characteristics of the sample against those that were relevant to the study. The sampling decisions were based upon the theoretical and methodological gaps in the literature, as outlined. The contexts represent a variety of professional settings, which have faced unprecedented ethical challenges. Unfortunately, contexts seem to attract public scrutiny when transgressions are exposed. Research is scarce regarding how organisational leaders are *getting it right*. A post-economic crash report (Rosenthal, 2012) carried out by the *Harvard Kennedy School, Centre for Public Leadership* is unequivocal. Of the thirteen US sectors examined, the military held the top spot regarding confidence in public leadership. Non-profits and charities came in at number three, local government; fourth, with religious leaders at five and education; ninth of thirteen. Business was ranked at seventh, a rise from previous years, and had overtaken education and state government. However, Wall Street, Congress, the Executive Branch and the news media languished at the bottom of the scale. The public clearly sees the good in not-for-profit leadership; they value and respect certain sectors above others; research needs to reflect their faith.

4.1.5 Gaining access; persistence and patience

For Flick (2012) the accessibility and availability of the target group were further important aspects for determining the sample. He contends that for qualitative interview research involving experts it may be difficult to secure more than ten interviews. It is one thing to identify a set of potential participants; it is another thing altogether to gain access to a group of elite and specialised leaders. Of the few to acquire access, Bowen (2002) carried out a total of six in-depth interviews with three elites (none were CEOs). She modified procedures from scholars who specialised in researching elites (Dexter, 1970, Yeager and Kram, 1990, Hertz and Imber, 1995, Dexter, 2006) and although she acknowledges access issues, she does not detail how she overcame them. Mikecz (2012) is more explicit; he describes how he had to negotiate every contact, exploit networks, social capital and cultural advantages. This resulted in a total of 21 interviews in six cities, in four countries.

He was, if nothing else, determined, and according to Peabody *et al.* (1990) had 'persistence and patience, as well as a strong ego' (p453); key characteristics of the elite interviewer.

Although scholars such Richards (1996) , Pierce (2008) and Goldman and Swayze (2012) recommend a formal set of strategies to select, identify and contact participants, it was not necessary to apply their approaches here. I started, as Dexter (2006) advised, 'looking for introductions and references from those who have had contact with an organization, situation, or institution' (p43). I purposefully used influence and knowledge of networks (Dexter, 2006), leverage (Hertz and Imber, 1995) and points of access (Goldstein, 2002) to secure the required data. My strategies to recruit advocates or enlist respondents were entirely informal. Similarly to the processes described by Welch *et al.* (2002) , Rice (2010) and Mikecz (2012) I used my personal contacts and the diplomatic and social communities in Washington DC to gain access. My affiliation with a respected and high profile military organisation as unofficial sponsor (Ostrander, 1993, Aberbach and Rockman, 2002, Welch *et al.*, 2002) proved crucial in getting through 'organisational bureaucracy' (Rice, 2010, p72). My relationship with this imprimatur enabled unprecedented access to four of the ten individuals (*Appendix A – Sampling Frame*), and like Herod (1999) enhanced my credibility and trustworthiness.

Hales *et al.* (2013) acknowledge initial contact as the 'deal breaker' (p182) for the elite researcher. As can be seen in *Appendix F - Leader contact record (US)* and *Appendix G - Leader contact record (UK)* I approached Lt-General-USA, Headmaster-USA and Principal-UK directly, the project was marketed to them in person to gain *on-principle* (Hales *et al.*, 2013) consent to participate. Ambassador-USA was accessed through a third party shared acquaintance. From this endorsement, she responded by expressing interest in 'helping' with the project. Access to Lt-General-UK, MP-UK and Charity Head-UK were facilitated by my imprimatur. Following this, I called the offices of Charity Head-USA, Vicar-General-USA, Charity Head-UK and Archbishop-UK and spoke to their respective

gatekeepers. After initial contact, I explained the project and gained their agreement to participate. I made interview appointments directly with Lt-General-USA, Ambassador-USA, Headmaster-USA and Principal-UK via telephone or e-mail communication. From initial contact to interview date the longest time frame was one year with the shortest, one month.

For the remaining leaders (Charity Head-USA, Vicar-General-USA, Lt-General-UK, MP-UK, Charity Head-UK and Archbishop-UK) either a personal assistant or secretary made the arrangements. In several cases the first contact with the respondent was at the interview itself. The role gatekeepers play in controlling access to elite individuals can not be underestimated (Hales *et al.*, 2013). They are often used as barriers, or filters to protect their bosses from the non-elite (Hertz and Imber, 1995, Undheim, 2003, Littig, 2009). Although gaining commitment to participate was a delicate negotiation (Goldman and Swayze, 2012), I followed the advice of Peabody *et al.* (1990) , Pierce (2008) , and Harvey (2010) and saw the gatekeepers as potential opportunities. Since they could advocate on my behalf, I took the advice of Littig (2009) and Harvey (2010) and invested the little time I had in building rapport so that the gatekeepers could persuade their superiors that the project was worthwhile.

Access is a two-fold issue, 'recognizable affiliations and personal contacts can only be qualifiers, and they are not likely to open doors unless accompanied by a compelling reason as to why someone should see you' (Hertz and Imber, 1995, p9). Zuckerman (1972) contends that some respondents feel obligated to share their views and experiences with others in their respective communities. Overall, it is advantageous if the research frame coincides or overlaps with respondents' sense of self-interest, that is, the research is appealing (Yeager and Kram, 1990, Pierce, 2008, Obelenè, 2009). Respondents must feel that there is more to be gained from the involvement than the inconvenience, or perceived risks of taking part (Mikecz, 2012). Like Zuckerman (1972) , Delaney (2007) and Gilding (2010) I believed that the majority of my respondents had agreed to be interviewed because they felt that they had valuable contributions to make to the topic. For Lt-

General-USA, Ambassador-USA, Charity Head-USA, MP-UK, Charity Head-UK and Archbishop-UK this research coincided serendipitously with a number of ethical challenges, some global, some national (see sections 1.4 and 5.5.2.2) and some personal (see section 5.4.1.3). Pierce (2008) and Morris (2009) warn that respondents have been known to use the interview to vindicate themselves. The research opportunity might be used as a platform for a respondent to justify and defend behaviours and actions (Goldstein, 2002, Morris, 2009), or re-write history (Lilleker, 2003). It is a fine line between understanding motivations and exploiting them for research gains (Dexter, 1964, Obelenè, 2009).

4.1.6 Preparation and etiquette in interviewing the elite

Procedures for identifying, locating, accessing and even interviewing my elite respondents were not discrete events, and did not always follow in the systematic order expected by Cohen *et al.* (2011) in regards to the research design. Like Gentles *et al.* (2015) the process was iterative, and at times ad hoc. But once agreement was made with the elite respondent or their advocate, preparation began in earnest. Following scholarly advice (Zuckerman, 1972, Berry, 2002, Pierce, 2008, Mikecz, 2012) I acquired biographical media and secondary documental information regarding those who were in the public domain (Lt-General-USA Ambassador-USA, Charity Head-USA, Lt-General-UK, MP-UK, Charity Head-UK and Archbishop-UK). This information would prove useful in personalising questions during the interview (Zuckerman, 1972, Mikecz, 2012), in maintaining common bonds (Undheim, 2003), and would help to decrease status imbalance (Mikecz, 2012). Furthermore, this type of preparation would, not only strengthen researcher credibility (Goldstein, 2002), but would also reinforce reliability (Beamer, 2002) by mitigating ulterior motives. Prior to interview I read a report relating to Lt-General-USA, and viewed several interviews given by Ambassador-USA and Charity Head-USA. Although alternative information was unavailable for Vicar-General-USA, Headmaster-USA and Principal-UK this was not deemed detrimental to the study (see section 6.1.7). On Hales *et al's* (2013) advice I used other ways to prepare; the interview questions, how they were posed, and

the dynamics between researcher and researched were also considered (see sections 4.1.8, 4.2.2, 4.2.3 and 6.1.8).

As indicated, and in accordance with Goldstein (2002) , Pierce (2008) and Gilding (2010) each potential respondent or gatekeeper was sent a protocol statement to explain the overall aim of the project and their role within it (see *Appendix C – Protocol Statement*). This was accompanied by an explanatory e-mail (*Appendix H – E-mail communication*) as can be seen in *Appendix F - Leader contact record (US)* and *Appendix G - Leader contact record (UK)*. Such measures are considered appropriate research etiquette (Aberbach and Rockman, 2002, Mikecz, 2012, Hales *et al.*, 2013), but they also serve to enhance the research relationship (Harvey, 2010). Similarly to Zuckerman (1972) responses were in the main, brief and swift, with few prompts necessary. Formal consent forms were not required, instead, verbal consent was recorded at the point of the data collection (Beamer, 2002). This involved a restating of the principles of ethical research conduct in terms of confidentiality and anonymity, concordant with the respondent and the University of Worcester and BERA (2011) procedures.

According to Mikecz (2012) elites are reluctant to travel to the interviewer and they should not be expected to. The elite interviewer must appear flexible in terms of timings and availability (Dexter, 2006, Harvey, 2010). Since elite respondents 'often have last minute breaks in their schedules... being on the ground and ready... is a huge advantage' (Goldstein, 2002, p671). Of my US respondents all were local to me, that is '*inside-the-beltway* (Goldstein, 2002); very little travel was involved in meeting for interview. In contrast, I had to travel considerable distances to meet three of the five UK respondents when I returned from Washington DC in 2012. Dexter (1964) reminds us that there are sacrifices involved in interviewing elite individuals. An interview with any respondent should be considered a gift of goodwill and kindness; inconvenience is a small price to pay for a very special testimony. I scheduled all of the interviews in advance, on different days, and conducted them face-to-face to gauge cultural nuances and non-verbal clues (Mikecz, 2012).

The interviews themselves were carried out in a variety of locations (see *Appendix A – Sampling Frame*). Normally the interviewer dictates interview location (Seidman, 2013), but in elite interviewing the interviewee concedes on the grounds that the relationship is not equal (Kvale, 1996). There is only the 'illusion of openness and equality' (Herzog, 2012, p216). For Welch *et al.* (2002) location is a territorial issue and thus worthy of exploration in the examination of power in elite interviewing (as seen in section 4.1.8). It is not a technical or logistical aspect, but an 'integral part of the interpretation of the findings' (Herzog, 2012, p207). Similarly to Aberbach and Rockman (2002) and Conti and O'Neil (2007) five of my ten interviews were conducted in respondent offices. Although Harvey (2010) claims that when interviews are carried out in office environments respondents may be 'less willing to disclose confidential information or provide additional time' (p9), I did not find this to be the case.

Mikecz (2012) recommends neutral interview locations to minimise office disruption and enhance disclosure, but I was able to do this only twice. I successfully interviewed Ambassador-USA (at her suggestion) in a café over lunch, and Principal-UK in the lounge of an hotel. Whilst the café became busy, and noisy, it did not hamper disclosure as Harvey (2010) warned, nor did it affect boundary issues (Josselson, 2013) as can be seen in *Appendix E – Abridged transcript*. Although Dexter (2006) warns against lunch-time interviews and Josselson (2013) dismisses coffee shops as unsuitable, conversation flowed freely and no privacy issues arose during either interview. Bowen (2002) summarises thus; you use the time you are given as efficiently as possible, if that means eating with your respondents, then so be it. As Aberbach and Rockman (2002) suggested, I carried out the interviews when and where I could.

I also came prepared as Pierce (2008) and Gilding (2010) suggested, with a personalised copy of the interview schedule and an audio-recorder. In my case a smart phone with an application called *Recorder Pro*. This was used for two reasons; firstly, smart phones are a customary part of the technological age, and less conspicuous or unobtrusive than dedicated recording devices. Secondly, only I

could access the recordings via password lock; they were secure. Once uploaded to my password protected iTunes library, they were deleted from the phone. Zuckerman (1972) argues that recording can be disadvantageous, 'provoke anxiety', and 'inarticulateness' (p169), she questions whether they should even be used at all. For Peabody *et al.* (1990) cautious or defensive responses are a result of historical investigations of corruption such as the Watergate scandal, whereby tape recording attracted bad press. Aberbach and Rockman (2002) and Conti and O'Neil (2007) even reported of respondents refusing to be recorded. On the surface, my respondents appeared at ease.

In congruence with other elite scholars (Zuckerman, 1972, Peabody *et al.*, 1990, Richards, 1996, Lilleker, 2003) I used recordings for accuracy and because I believed my respondents to be familiar with such journalistic methods. Dexter (2006) adds that despite the large cost in time regarding transcription audio recording still has the ability to capture nuance. Even without visual markers the recording is a genuine and accurate version of the exchange, albeit decontextualised (Kvale, 1996). Audio recording is essential, and field notes inferior (Johnson and Rowlands, 2012). Although the latter can be useful for triangulation. Peabody *et al.* (1990) provide solid justification for audio recording; it is credited with allowing the interviewer to maintain eye contact with the respondent and positively supports the research relationship. I was able to focus on the quality of the discussion and work on developing good rapport.

Normally, considerable time and effort are expended in the cultivation of the research relationship to create strong interconnections (Kezar, 2003), and ensure the trustworthiness of the deposition (Hales *et al.*, 2013). Although I had known Lt-General-UK and Principal-UK prior to this doctoral research, and had met Lt-General-USA and Headmaster-USA during my time in Washington DC (see *Appendix A – Sampling Frame*), the interview would be the primary data gathering event. It would be a single, unrepeated encounter (Lilleker, 2003, Mikecz, 2012). Therefore, first impressions were crucial for framing situations, especially when situation was unfamiliar and unique to both researcher and researched (Josselson,

2013). Although Josselson (2013) advises the interviewer to behave in 'socially predictable ways' (p59) she also contends that 'you must present yourself as serious in purpose' (p61). Pierce (2008) believes that it is important to look and dress the part, but conform to the setting. I chose very carefully when meeting my religious leaders; I wore smart but conservative clothing. Similarly to Richards (1996) and Mikecz (2012) I had hoped that this would positively influence the interview. Josselson (2013) warns us that we are being judged, and although we cannot control gender, race, age, and nationality, we can control our appearance. How we dress conveys clues to our social status and our attitude to the respondent's position. Although I did not have to upgrade my wardrobe as a strategy to diffuse power like Conti and O'Neil (2007) , I did wear a casual, smart *uniform* to most of the interviews.

My first interaction with the majority of the elite or specialised respondents involved the customary business greeting of a handshake followed by thanks for agreeing to be part of the research. Depending on familiarity, and for those I had known previously, I reciprocated their greeting and then engaged in small talk. Kvale (1996) contends that 'the first few minutes of the interview are decisive' (p128). On Dexter's (2006) advice I was personable, albeit nervous, but where appropriate reminded the respondents of our shared connections and mentioned the imprimatur. I was offered refreshments (coffee or tea) prior to five of the ten interviews, and brought coffee with me to two. Refreshments were an unavoidable and an integral part of the two interviews carried out in eating-places. Only one respondent neglected to offer any refreshment, and this would be the precursor for what was to become, for me, a most uncomfortable exchange.

Physical positioning was beyond my control on several occasions, certainly in regards to Lt-General-USA, Vicar-General-USA and Headmaster-USA, whom I interviewed in private offices. I sat where I was offered, normally a seat either adjacent to the leader's desk or directly opposite. Once settled I reminded respondents of the research purpose. My strategy included a re-confirmation of permission to record, and once recording began I re-stated the protocol statement

and checked respondents' agreement to continue. This new verbal consent now supplemented the earlier in-principle consent, and since it would now become part of the verbatim transcription, it became a written deposition. Josselson (2013) describes this as orienting, where intentions are repeated to ensure respondent understanding (Josselson, 2013), and provide reassurance (Hales *et al.*, 2013). The purpose was to enable an open discussion, 'a quasi-monologue- stimulated by understanding comments… with the less informed and experienced one (the interviewer) deferring to the wiser one and learning from him' (Dexter, 2006, p54).

4.1.7 Interview schedule design and interview process

The nature and typology of the interview questions were of paramount importance in this research. As discussed earlier, deep information was sought. Therefore *what would be asked* needed to reflect my epistemological stance. Although the interview questions were designed to address the overall aim of the study: **to research the nature of ethical decision-making across a variety of not-for-profit organisational settings**, they were particularly responsive to the sub-questions listed below, developed at the operationalisation stage (Wengraf, 2001).

- Were there significant ideological distinctions between ethical leadership and moral leadership as envisaged by the literature?
- To what extent did leaders understand their own behaviour in terms of the frameworks they used to inform and guide their decision-making?
- Were ethical decisions special or no different?
- Were there contextual differences when it comes to understanding ethical leadership and decision-making in situ?
- What were the specific challenges to maintaining one's moral compass in ethically challenging situations?
- Can the practice of ethics be made more accessible, transferrable, practical and actionable?

They formed the basis of the interview schedule (see *Appendix B – Leader Interview Schedule*). Questions adhered to Kvale's (1996) *Interview Guide* principles, contributing 'thematically to knowledge production and dynamically to promoting a good interview' (p129). The seventeen questions were arranged in three sections, Q.1 to Q.6 asked about leadership, ethical leadership and then moved toward elucidating decision-making. Questions 7 to 12 related to the ethical challenges of leadership and decision-making. The final section concerned institutional ethics and ethics education. A successful interview is likened to a funnel (Oppenheim, 2005, Pierce, 2008), whereby the sequence begins with inoffensive questions, and graduates to more intrusive questions. As advised by Aberbach and Rockman (2002) and Harvey (2010) , closed ended formulaic questions were avoided. Peabody *et al.* (1990) and Bowen (2002) also suggested keeping questions neutral, not too direct. Questions moved from the general to the specific (Beamer, 2002, Corbin and Strauss, 2008, Harvey, 2011), or the simple to the factual. I progressed to the interpretative or judgmental when there was good rapport (Peabody *et al.*, 1990).

According to Kvale (1996) question wording can be contentious in qualitative interviewing research. Testimonies can become contaminated (Wengraf, 2001, Oppenheim, 2005) when words are deliberately 'put into mouths' (Cohen *et al.*, 2005, p122). Arguably all questions have hidden purposes, but those purposes should not include overtly directing the respondent toward a desired answer (Wengraf, 2001). On close examination of the interview schedule (*Appendix B – Leader Interview Schedule*) some of the questions might appear as *presupposition triggers* (Wang and Ying, 2012). Whilst Kvale (1996) and Leech (2002) agree that wording can influence an answer, Kvale (1996) also acknowledges that the use of certain words as triggers can take the interview 'in important directions, producing new, trustworthy or interesting knowledge' (P159). Although Wengraf (2001) believes loading and bias contaminate data, I agree with Leech (2002) in that presumption may be important for the maintenance of rapport when sensitive information is sought. For instance, my interviews had a specific purpose, not only did questions have to be designed to

maintain interest and co-operation, but the nature of the respondents meant I could not waste a moment. In being inexplicit I risked the respondents viewing me as inexperienced and ignorant; lacking what Hirsch (1995) described as *street smarts* (p73).

Peabody *et al.* (1990) and Beamer (2002) advise pre-testing or piloting the interview instrument to maximise clarity and mitigate possible misinterpretation, and to learn whether there are aspects of the study which detract from the research objectives (Seidman, 2013). Indeed a *dummy run* (Robson, 2006) can be integrated into more flexible research designs. Whilst this research design might appear to have the desired flexibility, the target sample did not. Like Zuckerman (1972) and Wengraf (2001) I carried out preliminary testing with critical readers; since traditional piloting would require a sample of similar respondents to the research group in the main study (Gillham, 2005). Chenail (2011) agrees; sometimes piloting is not practical or possible. I did not want to lose possible respondents to a pilot, nor use up valuable time on under-developed questions. Indeed, my interview schedule had to be modified from an initial twenty-seven questions down to seventeen, following seven rigorous supervisory revisions. The first interview schedule consisted of a series of intrusively direct questions, many of which were replaced and modified. According to Zuckerman (1972) elites easily detect and resent standardised and formulaic questions. The production of strictly comparable questions had to be abandoned. The intention was not to create perfect communication without distortion, but to provide the optimum conditions for productive interactions (Bogner and Menz, 2009). Pretesting and piloting on anyone other than an elite would betray the purposes of the research, since my argument was that the questions were designed to elicit knowledge only certain people had. Ultimately, I contend like Berry (2002) that 'the best interviewer is not the one who writes the best questions.. excellent interviewers are excellent conversationalists' (p679).

As can be seen in *Appendix B – Leader Interview Schedule*, I categorised my questions using Kvale's (1996) 'Types of Interview Questions'*.* The letter A denotes

Introducing Questions, B: *Follow-up Questions*, C: *Probing Questions,* D: *Specifying Questions*, E: *Direct Questions*, F: *Indirect Questions*, and G. *Structuring Questions*, and are all highlighted yellow. On close analysis letter codes for I: *Interpreting Questions* and H: *Silence* are not evident in the planned questions. They only manifested during the interview event when tensions allowed for co-construction and reflection (Josselson, 2013). Like Harvey (2011) I responded in the form of 'umms', 'ahhs', and 'yes's'. When further clarification was necessary, prompts such as 'really?' or 'interesting' were employed (Dexter, 2006). Although silence is also a useful tool (Josselson, 2013); it was used sparingly. It could create tension, force revelations, or engender a detrimental atmosphere. Like Pierce (2008) I respected it, and on Hales' (2013) advice adopted a sensitive approach.

Conversational quality was explicitly sought, and the order of questions allowed to deviate as answers evolved (Peabody *et al.*, 1990, Aberbach and Rockman, 2002). Like Harvey (2011) I moved backwards and forwards as naturally as possible through the schedule. Although Oppenheim (2005) warns that this can question reliability, I agree with Johnson and Rowlands (2012) ; as a researcher with some skill, I felt confident in my deviations from the schedule. I did not want to reduce spontaneity but adhering too strictly to sequencing and delivery. As a reflexive elite researcher I used my intuition to gauge when 'an exception, a deviation, an unusual interpretation may suggest a revision, a reinterpretation, an extension, a new approach (Dexter, 2006, p19). My approach resonated with that of Goldman and Swayze (2012) , where there was 'no "right" or "wrong" answers, just the elites' experiences for exploration' (p239).

As such, the interviews were interpersonal conversations, and represented a 'delicate balance' between knowledge and 'emotional human interaction' (Kvale, 1996, p125). In the first instance, with all respondents there was deliberate framing, and orienting (Josselson, 2013). During this process respondents also sought affirmation; they were keen to know they were providing the desired data and tested my responses. I adopted a variety of interview stances as enacted through the interview schedule, I adjusted my interview style and shifted position,

to generate higher quality responses (Smith, 2006, Harvey, 2011). Other techniques included active listening (Undheim, 2003, Talmage, 2012) 'to invite elaboration and detailed stories and to stay in the relational dance' (Josselson, 2013, p65). As Wengraf (2001) and Lilleker (2003) suggested I listened with great attention to avoid obstacles and remained focused on my agenda, but was also ready to steer and challenge if necessary.

Similarly to Ostrander (1993) and Seidman (2013) my interviews were of substantial length, averaging around 90 minutes (see *Appendix A – Sampling Frame*). The shortest was around 48 minutes, with the longest approximately 1 hour, 46 minutes. Pierce (2008) claims that a successful interview lasts 50 minutes. In contrast to Peabody *et al.* (1990) and Kvale (1996) my interview schedule was not short (20-30 minutes) nor comprised of a few questions. Indeed, Harvey (2011) claims that interview length is dependent on may factors and thus varies, and advises the elite interviewer to be optimistic about contact time. But he also warns against taking advantage of an elite's hospitality. Indeed, time pressure was tangible in the interviews carried out with Lt-General-UK, MP-UK and Archbishop-UK. The interview with Lt-General-UK came to an abrupt end. With MP-UK I was conscious that I had outstayed my welcome, although he had not made me feel that way. With Archbishop-UK more time was requested, and graciously given. Although Seidman (2013) argues that extending allocated time can result in diminished interview quality, I did not find this to be the case.

In-depth interviews can be tiring for all concerned, and it is important that the interview has a positive conclusion (Wengraf, 2001). According to Gillham (2005) social closure includes handshaking and engaging in small-talk; I engaged with what felt appropriate at the time. As Harvey (2011) suggested, I took a final opportunity to ask for further comments as the interview wrapped up. And as Josselson (2013) advised, I thanked my interviewees for their time and for sharing their experiences. At this juncture I offered a breakdown of what would happen next with the valuable testimonies. Richards (1996) , Pierce (2008) and Hales *et al.* (2013) all suggest formally writing to the interviewee following the interview,

checking for overlooked areas as a strategy to keep the channels open for further contact. Unlike Mikecz (2012) I did not follow this advice, instead I emailed my respondents when the transcripts were ready for sharing, as agreed (see *Appendix I – Member Check E-mail*). But this drew little response; post-interview communication was not reciprocated. Although Seidman (2013) believes that what happens after the interview is reflective of the relationship nurtured during the interview; I do not agree. I believe it is more likely to be as a result of practical implications. Elite respondents employ highly protective gatekeepers (as noted earlier in section 4.1.5) and are less likely to have the time to personally check 30-page transcripts. Non-response is more likely to be as a result of the status I enjoyed in relation to the implicit trust afforded me by the imprimatur, coupled with the view that once the interview had been given, like a journalist interview, there would be no follow-up despite me saying otherwise.

Post-interview, Headmaster-USA, Charity Head-UK and MP-UK remarked that they had gained pleasure and enjoyment from the opportunity to share their experiences. Similarly to Smith (2006) some of my interviews were self-reflective, cathartic, uncertain, and at times, uneasy. I hoped that the leaders had also gained some personal insights (Goldman and Swayze, 2012). Elite interviewees are no different than other respondents when it comes to sharing their stories. Although Atkinson (2012) refers primarily to life story interviewing in his list of benefits, he believes that those willing to embrace the process can be rewarded with:

1. A clearer perspective on personal experiences is gained, which brings greater meaning to one's life.
2. Greater self-knowledge, a stronger self-image, and self-esteem are gained.
3. Cherished experiences *and* insights are shared with others.
4. Joy, satisfaction, and inner peace are gained in sharing one's story with others.
5. Sharing one's story is a way of purging, or releasing, certain burdens or validating personal experience – it is in fact central to the recovery process.
6. Sharing one's story helps create community and may show that we have more in common than we thought.

7. Life stories can help other people see their lives more clearly or differently and perhaps be an inspiration to help them change something in their life.

8. Others will get to know and understand us better, in a way they hadn't before.

9. A better sense of how we want our story to end, or how we could give it the "good" ending we want, might be gained. By understanding our past and present, we also gain a clearer perspective of our goals for the future.

(Atkinson, 2012, p120)

4.1.8 Positionality, power and gender

We are reminded that the interview is an emotional dialogical exchange, therefore we must be continuously aware of the effects of its 'micro-processes' (Wengraf, 2001, p195). Since the status difference between researcher and elite cannot be erased (Welch *et al.*, 2002), I acknowledge like Mikecz (2012) that it is fundamental to understand positionality. Particularly how 'power… and gender dynamics between the researcher and the researched shape the research process' (Hales *et al.*, 2013, p179). Although these appear as universal issues 'in all forms of verbal communication', in elite interviewing normal rules don't apply (Wang and Ying, 2012, p234). According to Rice (2010) there is a perceived gap between elite and researcher which needs to be recognised and accommodated to mitigate any false neutrality and universality.

In elite interviewing, power is in play from the outset (Conti and O'Neil, 2007, Rice, 2010), and evident in the 'preparatory contacts with the expert' (Bogner *et al.*, 2009, p70). I was the petitioner, humbly grateful to obtain the interview. The precedence was set, and the power imbalance established (Welch *et al.*, 2002, Hales *et al.*, 2013). To mitigate, Ostrander (1993) suggests establishing control from the outset. I used the little power I had to confirm my status as a professional researcher. Similarly to Dexter (2006) I politely turned down requests from Charity Head-USA, Lt-General-UK and MP-UK who asked me to provide the interview schedule in advance. With Charity Head-UK and Archbishop-UK, additional information was added to my initial e-mail (highlighted in *Appendix H – E-mail communication*) to circumvent future requests. Scott (2008) describes

this type of resistance as 'power from below' (p38). It was risky and could have jeopardised my access; but it did not. Like Delaney (2007) I adopted a general position that I was the status subordinate, and had no issues accepting the fact that I was there to learn from them.

Elite and specialised leaders are used to being asked for their opinions (Ostrander, 1993, Lilleker, 2003, Seidman, 2013) to 'stress his or her definition of, structure, and relevant data related to a situation' (Kezar, 2003, p397). They are often required to act as spokesperson for their respective organisations (Delaney, 2007). They present as seasoned professional communicators (Welch *et al.*, 2002, Gilding, 2010), or sometimes experts in evasion (Harvey, 2011, Brooks and Normore, 2015). They have an accepted knowledge and are conscious of their importance; possessing power to control the flow and quality of the information and direct proceedings (Richards, 1996, Welch *et al.*, 2002, Hales *et al.*, 2013). As such, the interview is balanced in favour of the respondent (Welch *et al.*, 2002, Morris, 2009, Goldman and Swayze, 2012).

Normally the interview process favours the interviewer; here the dynamic is disrupted (Welch *et al.*, 2002, Smith, 2006). The turn-taking (Wang and Ying, 2012), traffic management (Oppenheim, 2005) system common during conventional interviews is open to challenge. The elite interviewer can inadvertently relinquish any power they have by adopting an overly deferential stance (Richards, 1996) allowing the elite interviewee to dominate and control the exchange. This can result in a disadvantageous power asymmetry (Richards, 1996, Welch *et al.*, 2002). However deference was required with Archbishop-UK (addressed formally as Your Grace throughout the interview) and Vicar-General-USA. I had to show my respect for the office. Whilst Archbishop-UK graciously and openly answered every question, my deference was not rewarded with Vicar-General-USA. He displayed what Zuckerman (1972) described as *irritation*. He sat at great distance from me, offered no refreshment, and began by admonishing my research aim, and criticising the research tool, despite not having viewed it.

Although elites have been known to challenge research questions or manipulate responses in a bid to present themselves more favourably (Delaney, 2007, Morris, 2009, Goldman and Swayze, 2012), there are other reasons for unsuccessful interviews. Josselson (2013) talks about interviewee remorse and hidden agendas; she notes that people of prominence can offer 'press release' (p151) style interviews, become bored, distressed, and hostile. My interview with Vicar-General-USA was not confrontational; I was too respectful and professional to allow that to happen. Like Zuckerman (1972) I tried to salvage what I could. On reflection, I had made some attempts to follow Josselson's (2013) 'Dos and Don'ts of Interviewing', but it was futile. Vicar-General-USA was the figurative 'judge', and I 'the object of judgment' (Zuckerman, 1972, p175). It was only at the very end of the interview that I would understand why Vicar-General-USA had been uncooperative.

On review, I was not overly deferential, nor did I become star struck as warned by Ostrander (1993) . I was conscious of getting drawn into the worldview of elite respondents and risking objectivity (Delaney, 2007, Gronn, 2007, Gilding, 2010). Encounters can be seductive, whereby 'you enter someone's life for an hour or two... and it is easy to come out of the interview thinking... that was amazing' (Delaney, 2007, p217). Gronn (2007) , when recalling his experiences interviewing high profile, well-established leaders maintains that the inclination to *romanticise* leaders is influenced by the level of their elite status. He advises researchers to develop a healthy scepticism, record internal conflicts in a diary, and consult supplementary sources as strategies to moderate overstating power, privilege and superiority. His advice was followed in this research (see *Appendix D – Field notes diary excerpt*). Power was understood, 'not as an intrinsic property of an individual but as flowing from complex relationships between individuals, organisations and institutions' (Conti and O'Neil, 2007, p68).

Whilst factors such as the interviewer's specialist knowledge, linguistic competence, institutional background and academic titles (Bogner and Menz, 2009), race and religion (Hales *et al.*, 2013) can impact the research relationship,

age and gender were also key considerations here. Of the entire cohort, seven of the ten respondents were men. Although Cunningham-Sabot (1999) believes that gender is a significant issue, I feel that it is a secondary, positional factor. Similarly to Welch *et al.* (2002) I felt that my gender had distinct benefits; it encouraged more open testimonies, and interviewees seemed willing to spend extra time with me. But others report difficulties, female interviewers can be reluctant to control interviews with men, and male interviewees can be dismissive of women interviewers (Josselson, 2013).

As noted earlier, my interview with Vicar-General-USA became a real concern. Although it was difficult to distinguish whether it was gender or age differences, or both, like Welch *et al.* (2002) I felt that I had successfully negotiated the research relationship with both male clergy. Similarly to a study by Aldridge (1995) concerning prestigious Anglican Clergy, I had shown respect for the office, and highlighted our shared identity. Perhaps I had chosen poorly, Vicar-General-USA was simply a 'bad expert' (Gläser and Laudel, 2009), someone without sufficient motivation or interest to take part in the study (Johnson and Rowlands, 2012)?

In contrast, interviews with the other male elites fell into the classic male-female pattern (McDowell, 1998). Similarly to Mikecz (2012) and Goldman and Swayze (2012) I experienced no significant gender issues. Easy rapport was attributed to 'the researcher's familiarity with the field and environment' (Goldman and Swayze, 2012, p239) and the subtle authority of the imprimatur. The interviews with the three female leaders were however, different. I could not deny my 'feminine voice' (Gilligan, 1977), nor could I choose not to *hear* the voices of my female respondents. Gender issues are thought to extend beyond positionality; they concern how views are constructed, and the possible differences in attitudes toward the research topic itself. As such, gender issues could pose a threat to validity and present as bias. As such, it was comprehensively considered, again in this chapter and further attended to in Chapter Six (see sections 6.1.7, 6.1.8 and 6.1.9).

As noted earlier, age variance is also an important consideration when gathering in-depth interview data (Seidman, 2013). My leader's ages ranged from 49 years to 82, at the time of interview. Although Mickecz's (2012) respondents were also senior in age to him, all of his respondents treated him with respect. But a substantial seniority gap between a female researcher and an elderly elite respondent can result in a patriarchal, and condescending attitude (Welch *et al.*, 2002). Seidman (2013) believes that some older participants may feel uncomfortable… and that it takes a special kind of sensitivity on the part of the interviewer' (p107) to establish and maintain rapport. Elite interviewers must resort to a range of tactics when dealing with respondents with diverse ages (Harvey, 2011). Like McDowell (1998) I adopted a less informed, deferential stance with my elderly respondent once I had processed the verbal and visual clues. However, I had not paid enough attention to the initial dynamic. On reflection, it was only after the last question was asked of Vicar-General-USA that I realised a possible source for our lack of rapport.

> *"If you were to shut those 2 things off, I'd share something with you…*
> *'Cos, I think you might enjoy this… You know I really do not trust that".*

It is worth remembering that that the interview space is where respondents divulge personal information regarding their feelings and others (Johnson and Rowlands, 2012, Heggen and Guillemin, 2012). The interviewer is much more than a simple catalyst 'whose task is to provide a context in which interviewees can communicate information and opinion' (Wang and Ying, 2012, p234). On reflection, and following the advice of Josselson (2013) and Berger (2015) I moderated both my internal and external reactions during each exchange. I took special care, reflecting upon my own biases and assumptions in order to 'understand… without judgment or interference' (Josselson, 2013, p27). Berger (2015) acknowledges that if reflexivity is used as a mediating tool in the research process then the credibility of the study and its ethicality are enhanced.

4.2   Ethics, the golden thread

Most *elite* studies allude to ethical concerns in their discussions surrounding the methodological issues in regards to power (Lilleker, 2003, Conti and O'Neil, 2007, Scott, 2008, Neal and McLaughlin, 2009, Morris, 2009), positionality (Herod, 1999, Cunningham-Sabot, 1999, Harvey, 2010, Rice, 2010, Mikecz, 2012), and reflexivity (Kezar, 2003, Court and Abbas, 2013). Whereas others (Zuckerman, 1972, Richards, 1996, Welch *et al.*, 2002, Smith, 2006, Goldman and Swayze, 2012), consider procedural ethics and ethics in practice. This research stands against current approaches taken by mainstream (quantitative) leadership, ethical leadership and ethical decision-making scholars (Leitsch, 2004, Ruedy and Schweitzer, 2011) and considers them all.

Rossman and Rallis (2010) contend that procedures and technical matters have supplanted relational matters in respect of ethics. Research ethics are commonly associated with bureaucratic procedures such as gaining ethics approval, informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity and protection from harm (Klenke, 2008). The procedure here was initialised by the completion of the University of Worcester '*Ethics Checklist for Staff/Postgraduate Students writing a research proposal*'. This form, like most, is rudimentary and is designed simply to highlight potential ethical dilemmas (Josselson, 2013). It is a formal accountability procedure required by the Research Degrees Board. Forms say very little about how the researcher will behave or the level of that behaviour (Small, 2002, Klenke, 2008). I agree with McNamee (2002b) in that moral reflection must be made concrete, and that it is naïve to believe that moral issues can be solved universally. Checklists and ethical codes in research are no more benchmarks of ethical behaviour than the ethical codes found, and arguably un-followed in organisations. Therefore research ethics is about 'good research', in so much as this thesis is about 'good leadership'. It concerns *my* moral underpinnings and behaviour, and how these balance against the responsibility to, and treatment of the respondents and their data (Marvasti, 2004).

According to Williamson and Smyth (2004) this includes issues regarding how I recruited and informed respondents; the principles of my research design, and governance; my objectivity, the status of respondents, and how I protected them from harm. Although my behaviour in regards to respondent recruitment and consent has been explained, concordant with Seidman (2013) it was not in the form of physical consent forms. Rigid compliance to over formalised consent procedures are thought to jeopardise trust and participation making respondents suspicious of the research, the researcher and the academic institution to which they belong (Macfarlane, 2010, Marzano, 2012). I adopted a different approach. On the advice of Josselson (2013) I sent a deliberately brief protocol statement (*Appendix C – Protocol Statement*) with the outline of the study to gatekeepers, but directly to Lt-General-USA, Ambassador-USA, Vicar-General-USA, Headmaster-USA and Principal-UK when initial participation was being sought. It served to strike an ethical balance between misinforming respondents and leading them toward preconceived answers (Kvale, 1996). I did not send consent forms, nor did I collect signed consent forms as explained earlier (see section 4.1.6).

Consent to the interview (through the gatekeeper) meant that the respondent had seen all of the protocols and had agreed. But because Lt-General-USA had not recalled seeing the documentation, I took the liberty of going through consent a second time. When permission to record had been granted, and recording commenced I fully restated the protocols and purpose of the research with each respondent. Consent was recorded as part of the interview. I also discussed issues regarding levels of openness, confidentiality and anonymity, and detailed procedures for transcription validation (Kaiser, 2012). This manifested as *substantial understanding* (Israel, 2015) of all the material and information necessary to make the decision to proceed with the study. In line with Marzano (2012) and Josselson (2013) consent was to do with moral responsibility. My less formal approach was arguably, more rigorous. It was reinforced by the climate of trust and respect engendered through my connections. The goodwill effected through my association with an imprimatur was concordant with the cultural rules of the communities as described by Miller-Day (2012) .

Although elite interviewees are less likely to experience social disadvantage, they can like any interviewee become distressed, feel uncomfortable, or feel that their privacy has been invaded. Klenke (2008) states that harm must be minimized especially when dealing with sensitive or emotional topics. For Israel (2015) this involves 'psychological distress, discomfort, social disadvantage, invasion of privacy or infringement of rights' (p124). As previously reported, I believed that Vicar-General-USA had experienced some level of disquiet. However, I did also have concerns about unanticipated disclosure with Ambassador-USA (see *Appendix E – Abridged transcript*). Whilst I was mindful that 'people do not tell anyone anything they do not want to tell' (Josselson, 2013, p26-27), I felt profound guilt following Ambassador-USA's admission. We successfully completed the interview, but I still question whether, as Finlay (2012) suggested, my explorations caused her to relive her pain. Small moments are not unimportant, they are ethically significant events (Heggen and Guillemin, 2012). This was 'fruitful territory' (Johnson and Rowlands, 2012, p109) for us both. By having the courage to acknowledge respondents' unease and hesitation I was able to appreciate my own limitations. I believe that this level of personal scrutiny and self-criticality embodies my values, and according to Busher and James (2007) helps to strengthen the validity of this research.

4.2.1 Protecting and respecting confidences

Perhaps the most pressing ethical consideration for me as a researcher involved guaranteeing anonymity and confidentiality. Wengraf (2001) believes these to be distinct; anonymity 'is a question of degree' (p187), but confidentiality is a stronger requirement because it refers to what will be revealed. In elite interviewing the challenge and promise of maintaining secrecy is magnified. Macfarlane (2010) contends that 'confidentiality is also based on the idea that research participants are in some way vulnerable and less powerful than the researcher' (p21). I believe it is not patronising to assume that elite respondents want or need protection; they are used to being asked for their opinions, and to have them publicly reported. As such, testimonies needed to be purged of

identifying information. The risk was calculable, not only for the respondent, but might also extend to those they discussed.

On advice from Savin-Baden and Major (2013) careful attention was paid to how leaders talked about themselves and how they saw themselves in relation to others. As Klenke (2008) suggested, testimonies were redacted when identifying, sensitive or irrelevant information was disclosed. I removed geographic locations, names and publicly known opinions and events. Data were not altered, but masked to prevent compromise. Incorporating the views of Finlay (2012) I believe I was able to achieve a balance between facilitating disclosure and protecting from exposure. Special treatment was given to the transcripts of Lt-General-USA and Lt-General-UK, with Section 5 of the Official Secrets Act (1989) cited for the latter. I took significant additional precautions to protect and safeguard respondents.

Dexter (1964) warns that when presenting elite interview data scholars must be especially cautious when using verbatim quotes. The publication of lengthy quotes from participants can compromise research guarantees (Klenke, 2008, Macfarlane, 2010). The over-use of quotes can also result in a curious reader discovering an identity from a turn of phrase or the recounting of an experience according to Peabody *et al.* (1990) . I resisted temptation despite the fact that almost all of the responses were highly eloquent, relevant and useable. As Delaney (2007) advised, I used my 'own voice to make sense of the elite's view or to take an analytic stance in relation to that worldview' (P218). Unlike Shurmer-Smith (1998) I do not take the view that elite's had unfair advantage, and that the usual tenets of ethical research could be abandoned in order to redress social, bureaucratic and political imbalances.

4.2.2 Beyond trustworthiness; credibility and legitimacy

Since the values and lived experiences of those involved cannot be removed from the research process (Ponterotto, 2005) this study is both epistemological and axiological (Carter and Little, 2007). Qualitative research is about making 'value

judgements about what constitutes trustworthy knowledge' (Carter and Little, 2007, p1322). This includes recognising the characteristics of the research design which might influence results, but also means that researchers must have the courage to challenge their own integrity and to take ownership when things do not play out as expected (Heggen and Guillemin, 2012).

Along with reliability, objectivity and generalisability, validity is considered one of the 'canonical four' when it comes to the credibility of research (Rossman and Rallis, 2010, p382) . It is often considered a technical matter approached in isolation from ethical principles and rules which fore-ground and privilege research (Rossman and Rallis, 2010). Reliability and validity are considered fundamental concerns in quantitative research, but have a less certain role in qualitative research (Krefting, 1991, Klenke, 2008). Validity relates to how inferences can be justified in regards to the data (Wengraf, 2001, Robson, 2006), whereas reliability concerns replicability. Williams and Morrow (2009) and Cohen *et al.* (2011) believe they must be addressed within the corresponding research paradigm. This means that because qualitative research is *idiographic* and *emic*, as opposed to *nomothetic* and *etic* I can only limit, control or manage subjectivity (Morrow, 2005, p252). Perfect reliability and validity are unrealistic research aims (Cohen *et al.*, 2011, Mikecz, 2012); contaminants are unavoidable (Beamer, 2002, p93). A range of authors (Krefting, 1991, Morrow, 2005, Williams and Morrow, 2009, Kornbluh, 2015) recommend the adoption of a host of different models and criteria for evaluating the worth and merit of a study. This has led to confusion, and 'a deteriorating ability to discern rigour' (Morse *et al.*, 2002, p5). Klenke (2008) follows the advice of Lincoln and Guba (1985) who recommend that reliability and validity should be reconceptualised as *trustworthiness,* to include *credibility*, *transferability*, *dependability*, and *confirmability.* Morse *et al.* (2002) believe that trustworthiness should not be reliant upon technical measures, but wholly dependent upon 'the characteristics of the investigator' (p5), demonstrated through researcher ethical reasoning and the transparency of the decisions made.

But there are some technical measures that can be adopted which do not weaken epistemological stance. Lincoln and Guba (1985) , Morse *et al.* (2002) and Klenke (2008) advocate *prolonged engagement*, *peer debriefing*, *member checking*, *negative case sampling*, *reflexivity*, and *triangulation* as the tools of choice to verify quality and provide methodological coherence. Of the list, only member checking, negative case sampling, reflexivity and triangulation were possible because of the nature of the respondents in this study. Although Kornbluh (2015) believes that member checking or respondent validation are valuable strategies, they also have limitations. Josselson (2013) notes that 'in most cases the participant is not much interested in what the researcher does with the interview material' (p180). She does not advocate member checking, contending that only the researcher can verify the script whilst listening to the transcript. If the respondent endorses the script, a new 'truth' is produced. It is the researcher who should maintain 'interpretive authority' (Josselson, 2013, p179). If *non-elite* respondents do not wish to be burdened with such requests then elite individuals, by their nature are less inclined to validate lengthy transcripts (Welch *et al.*, 2002). Like Welch *et al.* (2002) and Goldman and Swayze (2012) it could be argued that my respondents displayed a post-interview reluctance to member check transcripts. Since my e-mail (see *Appendix I – Member Check E-mail*) requests went unheeded, I sent no further drafts. Similarly to reports by Lilleker (2003) and Morris (2009) , my elite respondents were not interested in validating the outputs of research.

Although negative case sampling is useful as a method of triangulation, helps to reduce researcher bias (Robson, 2006) and is thought to increase validity; like reflexivity (Kolb, 2012) it is not a popular method of verification. It requires the investigator to find deviant or disconfirming cases to explain why the respondent's testimony is different from others'. Klenke (2008) believes that learning from negative cases is useful for leadership researchers and can lead to 'more complex, dense and thick analysis' (p43). It is possible to draw parallels with the historiometric approach since secondary sources are scrutinised alongside primary data to provide a more complete picture. However it is my understanding that this type of crosschecking is needed when there is doubt and the data

warrants further challenge. In contrast, I do not doubt my data for the reasons outlined earlier regarding trust. However I do acknowledge that specific recollections could be easily verified in relation to Lt-General-USA, Ambassador-USA, MP-UK and Charity Head-UK. I could have accessed pre-existing interviews on YouTube, mainstream media reports and published works; biases and perspectives could have beeen clarified (Beamer, 2002, p93). For instance, Mikecz (2012) compared and contrasted interview data with official documents and databases, and Beamer (2002) used newspapers and articles as supporting or contradictory evidence. However caution is advised, negative case sampling is also an analytical strategy, and according to Robson (2006) requires inductive analysis. Furthermore, it belies the assumption that the negative cases are void of deception themselves. In fact, it could easily reveal 'discrepancies and disagreements among different sources' (Robson, 2006, p175) resulting in further contradiction (Davies, 2001). As such, negative case sampling challenged my epistemological approach to this research.

Overall, triangulation is considered a competent way to reduce threats to validity (Morrow, 2005, Robson, 2006, Williams and Morrow, 2009); but it is, according to Cohen *et al.* (2011) used by a minority in practice. It relates to a variety of considerations; namely *time*, *space*, *combined levels*, *theoretical*, *investigator* and *methodological triangulation* (Cohen *et al.*, 2011). Of these, I did not gather data over time; there was no prolonged engagement, nor did I involve other investigators. However, my sample could reasonably be considered in terms of *space* triangulation, i.e. cross-cultural. The sample involved a range of sectors (n=5) where possible differences between and across the populations were sought. Although the robustness of the sampling strategy has been comprehensively examined (see section 4.1.3) I believe it is also important to acknowledge that it is the quality of respondents which ultimately influences the nature and value of the research.

4.2.3 Subjectivity, objectivity and reflexivity

Dean and Whyte (2006) remind us that despite appearances elite testimonies are simply perceptions which have been 'filtered and modified by... cognitive and emotional reactions and reported through... personal verbal usages' (p101). Objectivity is challenged when respondents are recalling past events (Richards, 1996, Lilleker, 2003). Incidents are reconstructed to fit with current points of view, and thus data becomes highly situational (Richards, 1996, Dean and Whyte, 2006). Of course, there will always be questions regarding the 'truth' of the knowledge produced. Indeed, getting honest accounts is a legitimate concern (Richards, 1996, Dexter, Morris, 2009, Mikecz, 2012). Morris (2009) contends that 'many writers on interviewing elites assume they are going to be lied to' (p211). Few realise that elite respondents, like any others experience difficulty in recalling the past in necessary detail, or that they may wish to change their minds (Richards, 1996, Lilleker, 2003, Mikecz, 2012).

Beamer (2002) and Dean and Whyte (2006) remind the researcher to be aware of ulterior motives. This includes the desire to be part of the study or please the researcher (Krefting, 1991). Researchers must be attuned to undue hesitation during the testimony, or any other idiosyncratic factors such as mood, language peculiarities and reactions (Dean and Whyte, 2006, p102-103). To be able to do this well, and get close to the truth Berry (2002) advises researchers to deliberate carefully about their own decision-making, and remain alert.

Reflexivity has been mentioned before in sections 1.6 and 4.1.8. It is recognised by Smith (2006) as a powerful tool for moderating the imbalance of power in elite interviews, but it is also a strategy for increasing the credibility and authenticity of qualitative research (Klenke, 2008, Mikecz, 2012). It is enacted through *strategic*, *situational-discursive*, *embodied*, *relational* and *ethical* attitudes to research (Finlay, 2012). Practised systematically as a methodological audit, or as a spontaneous creative endeavour (Finlay, 2012). It is not an exact science and is subjective to the researcher. Moreover, if critical awareness is not maintained

the researcher risks 'getting sucked into a vortex of narcissism, pretentiousness and infinite regress' (Finlay and Gough, 2008, pxi). Similarly to Morris (2009) and Finlay (2012) my approach involved recognising and responding to my own assumptions and preconceived ideas about the person and the narrative, to 'understand the participant's experience as fully as possible without judgement or interference' (Josselson, 2013, p29).

Like Welch *et al.* (2002) and Berger (2015) I used reflexivity as a device to strengthen trustworthiness by examining my fieldwork experiences in relation to themes such as *access*, *power*, and *openness.* Methodological issues, differences and similarities regarding behaviour during interviews were recorded and kept for examination (*Appendix D – Field notes diary excerpt*). Reflexivity is a powerful tool, but it is only 'as strong or rigorous as our own knowledge base and our abilities to continually and critically interrogate our knowledges and construction' (Pillow, 2010, p275). Indeed, the researcher is a participant, and co-constructor of the knowledge. However, reflexivity cannot be expected to remedy all the methodological shortcomings of a qualitative approach; perfection is unachievable (Smith, 2006, Pillow, 2010). It is not a panacea, but it does help to 'reveal the often invisible but no less real complexities of social structures…for knowing human and social life more fully' (Rossman and Rallis, 2010, p388).

4.2.4 Credibility and the ethics of analysis

Ethics is the golden thread running through this research; and this extends to researcher considerations. The basis of this research concerns truth, good and right. Since it deals with the underlying moral disposition of others, it had to be true to those notions. Schostak (2006) contends that a researcher is the witness to experiences and views. As such, the interview itself is an ethical act. Throughout the unpacking of views and the re-telling of stories I have also attended to my ethical decision-making in the production of this research. The validity of my procedures and reporting now merit mention, especially with regards to the quality of the social reconstruction, or as Kvale (1996) describes the 'esthetics and

rhetoric' involved in the production of a 'scientific discourse' (p242). Savin-Baden and Major (2013) concur, adding that it is the explicit nature of the writing and thoroughness which shows that the product has quality.

As such, the practical stages are foregrounded here. However, certain interpretive principles also run in background to the analytical processes. There was explicit intention to strengthen the rigour and stability of this research by using 'analytic strategies that reflect and respect the intrinsic complexity of social organization, the forms of social action, and the conventions of social representation' (Atkinson and Delamont, 2005, p836). Epistemological integrity is a major research concern, and extends to processes beyond data collection. Bazeley (2013) claims that it is the transparency of the processes, and the extent to which the researcher has stayed true to their epistemological stance in the eyes of those evaluating the work which determines credibility. Since it is not normally possible to produce a literal description or complete account of the research process (Denscombe, 2007) researchers must honestly report how the research question was resolved to strengthen reliability according to Baker and Edwards (2012) .

What follows is the workings of analysis, the memos, diagrams, coding, reflective comments and the decisions taken to arrive at the findings (as summarised in Figure 2 - Analytical Overview). Here, I present what Corbin and Strauss (2008) describe as both description and validation of the scheme. Whilst this section may seem as though a specific procedural approach was taken, a range of analytical styles were used. My analytical path was intuitive as described by Savin-Baden and Major (2013) , and ad hoc according to Kvale (1996) , but it also involved post hoc elements as Rapley (2016) advised. To provide further clarity, advice from both Kvale (1996) and Bazeley (2013) were followed. The former advocated showcasing analytical examples to allow readers to follow steps, and the latter advised the researcher to present data from a code to demonstrate the analytical path from origination to presentation. The purple arrows in pictures 1-4, and Appendices L and N, coupled with the purple text in Appendices J, K, and M

indicate a form of what Tansey (2007) calls *process tracing.* The concept of *trust* is followed throughout the analytical processes to illustrate. Whilst I acknowledge that another researcher might arrive at an alternative view, I contend like Kvale (1996) that it could not be 'wholly different' (p209) given the data.

4.3   Analytical activities explained

The interview data were not transcribed immediately following the interviews. Time pressures to complete the whole USA cohort meant a tight schedule. If *Appendix F - Leader contact record (US)* is examined Lt-General-USA was interviewed 3rd May 2012, Headmaster-USA on 10th May 2012, Ambassador-USA on 21st May 2012, Vicar-General-USA on 24th May 2012 and Charity Head-USA on 5th June 2012. Given my part-time research status and the fact we were making preparations to return to the UK in the summer of 2012, time lapsed before transcription.   There was also a significant pause between interview and transcription with the UK cohort as can be seen in *Appendix G - Leader contact record (UK)*. Although they were more spread out, Lt-General-UK was interviewed 29th July 2013, followed by Principal-UK on 24th September 2013, then Charity Head-UK on 12th December 2013, followed by MP-UK and lastly, Archbishop-UK on the 7th March 2014.

Life got in the way of immediate transcription. Gillham (2005) warns not leave the task too long and suggests transcribing the following day when the experience is fresh. To counteract the delay and in-between, I relistened to my interviews and made field notes (see *Appendix D – Field notes diary excerpt*). In keeping with the ethical tenets of this research I personally transcribed each interview. Due to the nature of the data (respondents status) I believed the security of recordings to be a tangible concern (Dexter, 2006); outsourcing transcription would be ethically questionable. Additionally, due to the length and level of detail, it would also be very costly. Secondly, accuracy and appropriateness of data are predicated on the reliability of the initial transcripts (Richards, 2005,

Silverman, 2006); I needed to be sure that the data were precise to be able to have confidence in the resulting analysis.

Seidman (2013) warns that transcription is an onerous undertaking for a researcher. Researchers are advised to be realistic about the time it takes and the stress it can cause due to the prolonged periods of focus (Kvale, 1996, Gillham, 2005). According to Bazeley (2013) it takes one hour to transcribe fifteen minutes of text. The time I spent on each transcription ranged from three hours to roughly eight hours, and when multiplied by ten interviews this represented a considerable commitment. As advised by Gillham (2005) breaks were taken and hard to hear passages revisited for clarity, thus prolonging transcription time. When completed, transcriptions ranged from fifteen pages (Lt-General-UK) to thirty-four pages (Charity Head-USA). On par with the seminal qualitative study carried out by Treviño *et al.* (2003) and a later study by Frick (2009) transcripts were as Silverman (2006, 2011) described; *verbatim*, *detailed*, and *messy*, as befits natural exchange. Like Bazeley (2013) and Bryman (2016) I believe there is real value in personal verbatim transcription, where emotion and nuance can be preserved in the text. My aim was to faithfully record the exchange and remain close to my data.

Transcription was more than a mechanical task (Bazeley, 2013); it was interpretive (Gillham, 2005) and formed an initial, fundamental part of data analysis (Seidman, 2013). Kvale (1996) contends that transcription itself separates the conversation into fragments; paragraphs, sentences and words, whereby phrasing and rephrasing can shift meaning. I also had to make decisions regarding what could be reasonably reduced from the texts. My own dialogue was initially transcribed, but I felt it was cumbersome to include beyond the transcription stage. On the advice of Wengraf (2001) and Busher and James (2007) I also removed unique identifiers from the transcriptions and replaced them with pseudonyms. Whilst leaders were given letter codes ranging from A-J during the preparation and handling of the data (see *Appendix A – Sampling Frame*), I dispensed with them later. On supervisory advice, it was thought that the letter

codes were incapable of humanising the data in the body of the thesis. It would also mean constant reference to a coded list limiting readability of the results. More fitting pseudonyms were used when it came to reporting; leader title was followed by country, making it easier for researcher and reader to notice possible idiosyncrasies.

On the advice of Boulton and Hammersley (2006) , Saldaña (2013) and Seidman (2013) and to add meaning, the texts were annotated. They were marked for interest and significance prior to coding as can be seen in Picture 1: Annotated Transcript:
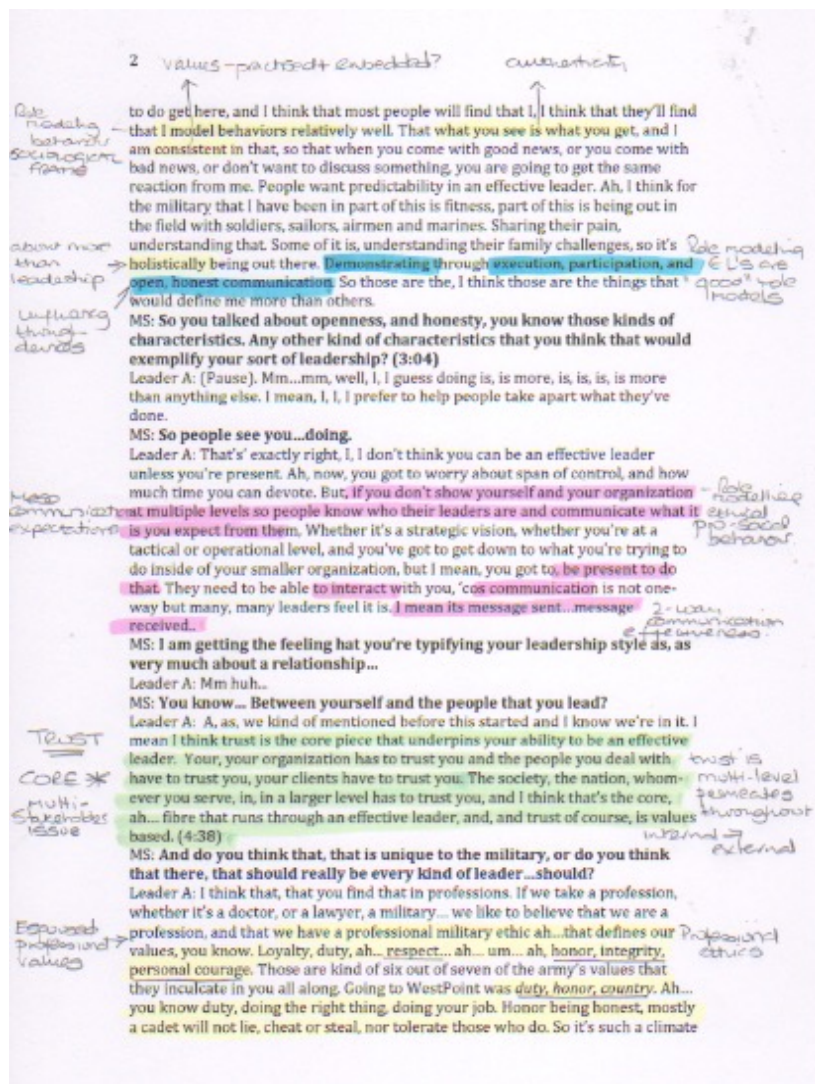
Picture 1: Annotated transcript

Seidman (2013) notes that after the labour of transcription this close reading is helpful to keep the researcher motivated and maintain confidence. Researchers can become bored with the repetition, get tired and sacrifice thoroughness (Rapley, 2016). Although I took Beamer's (2002) advice and viewed the transcripts with a healthy scepticism, it was reassuring to see data significance at this early stage. Possible codes were beginning to emerge and as Saldaña (2013) noted, these preliminary pre-codes would become key features or illustrative exemplars in the final presentation of data.

4.3.1 First stage coding

After this process I revisited the literature review and my research sub-questions to refocus on my research intentions and the purposes of the study as advised by Richards (2005) . I was ready to enter the first major stage of coding/analysis. As a point of note, I had originally considered using NVivo for Mac for coding. I had acquired the software through my university and felt that its use had distinct advantages in respect of data management, particularly volume. But when I explored the possibilities I realised that it would take a considerable time to learn to navigate the software. Richards (2005) and Bazeley (2013) both warn of the dangers. Beginners 'create and record too many data in too much detail' (Bazeley, 2013, p139), and become reliant upon the minutiae rather than cross-referencing and linking data. It becomes about the use of the software and results in an over-zealous researcher (Richards, 2005) robbed of imagination and creativity. Furthermore, I felt that computer assisted analysis did not fit with my epistemological view, even as a method of triangulation. Furthermore, I could not be certain that scholars had not used the auto-coding function and further removed themselves from their data.

In this study, text was cut from the transcript and treated *(Appendix J – 1st Stage Coding/Analysis Exemplar).* As advised by Savin-Baden and Major (2013) data were broken into segments for close examination. These short pieces of text or statements were given what Bazeley (2013) calls 'essential identifying

information' (p133) to enable keyword searches when further analysis took place. Bazeley (2013) notes that 'coding is a fundamental skill for qualitative analysis... a purposeful step' (p125). For Savin-Baden and Major (2013) codes are an illustrative marques that portray underlying properties and concepts of a given piece of data. Both Kvale (1996) and Gillham (2005) describe the coding process in terms of developing categories whereby important text is identified as a small part of a larger topic. However, Saldaña's (2013) view is the most relevant here, coding is:

> *'A researcher-generated construct that symbolizes and thus attributes interpreted meaning to each individual data for later purposes of pattern detection, categorization, theory building, and other analytical processes' (p4).*

Unlike extent qualitative studies (see section 3.1.6), I did not follow the fixed systems of Glaser and Strauss (1967) , Miles and Huberman (1994) or Boyatzis (1998) I opted instead for a hybrid coding scheme as described by Saldaña (2013) . I cherry-picked from the schemes available, using *theoretical*, *a priori*, *inductive*, *in vivo*, *indigenous*, and *verbatim* codes. The *theoretical* or *a priori* codes were underpinned by a re-reading of the literature and attention to the research sub-questions. As such, they were not abbreviated nor truncated, but written in full as Saldaña (2013) suggested. This was intentional; to more accurately reflect the true nature of the data. Amongst those codes were: *leadership style, leadership role, leadership skills, and constraints to leadership, personal characteristics, effective leadership, values, and leader motivation*. They were underpinned by the literature and research sub-questions as intimated earlier. In summary, these codes were expected.

However, space was also given to unexpected *inductive* codes (Saldaña, 2013). Many of which were *in vivo* and *indigenous* as stated by the respondent (Bazeley, 2013). Since stories and specific experiences could not be quoted nor reported for reasons of confidentiality, respondent voice could be reflected in these *verbatim* codes (Saldaña, 2013). Of all the codes, these would be particularly obvious in the presentation of data. They are normally italicised or emboldened to

highlight their nature. Although Saldaña (2013) warns that the researcher should limit their use, I disagree, they are powerful and potent in this study particularly when showing how my leaders' views contrast extant understandings (see 5.4.1.2).

Unlike Treviño *et al.* (2003) and Resick *et al.* (2011) I did not have analytical support or independent others to objectively help or review. I coded on my own and manually. Qualitative research is intensely personal as noted by Richards (2005) and despite Bazeley (2013) and Saldaña's (2013) collective advice, I did not create a codebook. I felt it unnecessary with only ten respondents; furthermore, I believed that I could be consistent. According to Saldaña (2013) a researcher needs to possess a range of personal attributes beyond the cognitive for analytical confidence; be *organised*, have *perseverance*, be equipped to deal with *ambiguity*, exercise *flexibility*, be *creative*, *rigorously ethical*, and *have an extensive vocabulary*. On review, and as a result of the prolonged exposure to the topic, I felt I understood the relevance and nature of the codes in minutiae. I knew how they were defined and described, their criteria and exemplars (Saldaña, 2013). As Richards (2005) noted, the process became more rapid, smooth and exciting, my challenge was to keep the thinking 'up' (p95). Constant reference to a codebook would have stagnated and stunted the intuitive nature of my approach.

4.3.2 Second stage coding

The next iteration involved organising the data by using the most prevalent codes as headings, and where appropriate included raw data (see *Appendix K – 2nd Stage Coding/Analysis Exemplar*). This process was to simultaneously reduce and categorise and maintain meaning by highlighting similarities and discontinuities in the data relating to gaps in logic. I followed the advice of Corbin and Strauss (2008) since they were not dissimilar to the approaches taken by Frick (2009) . Data from each leader went through this process singularly. I scanned for similarities and differences, and reflected on what I had seen. I revisited coded text, changed and reviewed the data (Richards, 2005). To get an overall feel for the shape of the data I decided to produce a series of individual concept maps.

Leadership - how leader A defines himself

Leadership Style

'You know where you stand with me, I think that's important..I think many people don't'

'What you see is what you get'

Leader title

Leadership skills

Experience

Honorary

Direct communicator
But not one way

Good listener

Reflective

Looking back at what was missed, using experience to frame early leadership

Experience valued

Interactive

Consistent

Predicability

Holistic

Fitness (not just physical)

interacting with environment
Military

Understandings - in field/pain familiy

Not all leaders have this style

Tension between collegiality and open, honest, direct communication

Leader as mentor

Effective teacher

Leader as Coach

Leader as role model

Leader A demonstrated moral courge, ethics by taking a stand against immoral behaviour

'walking the talk' - action not intention

Leadership Philosophy

'Doing is more..more than anything else'

'be, know, do'

Wants to be mentor

Mentorship cannot be assigned

Mentors are chosen

Demonstrated through

Execution

Participation

Effective Organisation

Effective leadership

Good leaders permeate membrane of isolation

Organisational Levels

Constraint

be visible, accessible

Presence

Isolation

Macro, meso, micro

'fewer people wanted to talk to you...you begin to forget to look down and pull information up'

Strategic

Tactical

Operational

'If you're not up and down the line of different levels you can't get a feel for that [commitment].

'The society, the nation, whomever you serve...has to trust you...that's the core fibre that runs through an effective leader...and trust of course, is values based'

Leadership in relationship with others

Values Based

Diagram 1 – Concept Map

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Silverman (2011) recommends trying different approaches and Bazeley (2013) describes this as important for seeing structure, helping to envisage potential 'hierarchical trees' (p181). The exemplar in Diagram 1 – Concept Map is a computerised depiction of one of six hand drawn charts for Lt-General-USA. Whilst thinking about the data in this way facilitated the visualisation of interconnections, themes, and patterns it also proved time consuming. It depicted complexity, and on review was not useful in simplification and reduction. Data were not being drawn together, they were being prematurely expanded and interpreted. Bryman (2016) warned against losing the narrative feel of the data. As such, this experimental approach was abandoned after Ambassador-USA. Reduction is difficult and challenging as I found out. Ellingson (2013) encourages qualitative researchers to 'own the process' by being honest about 'mistakes and misdirections' (p431-2). They can only help to strengthen the credibility of the research.

4.3.3 Ordering and revision; toward categorisation

Thus far, each interview had gone through two full consecutive coding iterations preceded by transcript preparation. The data were now a manageable size to be treated as a whole. This would offer opportunity to identify the most significant key words, which would evolve into categories and themes. This is a common part of the process outlined by Corbin and Strauss (2008) and facilitates the revising and reviewing of codes (Bazeley, 2013). Saldaña (2013) agrees and advises the researcher to maintain an open mind. Indeed, there were minor revisions in the first few stages, but at this juncture major revision occurred. Some codes were subsumed, expanded, merged and recoded. According to Cohen *et al.* (2011) subsumption is a useful stage on the way to developing hierarchies. Several *a priori* codes were discarded and replaced. For instance, *leadership style, leadership role and leadership skills* were found too similar, and broad, they were not in keeping with the aim of the research. Because they were difficult to unpick and differentiate when the data were examined, the codes were replaced by several *inductive* codes to better reflect depth and nuance. Indeed many would eventually become attributed to *enablers to leadership*.

To illustrate, Picture 2: Ordering and revising: toward category construction shows how *trust* was grouped with *values*, *moral values*, and *personal values*. According to Miles and Huberman (1994) and Saldaña (2013) this is known as sub-coding; the assignment of a 'second-order tag' following the 'initial yet general coding scheme' (p77-78). As can be seen, data were physically cut and pasted together. Although Boulton and Hammersley (2006) do not recommend this even for small amounts of data, I found that when attempted electronically this exercise was overwhelming; but by hand, I was able to maintain closeness to the data. This new cycle enabled the development of what scholars (Savin-Baden and Major, 2013) describe as hierarchical code patterns. At this stage, Bryman (2016) advises researchers to simultaneously 'refer to the literature relating to the focus of the study' (p588) to ensure that descriptors reflect the aims and purposes of the research and are appropriate.

Picture 2: Ordering and revising: toward category construction

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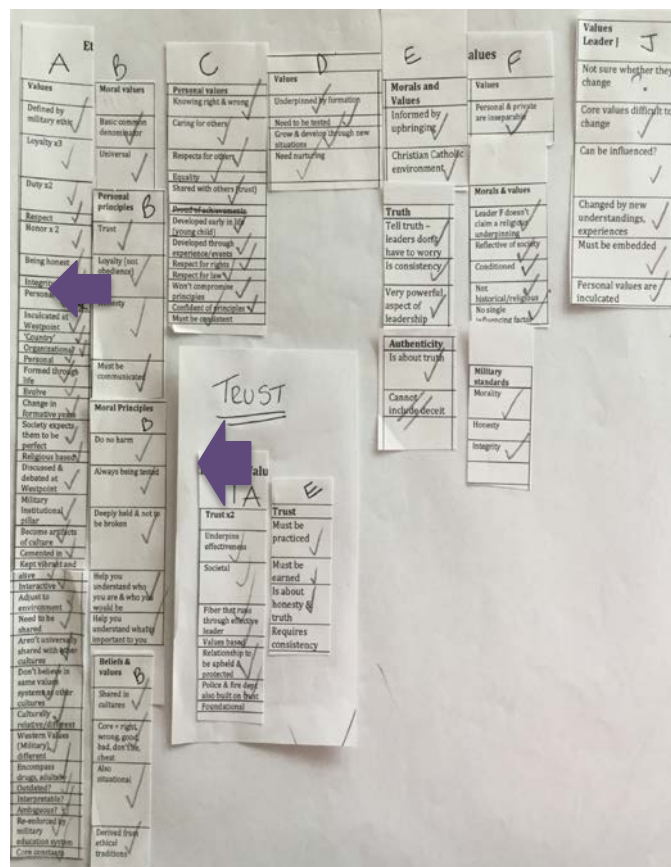
4.3.4 Categories, clusters and mini-stages

These were then categorised and structured to allow clusters to emerge from the data (Dey, 1993, Bryman and Burgess, 1994). This was similar to the analytical path forged by Treviño *et al.* (2003) and Frick (2009) . According to Bazeley (2013) these 'integrating, relational statements' typified 'both content and meaning' (p190). Through this process I became aware of the trends in the data, noting repetition as can be seen in Picture 3. Working left to right, *trust* appears as both a stated value for Lt-General-USA, Ambassador-USA, Charity Head-USA and Headmaster-USA, and affiliated to leadership by Ambassador-USA, Headmaster-USA, Charity Head-UK, Archbishop-UK and Principal-UK:

Picture 3: Categorisation and clustering

By going beyond the formation of simple thematic statements it was possible to build an interconnected network (Bryman, 2016), which more readily reflected the complexity of the concepts. Saldaña (2013) describes this process as

code weaving. The intention was not to further reduce but maintain the essential characteristics of the data. The records from this stage would form the basis of the data presented in Figure 3. This was, as Saldaña (2013) suggested, a strategic decision underpinned by the primary research question and the aim of the research, but also informed by theoretical and conceptual frameworks.

Data were then treated to two further semi-stages (see *Appendix L – Mini (half) stages of categorisation*). I felt that by playing with arrangements in this way the jigsaw pieces might fit more readily together. These steps were to do with re-organising and re-categorising rather than collation. Boulton and Hammersley (2006) advise the researcher to be mindful of how far they go in the analytical process. A researcher must know when to stop. Whilst Savin-Baden and Major (2013) recommend a repeated handling of the data, they caution that further processing can lead to oversimplification. It is at this lofty stage that a researcher can 'lose sight of… important and perhaps more insightful origins' (Saldaña, 2013, p249). I had stopped coding and categorising, sifting and sorting; now I was ready to 'see'.

4.3.5 The forest and the trees

In stepping back the data began to shape into what would become the overarching framework for the final presentation of the data (see section *5.3*). It is important to note that this did not happen instantly, but materialised following an epiphany regarding the contribution to knowledge for this research. Once this was written (*see* Picture 4: Results typology) I was able to work retrospectively on how the data would be presented, whereby it would naturally slot into my over-arching frame. Although it is important to record how data moved from analysis to interpretation, Gillham (2005) contends that a researcher must acknowledge the *process of discovery* (p159). Whilst I did not set out to produce a new typology or framework for understanding (ethical) leadership, once the threads were pulled together it became the most plausible conclusion (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). I agree with Boulton and Hammersley (2006) ; it is through iterative processes like

this that particular networks of relationships become evident. Picture 4 represents the *big picture*, of the 'concrete details of narratives, the analytical perspectives involved in constructing patterns, and paradigmatic/ideological goals' (Ellingson, 2013, p429). Although it is important to note that it may not be the only kind of *together* (Bazeley, 2013), the manifestation was impossible to ignore.
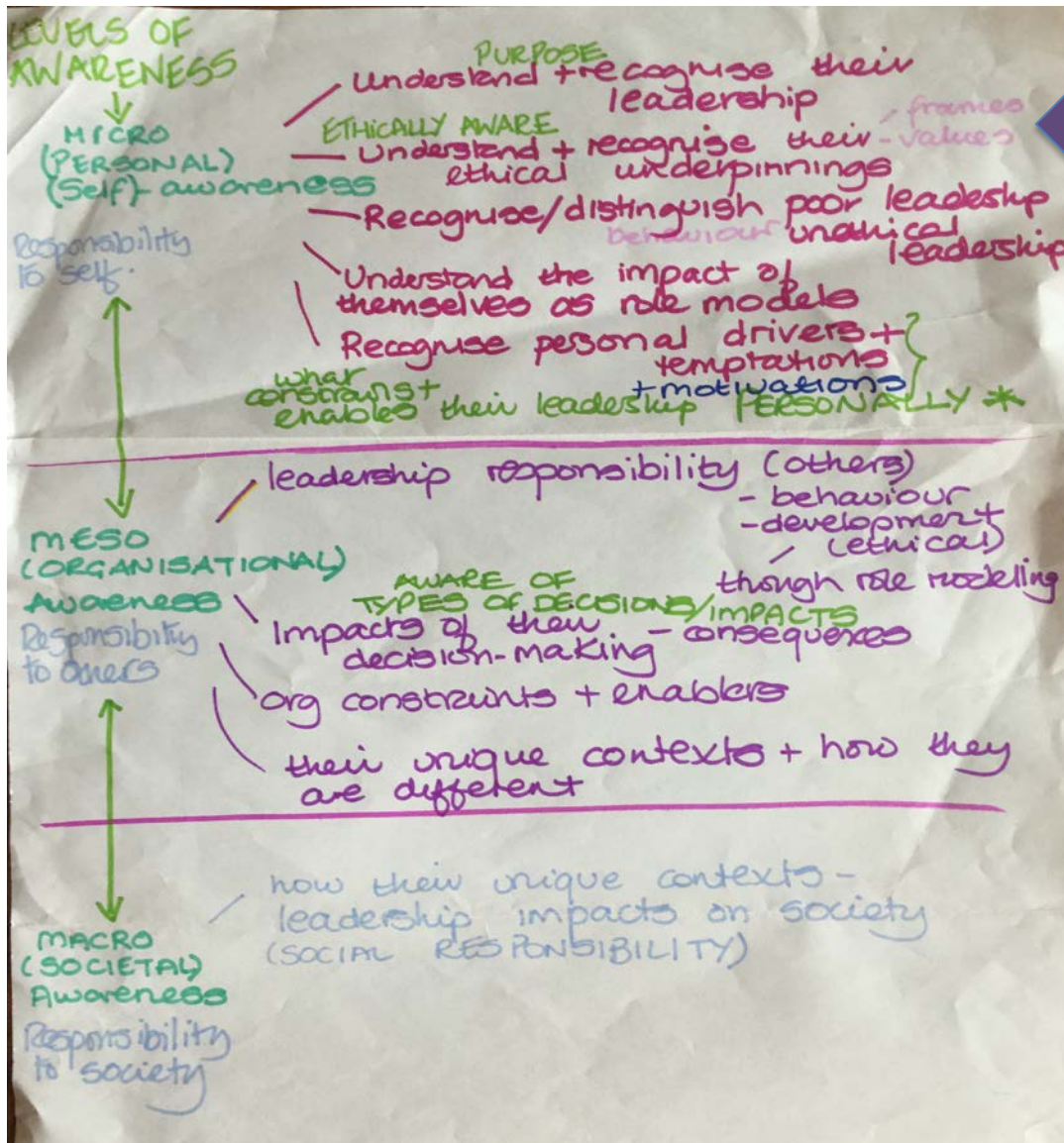
Picture 4: Results Typology

In keeping with the notion of *process tracing* (Tansey, 2007) the concept of *trust* now sat within the theme of *values* as seen in Picture 4, with the latter falling under the heading personal (micro) awareness. Once the framework was settled the data were restructured and formatted into two notional books, an example of the reconstituted data, as per themes is provided in *Appendix M – Data remarriage (book example)*. One 'book' was organised by topic and the second integrated sectoral differences. This was done to preserve and highlight the contextual nuances in the data. Together they formed the basis of what is presented in Chapter Five. The lens had widened and now it narrowed once more, with purpose and precision. The data were re-married to related concepts and coupled with substantive identifying statements as advised by Gillham (2005) . Interpretive notes were also reunited with what Packer (2011) described as contextual elements. Charmaz and Belgrave (2012) believe that integrating in this way helps to 'reflect the logic of the participants' experience' (p360). This final step allowed me to simultaneously see the data as a whole and in minutiae, to keep what Ellingson (2013) called 'the forest and the trees' (p429).

Contrary to Gillham (2005) I worked backwards and forwards through the sub-headings (themes) in my *books*. As Seidman (2013) advised, I cross-referenced as I wove in data with purposively selected interposed quotations. As such, the interview data were presented as a narrative with an 'element of rhetoric' (Denscombe, 2007, p303). The interviews were powerful, and therefore the testimonies given centre-stage; *verbatim* codes used (in italics) where necessary to reinforce. A balance of quotations was sought; they were vivid and varied, but unobtrusive. My aims were to preserve the essence of the story, maintain the integrity of the testimonies, and link the data with the literature in a logical and coherent way; but crucially, to remain epistemologically true. Data were represented in this way to simultaneously reflect the norms and diversity of social life, and to provide affirmation that this research would be 'faithful to the phenomenon under investigation' (Atkinson and Delamont, 2005, p824). The processes depicted here were 'messy ambiguous, time-consuming, creative, and

fascinating' (Marshall and Rossman, 2011, p207). As such, the results in Chapter Five were replete with what Bazeley (2013) called *thick description*.

4.4   *The approaches summarised*

This chapter has discussed and justified the research design. The appropriateness of elite and specialised interviewing as method has been debated and sampling decisions clarified and defended. Particularities regarding the approach have been presented and the process described in detail. Although it could be argued that the focus has been predominately procedural, the dialogue has included how those research decisions were guided and influenced. Since this research is unequivocally *about* ethics in both purpose and intent my approach had to foreground researcher conduct. Ethics was the golden thread, visible in 'every decision about data collection, analysis, interpretation, and presentation' (Rossman and Rallis, 2010, p379) and mediated through a moral lens. Ethical decisions do not relate to discrete research events, but permeate the entire process from inception to publication (Kvale, 1996).

A review of the empirical literature from Chapter Three revealed specific methodological shortcomings and a predominance for commercially focused studies. A qualitative approach was taken here in light of the growing dissatisfaction with quantitative and multivariate research (Hunter *et al.*, 2007, Klenke, 2008). In contrast this study followed the path of scholars such as Westaby *et al.* (2010) and Selart and Johansen (2011) who moved away from convenient pools and canvassed actual decision-makers. Primary data were collected from ten leaders, five from the USA and five from the UK. They were principled, experienced, ethical decision-makers with consistent leadership track records (Davies, 2001, Woiceshyn, 2011) and drawn from a variety of understudied not-for-profit (professional) sectors.

Respondents were informally and deliberately chosen, and co-operation secured through the unofficial sponsorship of the British Embassy, a military

imprimatur and a variety of gatekeepers. Revitalisation and new insights were to be gained by conducting in-depth semi-structured interviews, as conceptualised by Dexter (2006) . The instrument, a seventeen question schedule was designed to gather what Johnson and Rowlands (2012) described as deep information. It was deliberately void of the biased and loaded terminology common in self-reporting surveys, pre-determined scenarios and vignettes, and followed Kvale's (1996) interview guide principles. The methodology chosen was a retrospective, perfect-fit, and uniquely capable of addressing the research.

Rather than adopting the positivist conventions of validity and reliability, rigour and quality were enhanced by thinking in terms of trustworthiness and credibility. This more readily reflected the epistemological assumptions underlying socially constructed, interpretive research. Reflexivity was recognised as the most powerful tool to moderate, justify and understand the complex internal and external interactions during this research, and their impact upon the knowledge produced. Positionality was approached as fluid and negotiated, the golden mean between piety (Cousin, 2010) and exploitation (Berger, 2015).

This chapter has concluded by providing an overview of the analytical procedures concordant to the research design. As Delaney (2007) suggested, data were not treated any differently because of interviewee status. I have shown how the data were ethically treated. Processes have been explained and justified from transcription to presentation. Exemplars of annotation, coding, clustering and categorisation have been presented as an audit trail of analytical activities. The entire approach is summarised in Figure 2 overleaf. Whilst this may appear clear and focused, in reality, like others I found it challenging, relentless, exciting, repetitive and rewarding. I kept an open mind, and in doing so, allowed the data to emerge and speak for itself.

Collecting data
Gathering qualitative material from elite & specialised leaders (n=10)

Transcription
Faithful transformation into written form

Ist Stage Coding
Initial segmentation based on a selection of coding options (see 4.3.1)

2nd Stage Coding
Preliminary organisation and reduction see section 4.3.2

Ordering & revision
Keyword search, code revision and review. Major stage.

Categories & clusters
Integration, trend identification and interconnections noted (see section 4.3.4)

Min-stages of categorisation (x2)
Re-orgnanising & re-categorisation. Toward simplification.

Forest & Trees
Over-arching framework (typology) development & data re-marriage

Data presentation (Typology)
Findings and discussion as expanded in Chapter Five

Contributions related to the (ethical)leadership landscape
- Theoretical & conceptual
- Methodological
- Contextual

Figure 2 - Analytical Overview

Chapter Five – Presenting a new (ethical) leadership

Following the details in the previous chapter, the focus now shifts to the general purpose of the research study. The research question was *to explicate the role of ethics in not-for-profit leadership* by interviewing prominent leaders from specific sectors as defined in section 4.1.4. However, the simplicity of the research premise masks the intricacies of a complex phenomenon. The data indicates that recent conceptualisations do not fully explicate the true nature of the dynamic and multi-dimensional concept of ethical leadership.

5.1 The research problem

Organisational misconduct continued to garner public attention (Brown *et al.*, 2005, De Cremer *et al.*, 2010b, Yukl, 2013). Transgressions were no longer confined to commercially based organisations. There was a scarcity of leadership research regarding those that were *getting it right*. Whilst scholars responded and renewed efforts to understand the vagaries of leader ethical behaviour, it was social and business psychologists that led the revival. Conceptualisations of ethical leadership (Treviño *et al.*, 2000, Treviño *et al.*, 2003, Brown *et al.*, 2005, Brown and Treviño, 2006) remain firmly in the social scientific sphere of understanding with one particular approach dominating the field. Moreover, the adoption of a predominantly quantitative approach had not advanced understandings. Scholars have been urged to revisit the topic (Ciulla, 2005), to see beyond social learning theory as sole ideological framework. This research is in response to such a call. I posit that no single framework can adequately explicate the role ethics really plays in leadership. The data here will demonstrate that leaders understood their leadership in sociological, philosophical *and* theological terms. Indeed, nuances have been summarily neglected by quantitative researchers (Brown *et al.*, 2005, Riggio *et al.*, 2010, Kalshoven *et al.*, 2011b, Langlois *et al.*, 2014) who have been fixated on survey-based tools and inappropriate samples for the prediction and measurement of leader behaviour.

This study sought leaders from contexts other than for-profit. And although not immune from ethical transgressions, the view was that leaders in organisations where profit was not the motive might offer a more philanthropic understanding of leadership. The sample was selected on the basis that such organisations might indeed attract a different type of leader. Few researchers (Thach and Thompson, 2007, van der Wal *et al.*, 2008, Athanasopoulou, 2012) had tried to understand how for-profit and not-for-profit differed. Although some (Resick *et al.*, 2011, Eisenbeiß and Brodbeck, 2014) examined how culture-specific behaviours or characteristics might differ from country to country, or sector to sector (Heres and Lasthuizen, 2012). Fewer still sought individuals of high office, where ethical challenges were arguably, more intense. The elite and specialised (Dexter, 1970, 2006) individuals in this study were able to offer new perspectives on what decision-making meant, how they understood the challenges, and how they could be overcome. The research intention was to reveal the origins of ethical awareness from rarely canvassed leaders to revive and inform a stagnant, fragmented scholarly field.

As directed by the title of the study '**Ethical decision-making: Learning from prominent leaders in not-for-profit organisations**', the overall research aim sought to explicate the nature of ethical decision-making across a range of settings. This chapter will demonstrate how effectively the research objectives have been addressed. They were to:

- Explore philosophical ethical and moral theory, and investigate ways they were integrated with the leadership literature.
- Advance current understandings regarding the ethical challenges of leadership in specific settings by conducting qualitative, in-depth interviews with 'elite and specialised' respondents.
- Examine the interface between ethics and leadership in terms of the frameworks leaders used to understand who they were, what they did and how decision-making was informed and directed by moral disposition.

A set of sub-questions further strengthened the overall proposition. They provided structure to the literature review and supported the enquiry by informing the interview schedule. As such, this research also collectively addressed the following:

- Was ethical leadership ideologically distinct from extant leadership theories as envisaged by the literature?
- What were the specific challenges to maintaining one's moral compass in ethically challenging situations?
- To what extent did leaders understand their own behaviour, in terms of the frameworks they used to inform and guide their decision-making?
- Were ethical decisions special or no different?
- To what extent was organisational setting an influential factor in ethical leadership and decision-making?
- Could the practice of ethical leadership be made more accessible, transferrable, actionable or replicable in others?

5.2   Summary of the results

Much research has been devoted to the topic of leadership, ethical leadership and decision-making. But the role ethics really plays has been unclear (Ciulla, 1998, Kort, 2008). This study sought to address particular issues regarding this evolving research area. Leadership was found to be an explicitly ethical endeavour. The findings indicated that leaders employed a range of mechanisms to enable their own ethicality and that of their followers; highlighting unheeded enablers to leading ethically. It supports current views that the much relied upon, but deliberately vague sociological framework to ethical leadership (Brown *et al.*, 2005) remains unreliable for explicating the ways in which leaders frame their leadership, but it is not discounted entirely. On analysis, this research reveals the complex interplay between virtue ethics, deontological and consequential philosophical frameworks, the role of the sociological, and how religion supports leader moral conscience and judgment.

Whilst the research was focused on leader views, it transcended leader conceptualisations of self and extended to encompass organisational and societal concerns. The findings indicate that the leaders in this study (not-for-profit) have heightened awareness, different motivations and feel responsibility beyond self. Leaders demonstrated an overt concern for society and articulated how a humane orientation set them apart. The alternative research settings in this study have offered new perspectives in contrast to extant preoccupations with for-profit contexts and unethical behaviour. As such, the data here represents a mandate for change, and shows that ethical leadership development needs to be seen as an holistic endeavour, and that the leaders in this study have much to teach their for-profit contemporaries.

5.3   *Presentation and discussion of the results*

The results have been presented purposefully as described at the end of Chapter Four. An organic framework evolved when all the data had been analysed. After several aborted attempts to force the data into alternative forms the decision was taken to allow the data to speak for itself, as such, it naturally fell into three key categories:

- **Individual (micro) awareness**
    - *Leadership as an ethical endeavour*
    - *Enabling ethical leaders*

- **Organisational (meso) awareness**
    - *Enabling ethical followership*
    - *Enabling ethical organisational disposition*

- **Societal (macro) awareness**
    - *Leading ethically in the current climate*
    - *Socially responsible ethical leadership*
    - *Fostering the ethical leaders of the future*

There are several important issues to foreground for the reading of the data. Although the data is transformed into numbers, this in no way indicates that quantitative methods have been used. There was no other way to portray the prevalence of views other than listing leader labels. As such, numbers have been used to denote more than three leaders and set into footnotes with labels used for impact and nuance. Without this, the text would prove laborious, and fail to reflect data significance. This approach is reflective of my epistemological stance, whereby each opinion regardless of orientation is valued equally, as expected in interpretive qualitative research.

Secondly, the data moves from leader's views about self, to leader's views about the organisation and then to how leaders saw their leadership in terms of society. As the headings suggest, the data explicitly demonstrates that it is the level of leader (ethical) awareness that distinguishes the sample. But the data also implicitly hints at another key underlying feature; namely responsibility. Further, close examination of the sub-headings (in the content list, page iii) reveal that sections decrease in extent as they progress. This is because leader ethical disposition and leader understandings are antecedent to organisational and societal awareness and both theoretical frames discussed in section 2.5.4 were focused on the leader.

As much as it is important to state what is present in the data, it is equally important to acknowledge what is not there (Richards, 2005). I had early intentions of finding and reporting cultural differences between the UK and US leader perspectives. Some nuance had been found in the literature (see section 3.1.5, page 100). Despite this, differences between the UK and US leaders were difficult to isolate. Only one instance of contrast was found in relation to religious influence on moral formation. Therefore, the disparity must be treated with caution (see page 202). In keeping with the views of Norburn (1987) there may be no significant differences because as Resick *et al.* (2006) note, the 'work-related values and attitudes' (p351) are too similar. Therefore, it may be reasonable to suggest that there exists a Western-based leadership mentality.

Finally, it is also important to note, that in contrast to the work of April *et al.* (2010, 2011) , it is the enablers to ethical leadership which take centre-stage. Whilst challenges are addressed, they are discussed as issues to be overcome. Extant research has concentrated on misdemeanours, but that was not the intention of this study. As intimated, the organisation of the data was an organic process not wholly directed by literature review, research sub-questions, or interview schedule. This was because as the interviews progressed answers became more profound, and the inter- and intra- personal nature of the leadership emerged. Constructs were intertwined and terms used ambiguously. Moreover, the data categories as organised would appear to be in constant interaction. These were leaders discussing experiences of *their* leadership; what makes them *ethical* leaders is presented here.

5.4 *Individual (micro) awareness*

As has been suggested in the literature review (section 2.2.3) ethics has been superficially considered. Scholarly fixation with personality variables and leader attributes has seen leadership reduced to a collection of seemingly measurable traits and behaviours. This research sought instead, to clarify the role ethics really played. In keeping with scholarly work, the leaders in this research are presented as individuals in possession of *ethical awareness* (Jones, 1991, Strong and Mayer, 1992, Barnett, 2001, Reynolds, 2006a, Resick *et al.*, 2006). The following data will show ethics as inseparable from leader conceptualisations of self, leadership, ethical leadership and as corollary decision-making.

5.4.1 *Leadership as an ethical endeavour*

Early conceptions of leadership did not explicitly mention ethics (section 2.2) they were focused, almost by exception on personal qualities, and the taxonomies of behaviour. They simultaneously failed to explain contextual or situational factors. Even implicit normative theories such as contingency theory neglected to explicitly account for leader ethicality. There were no reflections of dispositions or role demands. Newer genre leadership theories, such as charismatic, transformational

leadership and authentic transformational leadership appeared to account for the emotional and value laden elements of leadership. Construct boundaries would mean that definitions could easily accommodate unethical leadership (Giessner and van Quaquebeke, 2010). On review, current conceptions indicated that ethics was superficially attended to, secondary, and background. In my study leaders foregrounded ethics to the extent that it was inseparable from the self.

According to MP-UK leadership *had to be ethical* and concerned *setting ethical standards* (Ambassador-USA). Ethics was *integral* and *central* to good leadership (Principal-UK); and in concurrence with Ciulla (1995, 1998) ought to be *the heart* (Charity Head-USA). It permeated everything (Lt-General-USA and Archbishop-UK) and transcended human interaction (Lt-General-USA). Whilst Headmaster-USA also believed that true leaders focused on ethics, Vicar-General-USA believed that an ethical leader would not need to. Contrary to the views of Wildermuth and Wildermuth (2006) Lt-General-UK noted that it could be natural, echoing early leadership conceptions such as *great man theory* (Carlyle, 1849, Galton, 1869).

Although Lt-General-USA believed like Kort (2008) ,that ethics was fundamental for success, both military leaders believed it was not necessarily essential for effective leadership:

> *"You've got charismatic, dynamic leadership and you have got followership who are prepared to be deceived or abused… it seems to demonstrate that the ethical component is not a fundamental that underpins effective leadership" (Lt-General-UK).*

Recent high-impact scandals such as those discussed in section 1.4.1 are case in point. But according to Lt-General-USA moral disengagement was not a sustainable leadership approach either:

> *"At some point your lack of ethical behaviour, your lack of values; your lack of adherence to the culture of mankind will cause that seam to open and the fabric of your leadership will fall apart".*

Unsurprisingly, both military leaders, both educational leaders, both clergy, and Charity Head-UK described ethical leadership using ethically related terms, e.g. *virtuous* (Headmaster-USA) or *moral* (Lt-Gen-UK). This was particularly notable because I did not provide scenarios or definitions, unlike empirical researchers (see section 3.1.3). For Archbishop-UK it was to do with *moral duty* and was a *privilege*. Both charity heads, the Vicar-General-USA and the MP-UK noted that ethical leadership required *principles* and *strong will* (Headmaster-USA). Internal boundaries were to be both *clear* and *moral* according to MP-UK, Archbishop-UK, and Principal-UK. Vicar-General-USA, Headmaster-USA, and Principal-UK made the distinction that, for them, ethical leadership concerned high standards of morality, or *high moral character* as described by Johnson (2012) . In conjunction with Mayer *et al.* (2009) ethics was the central focus. Ethical leadership was not described in terms of character traits. Instead, the data began to represent the more concrete connections between ethics and leadership sought by Levine and Boaks (2014) .

5.4.1.1 Ethics, virtues and values; ideologically indistinct

Leaders had a variety of views on the concept of ethics. Similarly to literature at the intersection of ethics and leadership there was no superior perspective, or complete explanation (Langlois, 2011, Crossan *et al.*, 2013). Ethics was difficult to define. In congruence with Donaldson and Dunfee (1994) the data suggested that the lines between the 'ought' and the 'is' and the traditional notions of morals and ethics remained blurred (as previously noted in sections 1.5.1 and 2.3.2). Indeed, Starratt (2004) had warned that the interchangeability of terms would also extend to ethics and values.

Overall, and in conjunction with Starratt (2004) and Mendonca and Kanungo (2007) the data relating to ethics was found to be normatively disposed. It did not follow the patterns forged by the self-sustaining social scientific community disparaged by Northouse (2010) . Ethics were seen as an ideal, or a guide according to Headmaster-USA, but also an *aspirational good* according to

Vicar-General-USA. This view appeared to have resonance with the type of virtue ethics described by Knights and O'Leary (2006) where individuals would strive toward achieving excellence through a moral life. The virtue ethics lens appeared to be an ideal fit considering the respondents' professional sectors, particularly in relation to the notion of *eudaimonia* (Arjoon, 2000, Moore, 2005, Beadle and Moore, 2006, MacIntyre, 2007) if goodness is considered contrary to the concept of capitalism.

Ethics, in accordance with Howell and Avolio (1992) chiefly concerned doing what was right (Lt-General-USA and Headmaster-USA). Values however, concerned understandings of both right and wrong according to Ambassador-USA and Charity Head-USA and MP-UK. This would suggest some distinction; but it was not conclusive, nor substantive. Therefore, on the advice of Hackett and Wang (2012) I also made the decision to use the terms interchangeably, since I could not be assured that the leaders understood the differences for themselves. The theoretical confusion outlined in section 2.3.5 was analogously mirrored in the data.

Ideological indistinction was to persist. For instance, Headmaster-USA, Charity Head-UK and Principal-UK described ethics as *fundamental*, *intrinsic* (Vicar-General-USA), *core* (Ambassador-USA and Archbishop-UK) and *foundational* (Vicar-General-USA). Similarly, values were *instinctual* (MP-UK and Charity Head-UK), *common denominators* and universally shared according to Lt-General-USA, Ambassador-USA and Charity Head-USA. But also considered core constants (Lt-General-USA and Ambassador-USA). In accordance with the views of Ciulla (2003) and Ruiz *et al.* (2011) , Principal-UK claimed that values were inseparable from the person. As suggested by Mendonca and Kanungo (2007) they appeared to go beyond 'etiquette, protocol and even the mere observance of the laws of the country' (p12). In stating how values concerned both the personal and professional (Vicar-General-USA and both military leaders) the data showed strong associations with the work of Bowie (2005) and Johnson (2012) who typified the personal and professional as public and private and to do with *inner*

life (see 49). Taken together, the data presented here supported the views of Ruiz *et al.* (2011) where only a truly ethical leader would be able to practice both pillars.

But ethics could also be present in varying degrees (Headmaster-USA), and characterised by a range of behaviours (Charity Head-USA and Principal-UK) as acknowledged by Gill (2011) and Yukl (2013) . Indeed, Solomon (1992) , Riggio *et al.* (2010) , Ciulla and Forsyth (2011) , Ciulla (2012) and Hackett and Wang (2012) have soundly debated the precarious nature of moral qualities. Ethical disposition could be lost, developed (Ambassador-USA and MP-UK) or not developed (MP-UK); it required validation (Ambassador-USA) and reinforcement according to Ambassador-USA and Charity Head-UK. It could also be influenced by new understandings and experiences (Principal-UK). Values were capable of adjusting to the environment according to both military leaders. Vicar-General-USA also believed that they could change, whilst Lt-General-USA believed they could evolve. Similarly to the work of Starratt (2004) , Resick *et al.* (2006) , Resick *et al.* (2011) and Eisenbeiß and Brodbeck (2014) ethics and values were seen as culturally relative (Vicar-General-USA and Headmaster-USA), societal (Lt-General-USA and Ambassador-USA) and maintained by societal norms (Vicar-General-USA), sharing a common language.

But it was not be enough to simply possess ethics or values, Ambassador-USA, Vicar-General-USA and MP-UK suggested that ethics needed to be tested and challenged. Similarly to scholars (Solomon, 2005, Price, 2006, Hackett and Wang, 2012), Ambassador-USA felt that this had to be in situations which demanded their exposure:

> *"There are people out there who have a fundamental core and they might not even quite know it, or they might not know how to articulate it, or they may not know that it's a valid way of doing things…nobody's validating it… it's not developed. You know, your ethics, there are such things as ethics, yes you have them, yes, you should keep them, yes, you should develop them and yes, they are a part of being a good leader…and so validating those ethics and strengthening*

them…allowing them to be in positions where they have to test them: that you can do…it's being exposed and then, you know, resonating".

This was further supported by several other leaders, who noted that being ethical required commitment (Headmaster-USA), and hard work because it was a challenge (Archbishop-UK). Indeed, Ciulla (1995) had remarked that ethics was not without effort. Opportunities to be ethical had to be taken (Archbishop-UK), ethics had to be enacted (MP-UK and Principal-UK), perpetuated and practiced according to Charity Head-USA. The data provided convincing evidence that leaders were adopting a virtue ethics approach (see sections 2.3.5 and 2.3.6). This was reinforced in relation to the characterological elements leaders reported as most prevalent on a personal level, for leadership, and in relation to leading ethically:
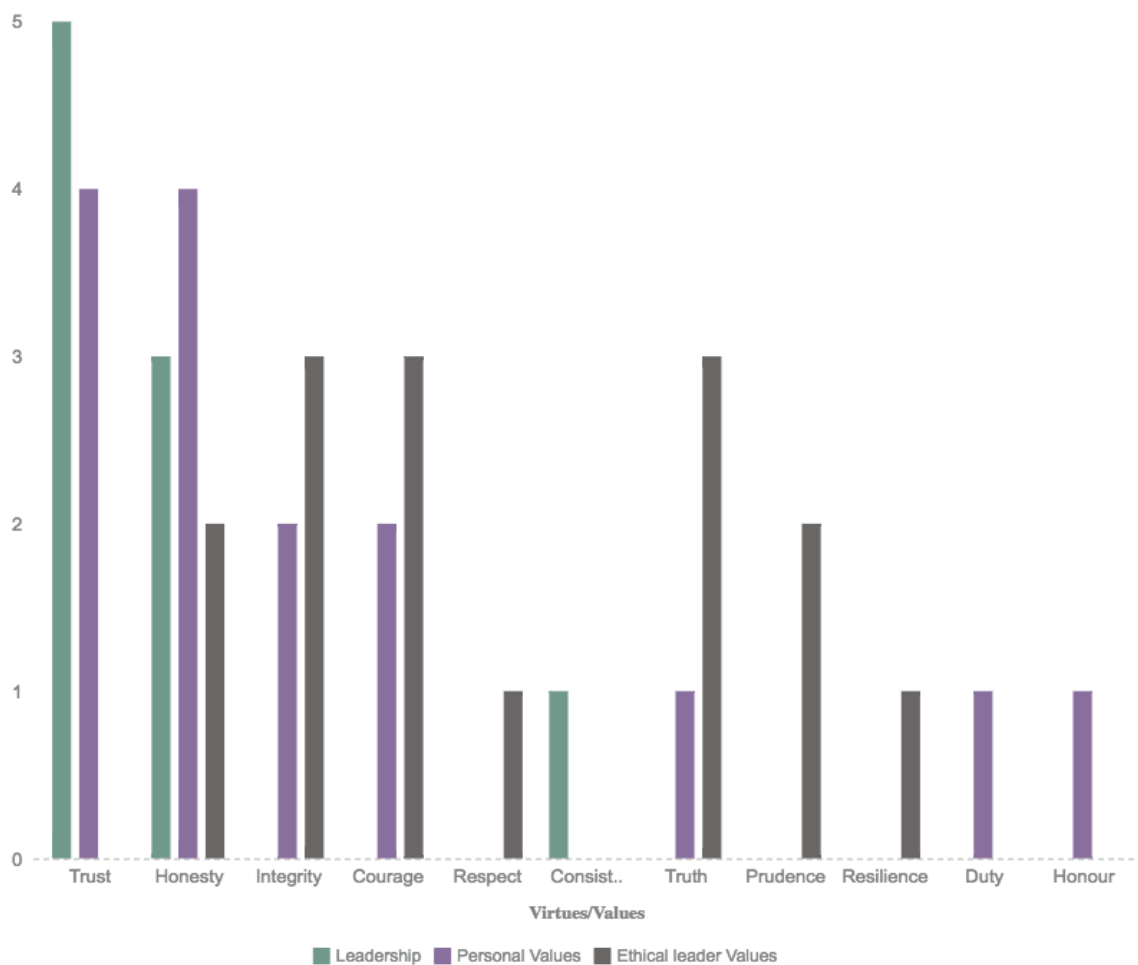
Figure 3: Values in leadership, leader personal values and espoused ethical leader values

Leaders identified trust, honesty, integrity and (moral) courage as key. Lt-General-USA, Ambassador-USA, Charity Head-USA, Headmaster-USA, Charity Head-UK, Archbishop-UK and Principal-UK noted the importance of trust both personally and for leadership. It was crucial according to Ambassador-USA, Headmaster-USA, Charity Head-UK, Archbishop-UK and Principal-UK, also mutual (Ambassador-USA and Archbishop-UK), and had to be built (Headmaster-USA). This appeared congruent with the views of Solomon (1998) where trust was conceptualised as 'the background to our social activities… the framework within which emotions appear… without trust there can be no cooperation, no community, no commerce, no conversation' (p99). The data suggested that leaders possessed a personal understanding of the importance of trust, and that it extended to the organisational (see section 5.5.2).

> *"I think trust is the core piece that underpins your ability to be an effective leader. Your… organization has to trust you, and the people you deal with have to trust you, your clients have to trust you. The society, the nation, whom-ever you serve… in a larger level has to trust you, and I think that's the core… fibre that runs through an effective leader… and trust of course, is values-based" (Lt-General-USA).*

> *"I will not micro-manage you in direct proportion to you not blind-siding me. It's about trust" (Ambassador-USA).*

> *"A true leader that is focused on ethics and focused on doing the right thing and focused on being consistent and truthful will empower others, will gain their trust…" (Headmaster-USA).*

Trust concerned relationships and interactions over time (Clapham *et al.*, 2014). And although *affective trust* (Brown *et al.*, 2005) and *trustworthiness* (Van Wart, 2014) featured in ethical leadership studies, reciprocal trust was less evident because it was often thought to do with psychological state (van den Akker *et al.*, 2009). For Mostovicz *et al.* (2011) it was an analytical, transactional leadership activity involving the calculation of risk. Whereas, the data here showed that trust was a transformational dimension of leadership, and according to Clapham *et al.* (2014) involved six competencies, several of which are also reported in this thesis (see section 5.5.1.2).

The majority of leaders (Lt-General-USA, Ambassador-USA, Headmaster-USA, Lt-General-UK, MP-UK, Charity Head-UK, Archbishop-UK and Principal-UK) also understood the value of honesty across the leadership spectrum; it straddled all three of the table fields. Honesty was also freely mentioned by van Oudenhoven *et al.* (2014) and Van Wart (2014) ; it appeared to have a universal nature. Indeed, Mintz (1996) considered it to be a moral virtue. In conjunction with scholars Lt-General-UK and Archbishop-UK also teamed honesty with integrity (see section 2.3.6). According to Lt-General-USA, Charity Head-USA, Lt-General-UK, Archbishop-UK and Principal-UK integrity was both a personal value and an ethical leader value. Indeed, integrity also featured singularly in the leadership literature. But despite its seemingly holistic nature (Carlson and Perrewe, 1995) or super-virtue status (Pipkin, 2000), the concept of integrity remained contentious. It could be present in unsalient leaders according to Ciulla (1998) . However, the data here broadly supported the views of Palanski and Yammarino (2009) in that integrity was a positive normative ideal.

Of the articulated qualities of the ethical leader, courage and prudence could be conceptualised as Platonian and Aristotelian. This meant that virtues were not just individual, but involved interaction with others, and that it is these conditions which promoted *flourishing* (Riggio *et al.*, 2010, April *et al.*, 2010, 2011). Whilst prudence was deemed intellectual and could be taught, the former would have to be lived to be learned (Pojman and Tramel, 2009). According to April *et al.* (2010, 2011) moral courage was associated with self-control and self-awareness, it provided the strength to make the *right* choices. MP-UK framed courage in this way:

> *"You can teach courage... when my son was fourteen I taught him to scuba-dive and to rock climb, and so on... why did I do that? Because each of those are about managing and making decisions, managing yourself, making decisions under stress and pressure. When the air runs out, when you are feeling weak and can't keep going, and so on. And I think quite a lot of human character development is about how you cope with that sort of adversity".*

In summary, and according to Headmaster-USA, values were a powerful aspect of leadership and thought to underpin leader effectiveness (Lt-General-USA

and Headmaster-USA). They were not the pick-and-mix list suggested by Lawton and Páez (2015) , but were expressed attributes extracted from deliberately indirect, interactive conversations *about* the practice of leadership. It was clear from the data in this section that whilst etymological delineations remained unclear, conceptually, leaders envisaged virtues, values and ethics as normative ideals. On review, these findings suggest that virtue ethics was the predominant lens with which to understand 'the make-up of the individual, virtues he or she possesses, and the self-knowledge and self-discipline that guide leader's moral actions'; their characterological elements (Riggio *et al.*, 2010, p237). The data indicated that they were relative, adjustable, practiced, enacted and had to be challenged. Perhaps as Levine and Boaks (2014) had suggested, leadership itself was a master virtue?

5.4.1.2 The paradox of (un) ethical leader characteristics and traits

Contrary to accepted literature (Treviño, 1986, Brown *et al.*, 2005) the personality-based antecedents identified by leaders in this study were wholly unexpected. Leaders described themselves using a variety of terms. They saw themselves as *modest* and *humble* (Headmaster-USA), even *unconfident* (Charity Head-UK) also *private* and *removed* (Ambassador-USA); not traits one would necessarily associate with ethical leadership. The majority appeared more congruent with the humane and moderate aspects of servant leadership. However, Reed *et al.* (2011) and Eisenbeiß and Giessner (2012) had found aspects of the servant leadership construct which demonstrated crossover (see section 2.4.2). Judge *et al.* (2009) alluded to such a paradox, noting that leadership placed complex demands on contemporary leaders, as such; espoused traits bore little resemblance to the established stock.

For example, Charity Head-UK described himself as *determined*, *entrepreneurial*, *passionate*, *emotional*, *obsessive*, *driven*, *bloody-minded* and *selfish*. He, along with Ambassador-USA also claimed to be *intolerant*, with the latter also believing herself to be *stubborn* and *blunt*. Leaders also noted that they could be

perceived as *arrogant*, and *charismatic* (Charity Head-USA), even *fierce* (MP-UK). According to House and Aditya (1997) and Lord (2000) these appeared more emblematic of the self-aggrandising, exploitative, socially undesirable and destructive qualities of the charismatic leader. These were negative, emotionally unstable, neurotic (Brown and Treviño, 2006, Kalshoven *et al.*, 2011a) and extrovert (Hofmann and Jones, 2005) charatersitics more likely to be associated with unethical leadership. But despite the negative undertones, this type of leadership appeared to sit firmly in the *ethical leadership zone* (Aronson, 2001). It was capable of encompassing ethical leaders who possessed the skills to access composite styles of leadership at any given time or situation. Although typical of the directive leader, it corresponded to theories of ethical egoism and benevolent autocratic leadership. On review, this data demonstrated what Caldwell and Hayes (2016) described as genuine self-awareness and self-appraisal. Whilst Zahra *et al.* (2009) noted that unseemly characteristics would persist if effective mechanisms were not in place to counter the behaviour, the data in subsequent sections shows how the leaders canvassed in this study possessed the skills to mitigate their undesirable characteristics.

Whilst the personality traits identified were unexpected, descriptions of the unethical leader were not. Eisenbeiß and Brodbeck (2014) typified unethical leadership as the antithesis of ethical leadership and the data roundly supported their view. Unethical leaders were described as *amoral* (Lt-General-USA), and in possession of a flawed or weak character (Lt-General-UK and MP-UK). They were *narcissistic* (Ambassador-USA), *self-indulgent, delusional and oblivious* (Headmaster-USA), *lacked humanity* (Lt-General-USA), were *dishonest* and *untrustworthy* (Lt-General-UK). According to Ambassador-USA and Headmaster-USA, and in correspondence with the findings of Boddy *et al.* (2010) and Boddy *et al.* (2011) they were also likely to *lie*, *cheat* and *disrespect*. They presented as a particular type of person (Lt-General-USA), *always on the edge* (Headmaster-USA) and concerned with *self-preservation,* they did not take responsibility (Ambassador-USA). Charity Head-USA, Vicar-General-USA and MP-UK agreed that such behaviour was *self-serving.* According to Price (2000) complacency, inflated

self-belief and a lack of self-control could result in cognitive moral mistakes. As such, a moral deficiency or *depletion* (April *et al.*, 2011, Treviño *et al.*, 2014) might lead to unethical behaviour. Whilst the data demonstrated distinct differences between leader personality and virtuous ideals with seemingly negative traits being identified they did not constitute unethical leadership, as typified by Brown and Mitchell (2010) . As argued earlier, the unexpected traits were found affiliated with conceptions of both servant leadership and charismatic leadership. Even the more extrovert traits appeared to fall within Aronson's (2001) aforementioned ethical leadership zone.

Headmaster-USA and Lt-General-UK believed that for-profit leaders were more likely to behave unethically. Unethical behaviour was acknowledged as behaviour outside of cultural norms, but it was not the same as illegal behaviour (Lt-General-USA). Unethical behaviour only seemed to become an issue when it was discovered; that is, someone had been caught (Principal-UK). Being unethical was not the same as being unlawful (Charity Head-USA). The data was not wholly consistent with the views of Brown and Mitchell (2010) who argued that unethical leadership transcended behaviour and concerned that which was illegal and immoral.

5.4.1.3 Recognising the personal challenges to leading ethically

Eight of the ten leaders (Lt-General-USA, Ambassador-USA, Charity Head-USA, Vicar-General-USA, Headmaster-USA, MP-UK, Charity Head-UK and Principal-UK) demonstrated an awareness of the challenges to leading ethically. According to Athanasopoulou (2012) not-for-profits were not invulnerable to ethical challenges. Indeed, Headmaster-USA, Charity Head-UK and Lt-General-UK believed these challenges could be both personal and professional. Moreover, Lt-General-USA, Headmaster-USA and MP-UK understood specific constraints, difficulties and pressures to maintaining virtuous conduct. On analysis, some stood in contrast to those found in the literature (April *et al.*, 2010, 2011). Scholars found a detrimental organisational culture; an emphasis on profits and a lack of consistency as overall

factors. Unlike this research, little has been produced on the specific challenges and tensions to leading ethically.

Of those who sought answers Duignan (2006) focused on educational leaders, noting that tensions concerned leadership situations where values and ethics were contested. Price (2008) agreed that 'moral leaders possessed the ability to resolve conflicts between self-interest and morality in the right way' (p66). However, in order to do this leaders would need to recognise their moral motivation; be self-aware. The leaders in this study possessed the tools of self-regulation and self-control to ensure consistent behaviour across settings (Tenbrunsel and Messick, 2004, Brown and Treviño, 2006). Of the leaders canvassed in this study, half of the leaders (Lt-General-USA, Ambassador-USA, the Vicar-General-USA, MP-UK and Archbishop-UK) believed leader self-interest or individualism to be particularly harmful to ethical leadership and ethical decision-making. Indeed, Knights and O'Leary (2006) believed that self-interestedness had 'no part to play in ethics' (p133). According to the data (Ambassador-USA and MP-UK), leaders in politics, government and charities had different motivations and temptations (see sections 5.4.1.3, 5.5.2.2 and 5.6.1). Self-interest was closely affiliated with the concepts of ego and power.

Indeed, ego was becoming a real leadership concern according to Headmaster-USA and Charity Head-UK. Lt-General-USA claimed that poor leaders were egotistical and incapable of delivering. Ambassador-USA, Headmaster-USA and MP-UK stated that *ego* coupled with *pride*, concern for reputation and the need to win arguments and promotion also constrained ethical decision-making. Whilst the data appears to support the views of Kanungo and Mendonca (1996) Headmaster-USA was unsure, ego was not wholly incongruent with ethical leadership:

> *"There are certain components of an ego that are important and I think this is the drive that gets things done, the belief that you can do it, the belief that you can help others, yeah, that little bit of ego, it's confidence".*

Power was however, a collective challenge according to Ambassador-USA, Charity Head-USA, Headmaster-USA and Charity Head-UK, particularly when its abuse caused an organisation to fail (Headmaster-USA).

> *"When [ethics] is not fundamental, when it is not the centerpiece of what you do, your brilliance and everything else goes back to the level of a Hitler or a Stalin, because there is nothing to hold you back from your power. There is nothing to constrain you, there is no reason why you can't indulge in it" (Headmaster-USA).*

Similarly to the arguments around ego, it was not that power, position and achievement of personal success were inappropriate for leadership, but that excess was detrimental. This exemplified what scholars called the *virtuous mean*, the space on the continuum between *ethical egoism* and *ethical altruism* (De Hoogh and Den Hartog, 2008, Crossan *et al.*, 2013). According to Mendonca and Kanungo (2007) high levels of *moral altruism* had to be balanced against social achievement for ethical leaders. This lends further credence to the arguments that that the ethical leaders in this study were equipped to recognise, and thus moderate self-interest to maintain the virtuous mean.

According to the data, ethical leaders would also need to have the skills to moderating feelings. Although the emotional aspects of ethical leadership are another rarely discussed feature in the leadership literature (Solomon, 1998, 2005), scholars such as Salvador and Folger (2009) , Brown and Mitchell (2010) and Thiel *et al.* (2012) have renewed efforts to understand the role of emotions. Emotional instability was negatively associated with ethical leadership according to Treviño *et al.* (2006) . Indeed, Lt-General-USA, Headmaster-USA, MP-UK, and Archbishop-UK noted its impact. MP-UK believed behaviour to be affected by an individual's emotional state, i.e. *hormonal* and *irrational*, noting that that *the inability to cope with stress*, and *hatred* (MP-UK) were detrimental. Others claimed that *moral outrage*; *irrationality* (Principal-UK) and *fear* (Headmaster-USA and MP-UK) were of concern. Decision-making could be a *slog, exhausting, distressing*, and *uncomfortable* and felt like a *battle* (Charity Head-UK). Indeed, the personal and moral toll on the decision-maker was also roundly acknowledged by Ambassador-USA. Ethical decision-making involved anxiety and concern

(Headmaster-USA). Charity Head-UK hated making difficult decisions and warned that they should never be done in haste or anger, stating:

> *"I have been quite ill sometimes and exhausted… I'm best when I am fighting battles I can win. I am at my worst when I am fighting the great faceless XYZ over policy… And don't' get anywhere and there's no one to fight".*

This data broadly supports the findings of Selart and Johansen (2011) who found that different stressors influenced ethical awareness and thus affected the ability to be an effective leader when not acknowledged. According to Elaydi (2006) emotions carry the ability to both debilitate and paralyse the decision-maker if unchecked. But emotions also had a positive side, they could be influential for *moral motivation* (Johnson, 2012, p245), affecting moral awareness and moral judgment and thus shaped ethical decision-making (Salvador and Folger, 2009). Emotions could both constrain and enable ethical leadership according to Treviño *et al.* (2006) , Kalshoven *et al.* (2011a) , Johnson (2012) and Heyler *et al.* (2016) Indeed, expert decision-makers compensated for their emotions and regulated them according to Shanteau (1988) and Thiel *et al.* (2012) . On aggregate, these findings suggest that the leaders in this study not only possessed the skill to recognise negative feelings, but they could control them to make sound ethical choices.

5.4.1.4 Ethical decisions, special and no different

In order to understand the role ethics played in decision-making leaders were asked whether they thought every decision had ethical implications and if ethical decisions were problematic (*Appendix B – Leader Interview Schedule*: Q8 and Q9). In association with Salvador and Folger (2009) Ambassador-USA, Charity Head-USA, Lt-General-UK, Charity Head-UK and Archbishop-UK differentiated between types of decisions. Archbishop-UK found them *functional*, *financial*, *pastoral* or *spiritual*. Decisions could also be strategic according to Ambassador-USA and Charity Head-USA. Purely empirical decisions, which did not affect people were more straightforward and were simply *seen through* according to Lt-General-UK. For instance, government (policy) decisions were focused on accountability, and

not necessarily underpinned by ethics or morals (Headmaster-USA, Lt-General-UK, and Principal-UK).

This would suggest that a different decision-making schemata were being used according to Jordan (2009) . But unlike Jones (1991) and Reynolds (2006a) I do not believe that the leaders in this study were overlooking consequences or were acting without volition. Ethics and values have been shown to be intrinsic (see sections 2.5.1 and 5.4.1.1). Morals and ethics were ingrained, summarily reinforced, influenced by experience, moral identity and interaction with others (Jordan, 2009, Lincoln and Holmes, 2010). Indeed, Charity Head-UK noted that right decisions were obvious. If this was the case, I would argue that in contrast to the views of Salvador and Folger (2009) my leaders could not disassociate their ethical underpinnings or their cognitive processes from reasoning. As such, decision-making could not be divorced from ethics (Vicar-General-USA), *ergo* few decisions were not ethical.

Interestingly, when leaders were asked to define what they considered to be an ethical decision they used a variety of terms. Ethical decisions were described as being more difficult, very hard (Ambassador-USA and Charity Head-UK), or more problematic (MP-UK) to make. They could also be challenging (Charity Head-USA), *distinctive* (Charity Head-USA), *important* (MP-UK) and *different* (Lt-General-USA and Ambassador-USA). They were complex (Charity Head-USA and Archbishop-UK), with multiple components (Headmaster-USA). Consequences made decisions ethical (Ambassador-USA), but for Vicar-General-USA and Headmaster-USA those consequences had to be serious and serious equalled *scary* (Ambassador-USA and Vicar-General-USA). As noted by Headmaster-USA and Principal-UK, ethical decisions were situational, and involved ethical dilemmas (Ambassador-USA and Headmaster-USA). Guy (1990) , De Cremer *et al.* (2011) and Elm and Radin (2012) typified conditions where the stakes appeared higher and the moral issues more obvious.

Leaders seemed to be applying a superior level of *moral sensitivity* (Butterfield *et al.*, 2000) and *attunement* (Dane and Sonenshein, 2015), displaying an absence of *ethical blindness* (Palazzo *et al.*, 2012, Werhane *et al.*, 2014). Leaders presented as *moral agents*, they discerned right from wrong, and took moral responsibility for action as suggested by Jones (1991) , Dvir and Shamir (2003) and Reynolds (2006a) . In demonstrating *moral awareness* (Butterfield *et al.*, 2000) or *moral recognition* (May and Pauli, 2002) the social and organisational characteristics of the situation were being summarily processed. From a focus on the moral issue and an evaluation of the scale of moral intensity (Jones, 1991) leaders appeared to be *sensemaking* (Caughron *et al.*, 2011, Zeni *et al.*, 2016). The findings demonstrate the importance of awareness and sensitivity in the process of activating leader *moral antennae* (Butterfield *et al.*, 2000). Ambassador-USA explained that ethical decision-making became a priority. Consistent with the work of Butterfield *et al.* (2000) and Pimentel *et al.* (2010) the status quo had been disturbed; the crucial first stage of problem recognition had been reached, ambiguity, social cues and the moral elements of the situation had been acknowledged. Coupled with the data, this would suggest that ethical decisions were different and that a different process was being enacted. But to further confuse, Lt-General-USA, Charity Head-USA, Lt-General-UK and Archbishop-UK additionally stated that *all* decisions had ethical implications or dimensions especially when they involved others (Headmaster-USA, Lt-General-UK and Archbishop-UK). Similarly to Elm and Radin (2012) the data suggested that the separation between ethical decision-making and other types of decision-making were unclear. The literature and the data were collectively contradictory, ethical decisions appeared to be both special and no different.

5.4.1.5 Decision-making and ethical decision-making symbiosis

Leaders were not asked outright to explain their decision-making processes. Instead, I asked several less intrusive, deliberately unbiased questions (*Appendix B – Leader Interview Schedule*: Q3 and Q14). Woiceshyn (2011) recommended that data be collected from leaders concerning genuine ethical dilemmas to advance

scholarship. Interestingly, some of the language used here shows parity with the terms used to describe ethics (see section 5.4.1.1). For instance, ethical decision-making explicitly concerned doing the right thing (Lt-General-UK) and was part of the moral purpose of leadership (MP-UK). Descriptions showed strong associations with Hanson's (2006) concept of moral leadership. In accordance with Maguad and Krone (2009) decision-making had to be *done right* (Headmaster-USA), and when it was not, it had to be challenged:

> *"There's nothing more frustrating than people just going 'well somebody made the wrong decision but here we are… we are where we are, therefore the decision sticks'…it has to be overturned" (Charity Head-UK).*

For many, decision-making appeared to typify what Martin and Parmar (2012) describe as *fast processing;* an intuitive and instinctive process of cognitive short cuts; almost unconscious decision-making (Elm and Radin, 2012) underpinned by expertise and experience (Shanteau, 1988, Dane and Sonenshein, 2015). Indeed, for Vicar-General-USA and Charity Head-UK it was automatic and instinctual and instant (Archbishop-UK), empathetic and intrinsic; you either had it or you didn't according to Lt-General-UK. Ethical decision-making was similarly instinctive (Principal-UK), intuitive, and inherent (Lt-General-UK). Despite this, few leaders found ethical decision-making to be an easy process.

According to Lt-General-USA, Ambassador-USA, Vicar-General-USA, Charity Head-USA and Principal-UK decision-making and ethical decision-making were difficult. In keeping with Burns (1978) , Charity Head-USA, Vicar-General-USA, Headmaster-USA, MP-UK and Principal-UK claimed decision-making could be complex, and messy (Charity Head-UK). Ethical decision-making was unclear and grey (Vicar-General-USA), with no absolutes (MP-UK). On review, the processes appeared ambiguous, serious, and three-dimensional. Of the leaders to describe their decision-making processes, Lt-General-USA, Lt-General-UK and Archbishop-UK described distinctive procedures. Lt-General-USA proffered a comprehensive model. He would firstly analyse the environment, develop responses, deliberate, select, and communicate, monitor then review. This format was taught in the

military and required mastery through practice; luck had to be normalised. Ethical decision-making was what the military did (Lt-General-UK):

> *"The first thing is to work out whether a decision is required at all, and if so, what the nature of the decision is, and thirdly, what material you need in order to make an informed decision, and therefore is this decision the decision that's going to be based on empirical evidence or intuition and instinct which is based on your experience?" (Lt-General-UK).*

In contrast, MP-UK would make judgements up front. Once he knew the decision could be made he felt he had no choice but to make it. Vicar-General-USA spoke of listening, analysing and then making a decision. For Charity Head-UK the desired outcome was visualised, then the solution reverse engineered. Charity Head-USA, MP-UK and Charity Head-UK also engaged in activities such as weighing up multiple possibilities and outcomes before committing to a decision.

In correspondence with the data on decisions, decision-making was situational according to half of the leaders (Ambassador-USA, Charity Head-USA, Vicar-General-USA, Archbishop-UK and Principal-UK) and real-life (Charity Head-USA). Leaders clearly understood their domains, which included evaluating complex contextual conditions. The data suggested that decision-making was an *integrated process,* both intuitive and deliberate; neither were superior, therefore it was hard to capture in static models (see sections 2.5.2 and 2.5.3). On analysis, these processes appeared simple in contrast to the complex model advocated by Jones (1991) . Indeed, Martin and Parmar (2012) warned against using static models to explain this 'complicated phenomenon' (p303). These results could be considered congruent with the issues highlighted in literature review (see section 2.5.3), where decision-making and ethical decision-making models only appeared useful after the fact as reflective tools (Schriesheim, 2003), not *in situ* support. Reynolds (2006b) added that not only did models lack efficacy, but they also failed to express *how* a moral agent might think. The data suggested that leaders understood their processes on a more ethereal level.

The data hinted at *how* leaders framed their ethical decision-making. For Charity Head-USA, Charity Head-UK and Lt-General-UK it was about making choices, sometimes-poor choices (Lt-General-UK), or could present as a series of decisions (MP-UK). At times, decision-making was simply a case of doing the best under the circumstances (Charity Head-USA). Concurrent with the work of Kohlberg, where decision-making was more rigidly framed by applying moral principles to the issue, and dependent upon the stage of moral development (Woiceshyn, 2011, Palazzo *et al.*, 2012), ethical decision-making appeared to be a rational act. It could be outcome focused and computational, involving cognitive evaluations (Elaydi, 2006). Indeed, MP-UK described it as calculating, he and others (Charity Head-UK Ambassador-USA and Vicar-General-USA) felt it was *strategic*, involving and negotiations and *trade-offs* (Charity Head-UK). Indeed, organisational risk evaluation was found to be important for the seasoned decision-maker (Messick and Bazerman, 1996). Whilst Vicar-General-USA, MP-UK and Charity Head-UK also described decision-making as utilitarian the literature suggested that there were more complex issues at stake.

Certainly, as an exclusive approach, utilitarianism appeared limited. As outlined in section 2.3.3, utilitarianism could not accommodate the interests of everyone, or the greatest number. It would conflict with the regulations that guide organisational functioning (Reynolds, 2006a, Pimentel *et al.*, 2010, Bauman, 2011). But Price (2008) maintained that if an organisation had agreed that a particular group of individuals were to be chief beneficiaries, then utilitarianism would allow for such particularism. Although it would be difficult to disentangle the *type* of utility; *act* or *rule* (Pojman and Tramel, 2009) , I suspect that in parallel with the data, the approach outlined would be dependent upon the characteristics of the situation. Indeed, as will be seen in section (5.5.1.3) the consideration of consequences would prove to be a pivotal factor.

5.4.2 Enabling ethical leaders

As can be seen in Figure 4, ethical leadership, decision-making and (ethical) decision-making share significant enablers according to respondents. On aggregate, the data show that at an individual (micro) level, the most important enablers to leading ethically and were experience, formation and upbringing; moral conscience; role models and ethical others; strong values or personal ethical code; plus the role of confidence and doubt. The major interconnected themes are presented and discussed discreetly in sub-sections (5.4.2.1, 5.4.2.3, 5.4.2.4, 5.4.2.5, 5.4.2.6). They do not follow Figure 4 literally, but have been further grouped into natural units of meaning for discussion. Whilst Figure 4 also presents organisational enablers (meso) in the grey block, and societal (macro) enablers in pink, the former are discussed in sections 5.5.1 and 5.5.2 and the latter in sections 5.6.1 and 5.6.2 respectively. Whilst constraints and enablers to ethical leadership have been acknowledged in the literature, scholars (April *et al.*, 2010, 2011) have neglected to make the explicit connections between what underpins ethical leadership, how this directs and informs ethical organisations, and how it could manifest in others.

Enablers to Ethical leadership	Enablers to Decision-making	Enablers to ethical decision-making
Experience & formation (3)	Experience (5)	Experience & Upbringing (6)
Value laden situations (3)	Religion (3)	
Role models (5)	Role models (5)	
Ethical others (2)		Ethical others (5)
Moral conscience (6)	Moral conscience (4)	Moral conscience (3)
Doubt (4)	Guilt (2)	Doubt (3)
Self-awareness (2)	Strong values (4)	Personal ethical code (2)
	Confidence (3)	
Right setting (3)	Organisational disposition (5)	Organisational ethical disposition (6)
	Others (4)	Others (3)
	Awareness (5)	
	Situations factors (4)	Situations factors (6)
		Communication (3)
	Understanding consequences (9)	Understanding consequences (8)
	Concern for others/society (5)	Concern for others/society (8)

Figure 4: Comparison of most significant enablers

5.4.2.1 Experience

Experience had a multivariate role in supporting ethical leaders. Both Charity Head-USA and Charity Head-UK were shaped, and Principal-UK directly influenced by experience. At a glance the concept of experience sat well with the social learning perspective underpinning Brown *et al*'s (2005) ethical leadership construct. But according to De Cremer *et al.* (2010b) and Stouten *et al.* (2012) the construct focused on how leader behaviour influenced organisational followers, not on *how* leaders became moral or what they understood regarding their own moral identities (Reynolds, 2006a). For the leaders in this study experience reinforced the development of their values, clarified moral boundaries, increased

moral awareness (Headmaster-USA), and confidence (Lt-General-USA). It was pivotal in forging moral character (MP-UK). Experience allowed leaders to 'practice constant integrated awareness' (April *et al.*, 2011, p180). Indeed, Lt-General-USA, further noted that experience offered a lens to view idiosyncratic behaviour and helped leaders appreciate the real role of leadership. This appealed to the views of Holtbrügge *et al.* (2015) who noted that 'self-reflective and self-regulatory capabilities enhance with age as individuals gain knowledge and life experience' (p3).

Experience was thought to be an integral part of the decision-making process according to Lt-General-USA, Ambassador-USA and Vicar-General-USA. Experiential examples were used to frame ethical decision-making (Ambassador-USA), providing context to contextualize theory (Lt-General-USA). As such, they informed (Ambassador-USA and Principal-UK), reinforced (Lt-General-USA) and supported decision-making *in situ* (MP-UK). For Lt-General-USA and Charity Head-USA ethical challenges needed to be learned early in careers. Contending that in for-profit leadership real responsibility came too late (and only in senior roles). In contrast, the military gave people high levels of responsibility and accountability early on their careers. Indeed, Lt-General-USA, Ambassador-USA and Headmaster-USA recognised the importance of being exposed to value-laden situations to develop and test their leadership. Lt-General-USA, Headmaster-USA and Lt-General-UK also believed that although experience could mitigate mistakes, it did not eliminate them, nor would it always lead to ethical expertise as Dane and Sonenshein (2015) had also argued. However, mistake making was accepted as part of leadership learning:

> *"In fact the only way you learn is through your mistakes. Although, I know I'll make more, but there's no question that the mistakes are what causes you to really, especially when you are in reflective mode, that causes you to step back and say... that was an error, how do I get better" (Headmaster-USA).*

On aggregate, this data goes some way to support the notion that ethical leaders possessed skills to reconstitute an outcome for new circumstances, they avoided hindsight bias. They did not find themselves locked into restrictive decision-making frames, nor did they succumb to creeping determinism (Palazzo *et al.*, 2012, Werhane *et al.*, 2014). Experience and exposure to failure offered them the opportunity to reinforce existing (possibly inadequate) schemata (see also section 5.4.1.4). If experience was highly significant as Figure 4 attests, it should not be considered without reference to the earlier life events of leaders; namely their formation and upbringing.

5.4.2.2 Formation, upbringing and the role of religion

Significantly, seven leaders (Ambassador-USA, Headmaster-USA, Charity Head-USA, Vicar-General-USA, Lt-General-UK, Charity Head-UK and Principal-UK) recognised the importance of formation and upbringing as influences on self. Formation was to include early life (positive and negative experiences), family influences (upbringing) and education. Of the enablers identified by April *et al.* (2010, 2011) upbringing was the most recurrent.

> *"You know it starts maybe with one's upbringing. It's then reinforced and nurtured by the organisation that one's belonged to… it's underpinned by whatever standards… one's school has put in store and emphasis. Then if you join something like the Army. The Army goes to endless lengths to underpin… what's right and what's wrong" (Lt-General-UK).*

> *"At essence we all have a child in us, we are, the outcome of our early years experiences, and mine have directed me and continue to. Doesn't mean I don't have conflicts, but it means I can recognise in myself my feelings in relation to situations and therefore devising a management approach to those situations whatever my feelings" (Principal-UK).*

Vicar-General-USA, Charity Head-USA, Headmaster-USA and MP-UK noted how they were shaped by home (family) influences. MP-UK conceded that it was his grandfather who had taught him about right and wrong. For Principal-UK the positive influence of a father with strong societal convictions in apartheid South Africa was key. Parents were also role models for Charity Head-USA:

"I think the reason I do what I do is because of who I am, and my personal, my upbringing by my parents. The culture I lived in, I mean we were a blue-collar community, my daddy was in the union, we were a union family, you know we always believed right and wrong".

Headmaster-USA acknowledged that he learned about sharing and getting along through family. In accordance with the literature on ethical leadership the merits of a social learning theory framework were not unfounded as broad antecedent (see section 2.4.1). Frisch and Huppenbauer (2014) found that ethical leaders had been influenced by parents, ethical others, political and humanitarian figures. As such, parental modelling had significant impact on moral probity. Whilst social and familial relationships were widely identified as influences, scholars (Treviño and Brown, 2004, Treviño *et al.*, 2006, Jordan *et al.*, 2011) framed upbringing chiefly in terms of *cognitive moral development.* According to Schminke *et al.* (2005) stages three and four of Kohlberg's (1969) model of cognitive development were particualrly relevant. This related to the type of behaviour which pleased others and was approved, whilst stage 4 concerned law, order and duty as well as conformity, and involved the maintenance of social order. However, there was little explication in the literature regarding the types of trigger events or experiences, which could impact.

In contrast, the data revealed that early life experiences (upbringing) did not have to be positive to have a positive ethical impact. Attitude to adversity (moral fortitude and resilience) were also important factors (Charity Head-UK). Ambassador-USA learned from challenging personal experiences early in life as illustrated by *Appendix E – Abridged transcript* and below. This affected self-reliance, provided a sense of duty and moral obligation; it helped Ambassador-USA develop empathy, self-awareness and responsibility:

"I lived with my grandmother who I have a lot of respect for… and I lived with my aunt, who I have a lot of affection for… at least my romantic idea of you know… a parent… Maybe it was watching too much… of the 1950's and 60's family… shows… my parents were not Ozzie & Harriet, they were not Donna Reed and that kind of… Leave it to Beaver, going into the house and asking your wise parents…what is the right thing or the wrong thing to do? I don't remember any of

> *that... I was forced to rely on myself, and my own judgment, very, very*
> *early... Without getting deeply psychological I mean... I was essentially*
> *abandoned when I was very young... I don't have a... priest or a*
> *grandfather or anybody else who... is sort of the wise person whose*
> *knee I sat at".*

Although she did not have physically close familial role models, she may have learned vicariously. As illustration, *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet* was a US television show broadcast from 1952 to 1962 featuring the Nelson family, and based upon their real lives and epitomised 1950s values and ideals. Donna Reed was an American actress who starred in movies such as *It's a Wonderful Life* and *From Here to Eternity*. She also played a middle class American housewife and mother in *The Donna Reed Show* (1958-1966). *Leave it to Beaver* was an American sitcom about the adventures of a young boy in a middle-class suburban family in America.

Others to recall profound formative events were Charity Head-USA, Charity Head-UK and Principal-UK. Charity Head-USA had experienced personal injustices and felt that the experience of victimisation was essential for the ethical leader. Charity Head-UK recalled his father's untimely death as crucial in the development of resilience, trust and self-sufficiency. MP-UK also acknowledged that adverse experiences helped develop character. But similarly to Price (2005) Vicar-General-USA and Headmaster-USA reasoned that such adversity could also harden and damage moral foundation.

> *"Some people are put in very, very difficult situations where they are*
> *constantly under pressure... also physical challenges... suddenly*
> *through no fault of their own they find themselves curtailed... I'm sure*
> *you have seen extraordinary people who can accept all kinds of*
> *disasters... others are wallowing in self-pity" (Vicar-General-USA).*

Indeed, resilience and moral fortitude have already been explicitly identified as ethical leader values (see Figure 3), but here they were also implied. Interestingly, of the four leaders to recall adversities (Ambassador-USA, Charity Head-USA and Charity Head-UK and Principal-UK), three were female. Whilst I have roundly acknowledged contributions made by scholars regarding the differences in the

moral development of men and women (see section 4.1.8); it was not an overt focus in this study, although is duly noted in section 6.1.5 for future esearch.

Overall, values were developed through formative years, life experiences and events, informed by upbringing according to Lt-General-USA, Vicar-General-USA, Headmaster-USA and Charity Head-USA. For instance:

> *"I am an imprint of the values that were placed upon me by others that I developed over the time that I grew to be an adult" (Lt-General-USA).*

> *"You really have to have it… and then you have to embrace it… you can't fight it, and then you find… when you do land, just by nature in these places, in these situations that reinforce it…. so its starts to perpetuate itself" (Charity Head-USA).*

Headmaster-USA stated that his upbringing was where he learned about ethics and had felt attracted to *good* from a young age. This was in contrast to the broad understandings provided by social learning theory. As noted in section 2.4.1, it was used principally to explain how leaders directly and indirectly influenced follower ethical conduct through role modelling (observation, imitation and identification) by scholars such as Brown *et al.* (2005) and Brown and Treviño (2014) . In contrast, my leaders were not only clear *how* they acquired their values, but also detailed *who* and *what* influenced them. For instance, schooling and education were noted as formative and continuous influences on personal (moral) development for Ambassador-USA, Vicar-General-USA, Headmaster-USA and Principal-UK. Principal-UK also claimed that her background in social work and policy and a life steeped in anti-oppressive values contributed to her leadership approach:

> *"Anti-oppressive practice… is part of my being, everything; and I suppose strongly influenced, because now everything I see I can relate back to".*

For Vicar-General-USA and Archbishop-UK, education i.e. the seminary was highly significant. Overall, the data suggested that leaders understood their moral origins; they displayed an introspective awareness of their inner thoughts and feelings. The leaders canvassed appeared adept at *symbolisation* and

internalisation (Aquino and Reed II, 2002, Mayer *et al.*, 2012). Moreover, how they understood their moral identity appeared to encompass a much understudied aspect of ethical leadership and decision-making; namely the role of religion. It is important to note that the literature review has shown that the scholarship in this area is limited. As such, this data fulfils requests from Longenecker *et al.* (2004) , Fernando (2011) , Dion (2012) and Broom and Service (2014) for better integration and understanding.

Religion was important in the lives of Lt-General-USA, Ambassador-USA, Charity Head-USA, Headmaster-USA. Unsurprisingly both clergy acknowledged its influence, but Archbishop-UK explicitly stated:

> *"Here is a decision to be made…. What is the history of this situation, who are the people involved? What is the teaching of the Church, what is the teaching of the Bishops in this country, what do the scriptures say?"*

> *"These are all the influences and you are trying to measure them up, and as you try to convince people or communicate with people…these are the issues, these are the pros, these are the cons… these are the hidden dimensions, and this is the prophetic witness of the Church".*

Lt-General-USA had learned intolerance of poor behaviour, about punishment, right and wrong, and values from religion. His faith reinforced the importance of forgiveness:

> *"If we were all perfect, I mean, I think that's one of the values pieces… and that's our Judeo-Christian ethic that we bring from our religious backgrounds that are becoming further and further separated through secularity… that causes us not to be forgiving… except when it happens to you, you want to be forgiven".*

Similarly, Headmaster-USA credited his faith as a guide, which enabled self-awareness, particularly when it came to recognising weaknesses and errors. In correspondence with Mendonca and Kanungo (2007) he singled out the works of St Thomas Aquinas as key inspiration. According to Chan *et al.* (2011) , Fernando (2011) and Benefiel *et al.* (2014) Judeo-Christian influences have relevance for ethical leaders. Whilst Ambassador-USA also acknowledged the role of religion in

her life (Christian Science), she also stated that no religion had a monopoly on moral development:

> "I did study philosophy, not more than the very basics but… being exposed to philosophies and different philosophies… you know what are the philosophic traditions…? I was an Asian studies major so I studied Asian philosophy, and Hindu philosophy… I'm not a supporter of religions but I'm fascinated by the ethical underpinnings of religion. I don't like… clerical structures, but… all cultures have beliefs and values and they tend to be basically the same one…. you know don't lie, don't cheat, don't murder… they're all basically the same thing… and so, that's fascinated me… there is this common ethical tradition among people… it isn't going to Church every Sunday that makes you an ethical person… some of the most ethical people I know haven't been in a Church in a long time… There isn't any one religion that has the monopoly on it at all. So this is where I get away from the formal religions… with their… 'We got it all nailed and you guys are wrong'… My grandmother was a Christian Scientist… and in a sense there is a lot about that Church that I… don't really fully buy off on. But, it has as a core tenant, the perfectibility of the individual, and in that sense, you know… you can be better than you were".

Indeed, scholars have begun to supplement their ethical leadership frameworks with a variety of faiths (see section 2.3.8: The theological twist for details). But acknowledgement is also growing regarding the concept of *religiosity* (Weaver and Agle, 2002) as an explanation for pro-social behaviour (Mazereeuw-van der Duijn Schouten *et al.*, 2014). Whilst MP-UK conceded that religion could indeed influence, Ambassador-USA and Charity Head-USA felt that church going did not make one moral. Riggio *et al.* (2010) noted that all leaders were vulnerable to ethical lapses, even church leaders who espoused a particular moral standard had been found to fail in their moral duty to society. Indeed, Principal-UK acknowledged that there were good Christians in organisations, but this did not mean they would always act ethically. In keeping with the work of Holdcroft (2006) and Parboteeah *et al.* (2008) this would suggest that *how* customs, practices, and the community supported daily activity was as significant as the faith itself.

It is worth noting that those comfortable to openly acknowledge religious influences included the entire USA sample, but only one UK leader (Archbishop-UK). It might be possible to make inferences about cultural differences here. However a close inspection of UK leaders, particularly Principal-UK sees her disclose a convent education, and its influence on behaviour:

> *"I'm feeling that one is much stronger in a leadership role if you do know what you believe. You know your ethical standards really, because that gives one more confidence about decision taking and making really and knowing… what informs it. I mean I can laugh at myself when I know I am giving very sort of nun-ish behaviour as it were, or mother superior behaviour, I can see that in me…but I can see values and behaviour in that".*

Indeed, Lt-General-UK and Charity Head-UK went to world-renowned independent schools where spiritual welfare was supported with daily Christian worship. Whilst the disparity in openness compares favourably with previous studies (Ali and Gibbs, 1998, Cavanagh and Bandsuch, 2002) where individuals were found reluctant to describe themselves as religious, the reasoning is less clear (see Chapter 2, p53). But my leaders, unlike Krishnakumar *et al.* (2015) did not describe themselves as spiritual either. Perhaps they did not *see* themselves as religiously motivated, or as Hicks (2005) argued, they preferred to leave their religious convictions outside the workplace.

On review, the data seemed to imply that, whatever the reasoning religion could not be discounted as influence on moral formation. Leaders used religious frameworks. Similarly to Hicks (2005) , Parboteeah *et al.* (2008) , Eisenbeiß (2012) and Broom and Service (2014) they were found significant and could not be disregarded. In congruence with Mayer *et al.* (2012) 'positive relationships' existed 'between symbolization and religiosity' (p153). However as Wright and Quick (2011) affirmed, and much like all the other frameworks discussed in this research, religion would not be sole antecedent either.

5.4.2.3 Strong values and consistency

Whilst values have been shown to be important (see section 5.4.1.1), leaders believed that they had to be fully and honestly accepted (Vicar-General-USA), i.e. embraced (Charity Head-USA) and practiced (Headmaster-USA). Lt-General-USA and Charity Head-USA believed they ought to be upheld, valued equally (Charity Head-USA) and protected (Lt-General-USA). But crucially, in order to enable ethical leadership and decision-making, like Bright *et al.* (2014) values systems had to be strong (Charity Head-USA, Vicar-General-USA, MP-UK and Charity Head-UK). For Solomon (1998) strong values were 'deeply held' and 'deemed important' (p91). Ambassador-USA and Charity Head-USA confirmed this conceptualisation, adding that values were not easy to break, nor should they be compromised (Charity Head-USA).

Lt-General-USA, Headmaster-USA, MP-UK and Charity Head-UK agreed that an ethical leader ought to be strong-willed and resolute. This could easily apply to character in general, not necessarily values. Nevertheless, strong values concerned standing up for beliefs (April *et al.*, 2010, 2011), and not compromising according to Treviño *et al.* (2003) . The data showed affiliation with the virtues of justice and courage. Strong ethical values were aligned with leaders who would not mislead or abuse others (Mahsud *et al.*, 2010). Ethical leaders had strong ethical commitments, demonstrated ethically normative behaviour and pro-socially motivated others (Piccolo *et al.*, 2010). Lt-General-USA noted that a robust personal values system helped moderate behaviour, and mitigated temptations (Headmaster-USA). Moreover, Lt-General-UK outlined the consequences of a weak values system:

> *"Unless you've got a substantial set of moral values… the leader who's prepared to transgress in achieving his specific purpose might be very effective in that specific purpose, because the odd transgression is rather minor. But, by the time it's extrapolated up to the wider leadership of a bigger organisation that minor flaw becomes an absolutely fatal vulnerability".*

Weak principles impeded ethical leadership (Charity Head-USA and Headmaster-USA), particularly a lack of honesty and openness (Lt-General-USA and Charity Head-USA).

Values and behavioural consistency were important to Lt-General-USA, Charity Head-USA, Vicar-General-USA, and Headmaster-USA, and made leadership more challenging if not maintained (Lt-General-USA and Headmaster-USA). Consistency was reported as important for ethical leaders by Treviño *et al.* (2003) and April *et al.* (2010, 2011) , but Lt-General-USA believed that the odd inconsistency could be tolerated. Wildermuth and Wildermuth (2006) and Mostovicz *et al.* (2011) have acknowledged the difficulty leaders face in remaining ethical in every situation. Of the ten leaders, Lt-General-USA, Ambassador-USA, Headmaster-USA, MP-UK, Charity-Head-UK and Archbishop-UK substantiated previous findings in the literature regarding the fallibility of leadership. Gini (1998) , Wildermuth and Wildermuth (2006) and Mostovicz *et al.* (2011) remind us that society is unforgiving when leaders err, they are human. Perhaps we expect too much of them (see also sections 2.3.6 and 5.6.1)? Were leaders actually describing the habitual practice of their moral qualities? They would appear to be adopting an Aristotelian to virtue ethics, one also advocated by Riggio *et al.* (2010) , Mihelič *et al.* (2010) , Johnson (2012) and McPherson (2013) . These were virtues 'intentionally selected, deliberately strengthened' (Ciulla and Forsyth, 2011, p234). On review, the data appeared to support the notion that values solidification was vital in enabling leaders to remain steadfast in the most challenging circumstances.

5.4.2.4 Positive role models, expert and ethical others

Section 5.4.2.2 has clearly advocated the presence, support and efficacy of family members and others as key enablers for leaders. Similarly to Brown and Treviño (2014) and Dane and Sonenshein (2015) leaders spoke of role models other than childhood. The role of others and their interests were crucial to ethical decision-making according Lt-General-USA, Charity Head-USA, MP-UK and Principal-UK. Support and advice from organisational others, for instance the core leadership

team was also a prime enabler for Charity Head-USA. Indeed, the role of others in was crucial to decision-making, and included subordinates, colleagues and group interactions according to Shanteau (1988) . However, Vicar-General-USA, Headmaster-USA, MP-UK and Principal-UK also noted that pressure from others, undue influence from board members or governors (Lt-General-USA and Principal-UK) posed as challenges. Conflicting pressures, competing interests and different departmental views coupled with the need to reconcile functional organisational aspects could appear detrimental (Charity Head-USA, Lt-General-USA and Principal-UK). This data compares favourably with the findings of April et al (2010, 2011) where peer pressure was noted as a stumbling block to leading ethically, with mentors and role models as significant enablers. Indeed, input from others could be both valuable and detrimental (Heyler *et al.*, 2016).

Vicar-General-USA, Headmaster-USA, Charity Head-UK and Principal-UK identified personal positive role models, with a further two (Archbishop-UK and Principal-UK) also associating such influence as an enabler for ethical leadership. Significantly, though, the *others* in question had to be ethical according to Lt-General-USA, Ambassador-USA, both clergy, both educationalists and Charity Head-UK, a point of difference not quite reflected in the work of April *et al.* (2010, 2011) . As such, positive role models, expert and ethical others significantly supported decision-making for Ambassador-USA, Vicar-General-USA, Lt-General-UK and Charity Head-UK. Principal-UK also stated:

> *"Listening to the views of people in the organisation helped me with my decisions: decision-making. Hugely valuable perspectives...taking some of the perspectives of the men on the team was very helpful".*

Indeed, reflecting on other leaders' decision-making was also important to Ambassador-USA, Charity Head-UK and Archbishop-UK. Even proximity to ethical peers was credited with heightening confidence in moral judgment (Headmaster-USA). On aggregate, the data confirms the findings of Aquino and Reed II (2002) in that these relationships strengthened moral identity, increased moral awareness and advanced moral reasoning (see section 2.5.1). Although scholars had identified mentors and role models as enablers to leading ethically (Treviño *et al.*, 2000, Toor

and Ofori, 2009, April *et al.*, 2011, Frisch and Huppenbauer, 2014) scrutiny would reveal that they were referring to the leader as role model to followers; noticed, and interpreted visible action. The dyadic relationship between leader and follower perceptions had remained overt focus in the literature according to Walumbwa *et al.* (2011) . In contrast, this study concerned origination and initiation of *leader* moral identity as recommended by De Cremer *et al.* (2010b) and Stouten *et al.* (2012) . The data has shown that leaders had their own role models and ethical others to help support ethicality. Brown and Treviño (2014) believe this to be a neglected area of research. As such, the data here provides a tentative first step in exploring the potential connections between 'highly conscientious leaders', and 'guidance and cues from ethical role models' (Brown and Treviño, 2014, p545).

5.4.2.5 Moral conscience, judgment and confidence

Lt-General-USA, Ambassador-USA, Vicar-General-USA and Lt-General-UK believed moral judgment to be a significant factor in ethical leadership. According to Ambassador-USA decision-making was underpinned by moral conscience and required moral judgment, and thus reinforced the morality of the decision-maker. This data has some resonance with early work of Treviño (1986) , who sought connection between moral judgment and moral action in ethical decision-making. Although moral judgment was also an important stage in Rest's (1986) popular decision-making model, (see section 2.5.2), it was arguably the strength of the foundation which determined the quality of resulting decisions. As such, an ethical leader ought to have the '*right*' moral conscience according to half of the respondents (Vicar-General-USA, Headmaster-USA, MP-UK, Archbishop-UK and Principal-UK). Leader ethicality was highly dependent upon the person and how they exercised their free will (Vicar-General-USA and Archbishop-UK). Internal boundaries, i.e. the *lines in the mind* (MP-UK) had to be clear (MP-UK, Archbishop-UK and Principal-UK) and in addition, moral (Archbishop-UK). The internal moral compass and personal code had to be strong (Vicar-General-USA and Principal-

UK). Although moral capacity could change, according to MP-UK. Vicar-General-USA, Headmaster-USA and MP-UK believed that required willing.

Scholars such as Hannah *et al.* (2011a) have begun exploring new avenues regarding *moral maturation* and *moral conation*. Treviño *et al.* (2014) talked about the self-regulatory process involved in moral conation in terms of leader capacity to take moral action; they related it to (un)ethical behaviour. Indeed, the leaders in this study, made a similar connection. *Internal discipline* (Archbishop-UK) was typified as the ability to practice virtues over vices (Headmaster-USA). Moral wisdom moderated and mitigated unethical behaviour, providing the necessary checks and balances. In contrast, unethical leaders were thought to possess an erroneous moral conscience according to Vicar-General-USA. Lt-General-UK expressed this more strongly; unethical leaders were amoral. Archbishop-UK believed them to have experienced a separation (breakdown) of the moral, physical and spiritual dimensions of life. Unethical leaders were individuals incapable of embracing realities for themselves. Whilst remedies often included increasing moral awareness (De Cremer *et al.*, 2010b), the literature was scant on how this could be done, or whether a foundation could be beyond repair.

In congruence with Mendonca and Kanungo (2007) ethical leaders were seemingly 'aided by the habitual practice of examination of conscience' (p100); a distinct Aristotelian approach. For Archbishop-UK, the practice, maintenance and development of conscience was much more:

> *"When you bring in the whole notion of...'I feel it's alright because I don't feel guilty'... society says 'don't feel guilty – you can get away with it', whereas the Church and the teachings of Jesus Christ goes right to the heart of that and it says conscience is ultimately not to do with feelings, it is to do with right judgment and integrity and ethics and wholeness and holiness" (Archbishop-UK).*

On analysis, this testimony appears reflective of a complementary normative and religious framework as recommended by Eisenbeiß (2012) , in contrast to the social learning theory approach advocated by social scientists and critqued in section 2.4.1. Although Jones and Ryan (1997) believed that *moral approbation*

encompassed 'philosophy, religion, biology, socialization and cognitive development' (p668), they were unsure as to the weighting of the constitutive parts. For Longenecker *et al.* (2004) religion was a significant variable in ethical decision-making. Superior levels of ethical judgment were found in evangelical respondents. If their findings, and the views of Maguad and Krone (2009) are coupled this data (see also 5.4.2.2) they offer additional support for a more comprehensive inclusion of religion in the ethical leadership landscape.

Ethical leaders had varying degrees of confidence. On balance, the majority of leaders (Lt-General-USA, Ambassador-USA Vicar-General-USA, Headmaster-USA, Lt-General-UK and Archbishop-UK) stated that they were confident in their (moral) judgement. It was about trusting instincts for Lt-General-UK, and concerned *knowing what to do* for Ambassador-USA. Confidence was also credited with enabling ethical decision-making according to Lt-General-USA. It ultimately concerned the trust a leader placed in their own decision-making processes, predicated upon moral self-identity, and the quality of supplementary information and support from others. Lt-General-USA was so confident in his judgment that he was not fazed by investigations into his decision-making:

> *"Don't be afraid of investigations…frankly, it clears more people than it convicts. It eliminates ambiguity; it allows people to have context and understanding of why the decisions were made. But everyone's afraid of an investigation…people are afraid of it…external people don't understand it" (Lt-General-USA).*

According to Messick and Bazerman (1996) , decision-making confidence was a matter of being able to assess risk and probability and that overconfidence could cause failure and harm others. Poor performers and narcissists were more likely to inaccurately assess the quality of their performance (Chen, 2010). As such, cognitive mistakes and ethical failures were the domain of unethical leaders. But not all leaders felt confident all of the time, Vicar-General-USA, Lt-General-UK and Principal-UK admitted that they were not always sure.

> *"I don't think leaders know they are making the right decision… sometimes one feels one is more 80, its 80-20 but occasionally it can be 50-50… but the thing is impression making really… how to give other people confidence and take them with you" (Principal-UK).*

Charity Head-USA also admitted to feeling unconfident, sometimes insecure. She was concerned about the decision outcome and disclosed that she sometimes felt arrogant that her view would always be the one accepted. Despite this, she and Ambassador-USA did not have regrets regarding the decisions they made. Whilst, a lack of confidence might appear as self-doubt, I believe it was evidence of something else, humility, collegiality and genuine concern.

5.4.2.6 Deliberation, doubt and indecision

In keeping with the recommendations of April *et al.* (2010, 2011) practices such as *reflection, meditation and mindfulness* were accepted as important guidelines for leading ethically. Half of the respondents in this study (Lt-General-USA, Vicar-General-USA, Headmaster-USA, Charity Head-UK and Principal-UK) indicated that constant self-questioning and reflecting were necessities for the ethical leader Both decision-making and ethical decision-making were thought to be endemically reflective processes according to Headmaster-USA and Archbishop-UK. Moreover, decision-making required careful deliberation according to Ambassador-USA, Charity Head-USA, Archbishop-UK and Principal-UK. Indeed, Charity Head-USA stated that:

> *"I just think things very deeply through and then I make my commitment and then I move forward".*

Archbishop-UK supported his decision-making with prayer and meditation, whereas Charity Head-USA thought deeply before making a commitment. On aggregate, the data broadly supported the views of Elm and Radin (2012) and Kaspar (2015) whereby contemplation and 'morally oriented conversations' (Werhane *et al.*, 2014, p58) were thought to enable ethical decision-making. This type of self-monitoring or self-awareness through reflection was enabled by experience and was critical when leaders were faced with new, unfamiliar situations, as pointed out by Thiel *et al.* (2012) . Principal-UK illustrates the point:

> *"It is very important to work on one's blindside as it were, because there are things one doesn't see and experiences one hasn't had and possibilities one cannot see… I have to constantly reflect".*

Although understanding was also shown to be important, preparation was found key for both decision-making and ethical decision-making (Archbishop-UK and Principal-UK). Ambassador-USA, Headmaster-USA and Charity Head-UK identified time as a useful enabler, followed by attention (Ambassador-USA) and information (Lt-General-USA, Charity Head-UK). According to MP-UK a lack of time manifested as both a situational and an organisational constraint. For Charity Head-USA it presented as pressure to settle (legally). Archbishop-UK explained that society expected an instant decision and reaction. Such pressures might coerce a less able leader to take the easy option (Headmaster-USA). Indeed, Lt-General-USA and Vicar-General-USA both contended that ethical decision-making could be hindered when the situation was too fast, or time sensitive; outside of normal operating controls.

As such, a lack of information and knowledge constrained decision-making (Charity Head-USA, MP-UK and Archbishop-UK). Moreover, Lt-General-USA and Ambassador-USA warned that if information was being filtered somewhere in the system it could prove harmful. Different understandings, sources, and the reliability of information constrained (Vicar-General-USA and Headmaster-USA). Leaders needed clarity (Vicar-General-USA) and required unfiltered and reliable information. A narrow prism or inability to see the '*core*' of the decision could mean that leaders were obscured from envisioning the breadth and depth of organisational impact (Lt-General-USA and Ambassador-USA). Leaders would be incapable of calculating for consequences if they were unable to *see* (Ambassador-USA). These conditions roughly equated to what Zeni *et al.* (2016) reports as distortion, and leads to unethical decision-making.

Leaders needed to be able to filter out *noise*. MP-UK believed it was a singular contextual constraint to ethical leadership. In politics and government people had agendas (Ambassador-USA), which meant competing interests, and could involve pressure to support a disparate government view (MP-UK). Charity Head-USA concurred and lamented that politics operated in a compromise system. Ambassador-USA summarised the unique pressures:

> *"The easy thing is to quit, the easy thing is to walk away… the hard thing is to stay and either continue that fight or save yourself… for the next fight where you might be able to make a difference… that's the real ethical issue that you face… the higher up you get the more you have to make that decision… you don't win every fight and sometimes you shouldn't win.. and not every fight is worth… everything".*

Indeed, leaders had to contend with extrinsic influences, but they also had to contend with inner contradiction. Eberlin and Tatum (2005) noted that the decision-making process could be hampered by *cognitive dissonance*. For instance, Charity Head-UK admitted that sometimes his decision-making process could take weeks:

> *"Because one has to weigh up all the consequences and when you have formed an idea… on somebody or some policy or whatever it is and then… other stuff becomes apparent and you change tack".*

Whilst this may appear as indecisive, it was not, according to Brooks (2011) . Indecisives were thought to labour over decisions, focusing on the worst-case scenario. As reported by Dane and Sonenshein (2015) perhaps Charity Head-UK was simply using the time for *attunement*? Or rather, allowing for Shanteau's (1988) six strategies to overcome self- recognised cognitive limitations. He was making adjustments (responding to environmental feedback); relying on others (gaining feedback from others); learning from past decisions (from both success and failure); using informal decision aids (recording decisions to avoid bias); avoiding large mistakes (getting to a decision that is close enough) and finally; dividing and conquering (break large problems into smaller parts). However, there were also times when cognitive limitations and lack of attunement had serious implications.

Lt-General-UK believed prevarication to be worse than not making a decision; it was uncomfortable, a different type of pressure. Although, Lt-General-UK claimed that maintaining the status quo was better than an uncertain future, Lt-General-USA was very clear:

> *"No decision, is a decision…no action, no direction is a moral statement, because people will act based on how they interpreted the fact that you did not make a decision…Often, if you don't tell someone*

no they will interpret that as acceptable… you don't' find out what's wrong till after you've not made the decision… I am extraordinarily cognisant that if I don't make the right decision here I am going to affect the behaviour of all the soldiers".

Indecision had more serious consequences, it was worse than a bad decision according to Ambassador-USA. Over-analysis and the over-playing of ethics could result in ethical decision-making paralysis. Similarly to the work of Elaydi (2006) it was found to be a debilitating phenomenon, obsessional and paralysing. Doubt and self-doubt were thought to constrain according to Lt-General-USA, Vicar-General-USA and Principal-UK, and would result in leaders avoiding making difficult decisions (Lt-General-USA). On review, the data were contradictory, Vicar-General-USA believed that doubt could actually enable ethical decision-making; he contended "*that you cannot act without doubt… you have to resolve that doubt…so one can act.*" As such, the doubting process provided opportunity for resoned deliberation.

5.5 Organisational (meso) awareness

Thus far the data has focused on personal or intrinsic leader foundations as related to the research objectives. In this section the data will show that leaders articulated responsibility beyond self. This extended to the motivation and mechanisms leaders used to enable ethical followers, and as corollary the ethical organisation. The data has not been organised in the categories depicted in Figure 4: Comparison of most significant enablers, but was meaningfully and discreetly organised to fall into the overall framework discussed in section 5.3. As indicated earlier, this research diverges from current trends by focusing on *what* leaders understood regarding their organisations and *how* they overcame and promoted ideal pro-social organisational behaviour. Leadership has been shown to be an ethical endeavour, now it will be presented as a people-oriented endeavour.

5.5.1 Enabling ethical followership

Similarly to the seminal work of Treviño *et al.* (2003) ethical leaders were reported as being concerned for people. All but Vicar-General-USA described leadership and ethical leadership as people-orientated. According to Resick *et al.* (2006) leader possessed an awareness of how their actions impacted upon others; social power was used to serve the collective. This is not dissimilar to the view of Eisenbeiß (2012) who saw this orientation as concern for the welfare of society and community. In accordance with Treviño *et al.* (2003) , Resick *et al.* (2006) and Van Wart (2014) Ambassador-USA, Charity Head-UK and MP-UK presented as socially salient individuals with a concern for others. Indeed, Ambassador-USA and Charity Head-UK were notably unconcerned for self.

> *"I think the other key… element of… leadership is that they have to know that it's not all about you…I think that's a critical part" (Ambassador-USA).*

Just over half of the respondents (Lt-General-USA, Ambassador-USA, Charity head-USA, MP-UK, Charity Head-UK and Principal-UK) indicated that *selflessness* was an important leader characteristic. Interestingly, Ciulla (1995) and Stone and Patterson (2005) had reported selflessness as a quality seen in servant leaders. Certainly, *altruism* followed by *trust* as seen in Figure 3 and *service* were what Stone and Patterson (2005) described as crossovers. Altruism could be framed in several ways, it could be considered psychological and sociological, explained in philosophical terms such as *moral altruism* (Kanungo and Mendonca, 1996), or thought to have deontological roots (Ciulla, 2005). It was an internal state concerning pro-social behaviour and the antithesis of self-interest (Ciulla, 2005, Price, 2006, Price, 2008). It could also be rationalised through the lens of virtue ethics (love – for thy neighbour) and religion. According to Johnson (2012) high performing leaders were altruistically orientated on an individual, group/organisation and societal level. Indeed, it could be argued that the sectors in this study enabled leader altruism because they possessed the potential to attract a certain type of person (see section 5.5.2.2).

Whilst Ambassador-USA and MP-UK agreed that particular settings promoted virtuosity, they believed that the political environment did not. MP-UK was unequivocal:

> *"Most people start off as quite altruistic and what happens is the system sort of bends them out of shape over time... not all of them by any means, and there are plenty of people who have been here... I mean you have got the Frank Fields of the world who are upright and withstand the pressure".*

> *"It doesn't matter what profession you are in ... banking, law, government, soldiering... there is often a dominant semi-cynical vein".*

According to Ciulla (1995) truly self-sacrificial leaders would choose jobs where they would find no benefit so as to 'give themselves over totally to serving the wants of others' (p327). Altruism was supposed to be a wholly selfless enterprise. However the *hedonistic paradox* questions the legitimacy of altruism (Kanungo and Mendonca, 1996, Mendonca and Kanungo, 2007), because acting for the benefit others could result in happiness for the self, therefore it was not considered *genuine* altruism. Despite this, I believe Ambassador-USA and MP-UK displayed genuine moral altruism. This is further supported by to Kanungo and Mendonca (1996) who note that 'motivational force' was derived from 'the internalized social responsibility norm' (p40). Resick *et al.* (2006) agree; altruism is central in developing *community/people orientation* (p347), and thus enhances commitment and motivation (Ruiz *et al.*, 2011, Den Hartog, 2015).

According to Ruiz *et al.* (2011) the relationship between leader and follower beyond the transactional remains underexplored. Ambassador-USA, Charity Head-USA and Archbishop-UK characterised their leadership as being in partnership with others. For both educators the relationship with followers was based upon learning and growth. The data broadly supported the views of Mahsud *et al.* (2010) who found that ethical leaders were interested in supporting, developing and assisting followers. Charity Head-USA, Charity Head-UK, Headmaster-USA and Principal-UK described their leadership as collaborative, with Headmaster-USA noting that collaboration strengthened his leadership. Indeed, collaborative decision-making required interaction with others (MP-UK

and Charity Head-UK). Often; alternative views helped solve problems (Lt-General-USA, Headmaster-USA and Principal-UK). Ideas were shared (Charity Head-UK) and all opinions valued (Charity Head-USA). Collegial and democratic decision-making encouraged consensus (Charity Head-USA and Principal-UK). Principal-UK underlined her approach:

> "Being valued is so important to all of us isn't it? So valuing other people… and their opinions or what they do or who they are".

As such, follower perceptions and their understandings were of prime importance to Lt-General-USA Charity Head-USA, Headmaster-USA and Principal-UK. This appeared emblematic of a democratic approach to leadership, where all would be given power and a voice in the decision-making process. According to De Hoogh and Den Hartog (2008) and Piccolo *et al.* (2010) voluntary organisations tend to follow a democratic ideology, which included job autonomy, meaningfulness at work and fostering organisational citizenship. Indeed, the views here measured well against previous data (section 5.4.2.4) where support and advice from others was a key enabler to leading ethically. Overall, the data remained indicative of the high quality leader-follower relationship necessary for leader success, as noted by Walumbwa *et al.* (2011) . In congruence with Ruiz *et al.* (2011) the data appeared to show the caring side of leaders, which included desiring and getting the best from followers. The literature appeared congruent with the general approach noted in the data, relationships were built upon reciprocal social exchange and trust (Walumbwa *et al.*, 2011). Leaders possessed the skill, opportunity and confidence to reveal and express their relations-orientated behaviour (Mahsud *et al.*, 2010).

5.5.1.1 Influencing and role modelling as embedding mechanisms

Leadership was often classified as a process of *influence.* Indeed, influencing was found to be an important aspect of leadership (Charity Head-USA, Headmaster-USA, MP-UK and Charity Head-UK). But in contrast to current fixations regarding task and goal, the leaders in this study were very accommodating regarding the *how* and *why* of this relational element of leadership (see section 2.2 detailing how

the current taxonomy does little to explicate *how* leaders, particularly ethical leaders might lead). For example, followers were nudged and *encouraged* (Charity Head-USA and Headmaster-USA), *persuaded* (Charity Head-UK) or *convinced* according to Headmaster-USA in a variety of ways. Winning hearts and minds (Archbishop-UK), empowering (Headmaster-USA and Lt-General-UK) and inspiring (Headmaster-USA and Archbishop-UK) followers were just some of the approaches leaders would employ (Headmaster-USA and Archbishop-UK). Zhu *et al.* (2004) explored how important empowerment was for followers, it enabled individuals to find the 'meaning in their jobs', supported 'respect' and 'human dignity', and allowed for 'growth and confidence' (p20). Heres and Lasthuizen (2012) believed that empowerment engendered independence; followers were encouraged to discover the boundaries of appropriate behaviour for themselves. Similarly to the views of Brown *et al.* (2005) and Resick *et al.* (2006) these types of empowerment strategies could be considered features of transformational leadership, or charismatic leadership relating to *idealised influence* (see section 2.2.1). Perhaps, as Howell and Avolio (1992) suggested the leaders were *ethical charismatics*? Extraordinary individuals, with high moral credentials who acted ethically as a strong role model for followers (Northouse, 2010, Yukl, 2013). In congruence with findings from Toor and Ofori (2009) , I believe that the leadership described here was positively aligned with *idealised influence*.

Interestingly, half of the leaders (Lt-General-USA, Ambassador-USA, Charity Head-USA, Headmaster-USA and Archbishop-UK) stated that the most significant way to influence collective behaviour was through leader positive role modelling. Given the accepted definition of ethical leadership (Brown *et al.*, 2005) it was clear that leaders were expected to behave, and *be seen* to behave in a certain way. Leader behaviour had to reflect ideal, pro-social ethical behaviour (MP-UK). In accordance with Treviño *et al.* (2003) and Frisch and Huppenbauer (2014) Lt-General-USA, Ambassador-USA, Charity Head-USA, Vicar-General-USA and Headmaster-USA agreed that ethical leaders role modelled ethical behaviour. Lt-General-USA believed that ethical leaders had to be seen as morally correct and that behaviour also had to meet certain organisational expectations. Headmaster-

USA further explained that teachers were ethical role models. In keeping with the views of Mayer *et al.* (2010) and Heres and Lasthuizen (2012) everyday leader behaviour had the most significant effect on follower conduct.

In accordance with scholars (Treviño *et al.*, 2000, Heres and Lasthuizen, 2012) the leaders in this study appeared to have a fulsome understanding of how their words and deeds were understood by followers. Much as leaders learned their values from others (see sections 5.4.2.1, 5.4.2.2, 5.4.2.3 and 5.4.2.4); followers also learned their values from leaders (Mihelič *et al.*, 2010). As previously noted, scholars had relied upon social learning and social exchange (reciprocity) theories to explain this relationship (see section 2.4.1). But to be a role model followers had to *notice* the leader, they had to 'be attractive and credible role models who elicit followers' attention to messages about ethics' (Jordan *et al.*, 2011, p666). Indeed, Ambassador-USA appeared to understand this, noting that when shared values were reciprocated they would be reinforced and promoted. Indeed, Schaubroeck *et al.* (2012) described role modelling as a *deliberate* embedding mechanism. Whilst this sounds premeditated, I contend that the leaders in this study simply went about their business, ethically aware that their behaviour influenced others.

5.5.1.2 Communication, mission and vision

Communication, albeit a social performance skill was another such embedding mechanism according to Northouse (2010) . Whilst Ambassador-USA, Headmaster-USA, Charity Head-UK and Archbishop-UK singled out communication as key when talking about their leadership, it wasn't effective unless it was clear according to Lt-General-USA, Ambassador-USA, Charity-Head-USA, Headmaster-USA and Charity Head-UK. Charity Head-UK noted that:

> *"When you don't communicate it goes wrong because people misunderstand and, and we get frustrated … at the end of the day its always communication because we haven't articulated it direct to the person. The second you start allowing other people to interpret it, then you have people who think 'I'll protect Charity Head-UK from this bit of knowledge', or 'I will interpret what he said in my way and then eventually it comes back to you and you go… why didn't you do what I actually describe".*

Half of the leaders in this study (Lt-General-USA, Vicar-general-USA, Charity Head-UK and Principal-UK) were cognisant that followers often saw things differently. A further six (Lt-General-USA, Charity Head-UK, Vicar-General-USA, Headmaster-USA, Charity Head-UK and MP-UK) recognised the importance of listening, with MP-UK sensitive to the views of others. Followers had to have confidence in leader decision-making (Principal-UK), and understand reasoning and outcomes according to Lt-General-USA, Ambassador-USA, Headmaster-USA and Lt-General-UK. The data compared favourably with the findings of Heres and Lasthuizen (2012) , in that ethical leaders communicated and justified their decisions. To illustrate, Lt-General-UK stated:

> *"At this stage of my career… I mean for the last fifteen years, I have been at the stage where the decisions I make are not enacted by me. I am responsible for having made the decision and then managing the consequences of that decision. It's the organisation that actually delivers the decision for me…. Therefore [they've] got to understand the context and the logic of it".*

Good communication enabled followers to do their jobs honestly and well (Ambassador-USA), whilst poor communication resulted in others being reluctant to contribute in future decision-making (Principal-UK). Communication was understood to flow in both directions. Brown and Treviño (2006) , Walumbwa and Schaubroeck (2009) , Piccolo *et al.* (2010) and Mayer *et al.* (2012) relate to this in terms of closeness between leader and follower and the facilitation of follower 'voice'. Lt-General-USA explained:

> *"If you are not up and down the line of different levels you can't get a feel… effective leaders have to find ways to make information more permeable coming through that isolation membrane… as you move up on the pedestal fewer people want to talk to you… you begin to forget to look down and pull information up".*

But communication was also fundamental in the transmission of organisational vision (Charity Head-UK) and leader expectations, and crucial in the articulation of values (Ambassador-USA). Similarly to Kalshoven *et al.* (2011a) and Eisenbeiß (2012) my ethical leaders were adept at clarifying expectations. Whilst Ruiz *et al.* (2011) argued that the communication of values were important for

perceptibility, Treviño *et al.* (2000) believed that *moral managers* needed to think carefully about how best to inculcate the values necessary to guide the decisions and actions of others. Indeed, mission and purpose were also considered as instruments available to leaders to embed ethical climate and culture and according to Jeavons (2005) they were key leader obligations.

Purpose was important for half of the respondents (Charity Head-USA, Headmaster-USA, Charity Head-UK, MP-UK and Principal-UK); remarking that it had to be focused to avoid conflicts in understandings. Mission had to be similarly, direct (Lt-General-USA, MP-UK and Archbishop-UK), decisive (Lt-General-USA), task orientated and clear (Headmaster-USA). Collectively, they embodied the organisation's public statement regarding ethical conscientiousness (Sims, 1991), and represented the organisation's 'benchmark' for 'ethical excellence', whereby a 'consensual mission' created an 'ethical culture' (Whetstone, 2005, p371-372). Whilst mission and purpose were significant enablers to both decision-making and ethical decision-making according to Lt-General-USA, Charity Head-USA, Vicar-General-USA, Charity Head-UK and Principal-UK, Headmaster-USA stated that mission also had to be virtuous.

This was conspicuous comment considering the organisational contexts in this study. The leaders here represented different *worlds* than those generally found in the ethical leadership and ethical decision-making literature (see sections 1.4.3, 1.5.1, 4.1.4 and 5.5.2.2 for full explication). The data suggests that leadership in these unique contexts possessed a moral imperative. Organisations such as these were more socially responsible (Rothschild and Milofsky, 2006), possessed a highly ethical mandate (Eisenbeiß and Giessner, 2012), or pre-existing 'high internalized obligation' (De Hoogh and Den Hartog, 2008, p298). As outlined by Eisenbeiß and Giessner (2012) the leaders in this study could be thought to engage in both formal and informal 'communication mechanisms' (p15) to embed organisational ethical awareness. These were highly visible, continuous interactive communication techniques which when combined with socially motivated organisational roots, supported institutional ethics.

5.5.1.3 Responsibility

Responsibility has been presented as an intrinsic concern (micro), but it was also a macro concern in terms of the leader's responsibility to society at large (discussed in section 5.6). In this section it is offered as a meso concern, to do with responsibility to the organisation and those within it. Lt-General-USA, Ambassador-USA, Charity Head-USA and Charity Head-UK understood it as a universal concept which permeated throughout the organisation. Responsibility appeared to be multi-dimensional, with roots in philosophical and post-modern traditions. It was more than just the prevention of harm, it encompassed responsibility to others, responsibility for their welfare, and the creation of a healthy organisational environment (Starratt, 2004). For Knights and O'Leary (2006) it was to do with the *Other*, but not an accident; as opposed to 'the pre-occupation with self' (p134). It was conceptualised as sitting in the deontological domain concerning the duty of the leader toward followers (Bowie, 2000, Resick *et al.*, 2006), but also understood through the lens of virtue ethics (Arjoon, 2000) or eastern philosophy (Ketola, 2007). On aggregate, the data appeared to reflect two of the five facets of leader social responsibility namely *internal obligation*, and *concern for others* (De Hoogh and Den Hartog, 2008)*.* Both of these concepts measured favourably against the moral person and moral manager aspects of ethical leadership (Treviño *et al.*, 2000). Whilst both Charity Heads were concerned for the welfare of others; Charity-Head-USA, Vicar-General-USA, Archbishop-UK and Principal-UK also felt responsible for helping and supporting those they led.

> *"The Charity… I just see it as a massive responsibility… I'm driven by… trying to help people" (Charity Head-UK).*

However, responsibility could also be a burden (Lt-General-USA, Charity Head-USA and Charity Head-UK). Both Charity-Heads noted that being founder and figurehead of their organisations, solely responsible for reputation and success, weighed heavily. They faced different challenges to other organisational leaders, even other charity leaders. Their leadership experience was different because they

were the charity (Charity Head-USA and Charity Head-UK); neither were chosen or selected as leader. Indeed, scholars have advised leaders to accept and embrace responsibility (Thomas *et al.*, 2004, Johnson, 2012). Whilst, six leaders acknowledged that they would always take final responsibility despite the outcome (Ambassador-USA, Charity Head-USA, Headmaster-USA, Lt-General-UK, Charity Head-UK and MP-UK), Lt-General-USA, Lt-General-UK and MP-UK claimed they would step up when others would, or could not. This data supports the work of Mostovicz *et al.* (2011) , where ethical leaders accept blame in the face of failure, even when the failure was not theirs. Once again, this demonstrated genuine moral altruism. Charity Head-UK noted that:

> *"Taking responsibility off other people… by leadership… by saying… I'll take that… I'll take the hit on it".*

But responsibility also extended to holding others accountable according to Lt-General-USA and Charity Head-USA. Duignan (2006) believed ethical leaders must 'challenge unethical and immoral policies and practices when they find them' (p11). As such, the data appeared to imply that the leaders in this study demonstrated moral courage. According to Ciulla (1998) and Eisenbeiß (2012) ethical leaders fully accepted their moral responsibilities (see section 5.4.1.1 for a realted discussion on presence and the enactment of moral courage).

In correspondence with Werhane *et al.* (2014) six leaders (Ambassador-USA, Charity Head-USA, Vicar-General-USA, Headmaster-USA, Lt-General-UK and MP-UK) agreed that responsibility also concerned decision-making and ethical decision-making. Responsibility *meant* consequences according to Vicar-General-USA. Indeed, the majority of leaders (Lt-General-USA, Ambassador-USA, Charity Head-USA, Vicar-General-USA, Headmaster-USA, Lt-General-UK, MP-UK and Principal-UK) confirmed that an awareness of consequences was required in order to weigh up the risks when making ethical decisions.

> *"You have to be aware of the consequences of what you are doing… sometimes you will take a look at it and you'll kind of go, I'm not particularly keen…the great consequences on this…not everything rises to the level of the ethics…not there in every single decision you make,*

but there is a consequences to every decision you make" (Ambassador-USA).

"Every decision you make has an equal reaction, so you know...if I say, no, I'm not going to do this, then what happens next time" (Charity Head-USA).

Ethical decisions were described by half of the leaders as decisions that had consequences for someone (Ambassador-USA, Charity Head-USA, Headmaster-USA, Lt-General-UK and Charity Head-UK). This data appeared congruent with the views of Messick and Bazerman (1996) who stated that 'major decisions have a spectrum of consequences, not just one, and especially not just the intended consequences' (p10). For Lt-General-USA and MP-UK the level and type of consequences were crucial. Consequences had to be considered for all levels of the organisation (Lt-General-USA and Principal-UK). Ambassador-USA, Charity Head-USA and MP-UK also noted that consequences could be unintended and high. For both military leaders and both church leaders professional responsibility included the preservation of life. Lt-General-USA, Vicar-General-USA and Principal-UK were also concerned with mitigating impacts. For Ambassador-USA, Charity Head-UK and Archbishop-UK this meant the human costs encompassing self and others had to be taken into account. The data were synonymous with Morris and McDonald (1995) , Frey (2000) , Butterfield *et al.* (2000) , May and Pauli (2002) , Brown and Treviño (2006) , Elm and Radin (2012) and Heyler *et al.* (2016) who had also found MC to be a significant factor and parity with the specific components of Jones's (1991) Issue-Contingent Model (see also section 2.5.1).

Data were less supportive of the Person-Situation Interactionist Model favoured by Treviño (1986) . Like most others it was predicated on the decision-maker and their cognitive processes. Here, the focus was clearly on the nature of the decision itself. As such, the data suggested leaders understood the notion of consequences in a variety of ways. Similarly to the notion of responsibility, *decision-making* responsibility appeared philosophically congruent with notions of duty and obligation toward others and their rights (Whetstone, 2001, Plinio, 2009) and indicative of a deontological approach (Knights and O'Leary, 2006). As

expected, decision-making also appeared consequentialist, for example, Ambassador-USA stated that consequences *had to be good*. Therefore, data relating to the responsibility element of decision-making supported the tripartite philosophical approach proposed by Whetstone (2001, 2005).

Overall, the data here has shown that leaders took all aspects of responsibility seriously, easily encompassing Starratt's (2004) *responsibility as, responsibility to, and responsibility for* approach. Despite the fact that the leaders in this study understood the concept of responsibility to extend well beyond the confines of self and organisation, few scholars (Mihelič *et al.*, 2010) have made connections regarding the role of responsibility in ethical leadership and ethical decision-making.

5.5.2 Enabling ethical organisational disposition

Whilst the '*right*' moral conscience was necessary to enable an ethical leader (section 5.4.2.5), the '*right*' environment was crucial for all to prosper (Charity Head-USA and Headmaster-USA). Environment was understood to be the organisational professional setting, its culture in relation to bedrock ethics, values and standards, and included ethical climate. Both charity leaders agreed, noting that their leadership was underpinned by ethics and ethical intentions were reinforced internally within the organisation. Whilst this appeared reflective of the *moral person, moral manager* aspects of ethical leadership as envisaged by Treviño *et al.* (2000) , Mayer *et al.* (2010) and Ruiz *et al.* (2011) , my data extended to encompass the *moral organisation*. According to Treviño *et al.* (2003) executives knew the importance of institutionalising values and reinforcing them. In line with Grojean *et al.* (2004) and Mayer *et al.* (2010) Lt-General-USA, Ambassador-USA, Headmaster-USA and Lt-General-UK also understood the necessity of engendering culture and setting organisational tone. For Lt-General-USA, Ambassador-USA, Charity Head-USA, and Charity Head-UK this could in turn direct collective organisational behaviour. Brown and Treviño (2006) credited ethical leaders as capable of propagating 'positive ethics-related attitudes and behaviors' (p601).

This was a view supported by the data; Lt-General-USA, MP-UK, Archbishop-UK and Principal-UK agreed that ethical leadership positively influenced ethical organisational culture. Similarly to Mayer *et al.* (2009) Ambassador-USA believed ethical standards *trickled down*.

Fortunately, ethical leaders had a range of instruments at their disposal beyond those already discussed (see sections 5.5.1.1 and 5.5.1.2). For instance, Mayer *et al.* (2010) and Toor and Ofori (2009) found that organisations had informal, formal and institutional procedures (surveillance and sanction mechanisms) to exert moral force. Not only did ethical infrastructures exist to establish clear expectations and influence behaviour, but they were also important for the maintenance and development of ethical leadership (Brown and Treviño, 2006, Eisenbeiß and Giessner, 2012). For instance, the Military had a stated set of core organisational values (Lt-General-USA), and went to great lengths to help people understand morals and ethics (Lt-General-USA and Lt-General-UK). They helped develop staff, and worked hard to support ethical decision-making (Lt-General-USA and Lt-General-UK). Systems were set up to provide people with the cultural and moral reference points needed to reinforce and support their moral development (Lt-General-UK). Programmes were thought to inculcate (Lt-General-USA), cement and condition (Lt-General-UK) organisational values and institutional pillars. Doctrine, espoused and stated values were put into context and followers encouraged to autonomously improve (Lt-General-USA). Dickson *et al.* (2001) praised the US Army for their approach to establishing strong ethical climates, and that other organisations ought to follow this lead.

As recommended by Johnson (2012) , Lt-General-USA agreed that sustaining a healthy ethical climate was considered continuous, ongoing *internal work*; organisational culture had to grow and develop. Although it could change according to Lt-General-USA, Ambassador-USA, Lt-General-UK and Charity Head-UK, both military leaders agreed that this would not be easy. It was clear from the data here and in the previous section (5.5.1) that the organisational leaders in this study went beyond the traditional command-and-control, albeit transactional

approaches admonished by Tyler (2005) . Lt-General-USA noted how the military *re-blued* their personnel. Like guns, soldiers were metaphorically refreshed, restored, retreated and reconditioned. They were taught about doing the right thing; moral judgment and values were reinforced. Every course was values-based and real-life examples used as teaching tools (Lt-General-USA). Corresponding with the views of Eisenbeiß and Giessner (2012) and Den Hartog (2015) the data endorsed a complementary, holistic approach to the institutionalisation of ethics. Unlike Lager (2011) the focus was on changing and sustaining mindsets as suggested by Werhane *et al.* (2014) as opposed to the enforcement of control measures.

According to the data, people were attracted to organisations which reflected their own standards; where they were surrounded and supported by like-minded people (Headmaster-USA). Leadership reflected the constituency (Lt-General-UK). For instance, schools sought virtuous and ethical people because teachers were considered ethical role models (Headmaster-USA). Not-for-profits attracted a different type of leader with different characteristics suited to the setting (Rothschild and Milofsky, 2006, Gill, 2011). Similarly to Grojean *et al.* (2004) Lt-General-USA and Ambassador-USA remarked on the importance of organisational fit, noting that when values were incongruent good people moved out of organisations. Moreover, ethical credibility was too important to stay for the wrong reasons according to Principal-UK. In fact, one of the leaders in this study had resigned on such a principle. In an ideal world leader and organisational ethics would match (Headmaster-USA), or be similar (Vicar-General-USA and Charity Head-UK); but they had to be shared according to Lt-General-USA, Headmaster-USA and Principal-UK.

> *"One starts with core values, then it is all very well to say you have them, but how do you actually detect whether people in your organisation are just paying lip service or are they delivering within and… not delivering discreetly, but that it is integrated…into the whole culture of the organisation, and therefore becomes part of it"* *(Principal-UK).*

Both charity leaders believed their leadership to be underpinned by ethics to the extent that those ethical intentions were reinforced internally within the organisation. Charity Head-UK believed that his staff possessed a moral compass, and that they were dedicated '*over and above*' to maintain the credibility of the organisation. He also felt that:

> "*It's easier to be an ethical leader with a moral compass if you're working in an organisation like this… because it's what you do*".

Whilst leaders had identified a selection of personal values (see Figure 3), certain values also appeared organisational. *Trust* was considered key (Lt-General-USA and Headmaster-USA), as was *respect*. Trust was important for relationship building, necessary for follower commitment and according to Grojean *et al.* (2004) essential for follower commitment and a strong ethical climate. The leadership described by my leaders also appeared to be underpinned by self-respect (Archbishop-UK), and respect for others; but this had to be reciprocal (Ambassador-USA, Charity Head-USA, Headmaster-USA and Principal-UK). In treating others with respect leaders preserved dignity (Headmaster-USA and Archbishop-UK). Indeed, the data were synchronous with the findings of Brown *et al.* (2005) , whereby ethical leadership was positively related to *interactional fairness and trust,* the notions of which were built upon respect and dignity. As such, organisational members were seen as human beings with imperfections (Ambassador-USA and Headmaster-USA). Archbishop-UK believed that the church had a unique understanding and summarised thus:

> '*The Church has been prophetic… saying to people of the Catholic faith and not of the Catholic faith…when you come here there will be an environment in which you are respected, in which your contribution is celebrated and we can all flourish… if we subscribe to the ideal*".

5.5.2.1 Rules and ethical codes

As noted earlier (see section 5.5.1.3) responsibility was highly significant in this study. It was a multi-dimensional concept which included *internal obligation, concern for others* and *concern about consequences*, now it would extend to the remaining facets of the social responsibility framework as described by De Hoogh

and Den Hartog (2008) concerning *moral-legal standards.* Data here would suggest that leaders considered responsibility in terms of accountability toward a professional ethic, as typified by Shapiro and Stefkovich (2011) and Shapiro and Gross (2013) . This collectively concerned the standards of the profession, ethical principles, codes of ethics, ethics of the community, professional judgment, and professional decision-making, and encompassed the professional obligations of the leaders (educational). Indeed, leadership required leaders to be aware of, and use every organisational support mechanism at their disposal according to Lt-General-USA and Principal-UK. Therefore, the focus now switches to how leaders recognise and understand more formal mechanisms; that is the rules, laws, ethical codes, and standards of conduct, guidelines, policies and procedures (Toor and Ofori, 2009, Mayer *et al.*, 2010) necessary to institute ethical standards.

Many professions had rules (Ambassador-USA) but they were different depending upon the type of organisation (Principal-UK). According to General-USA and Ambassador-USA rules could appear law-like in nature i.e. as formal and legalistic; exist as professional guidelines, or (ethical) codes of conduct. This meant that behavioural standards and values were set out for leaders (Lt-General-USA and Lt-General-UK). For instance, Chapter 3 of The British Army guide entitled '*Developing Leaders: A British Army Guide*' (2014) has comprehensive behavioural expectations. According to Lt-General-USA the entire military system is designed to promote ethical behaviour; it is supported and insulated by structures for purposes which include regulation, oversight and compliance.

Ambassador-USA and Headmaster-USA and Lt-General-UK believed that codes of conduct were necessary for instituting and enforcing ethical standards. However, not all organisations had strong ethical standards (Ambassador-USA). Ethical codes were often exploited, circumnavigated or ignored (Principal-UK). Furthermore, according to Lt-General-USA and Ambassador-USA when rules became punishments this made them ripe for abuse. Although compliance programmes were thought to have a positive impact they did not on their own guarantee ethical behaviour (Treviño and Brown, 2004, Johnson, 2012, Werhane *et*

al., 2014). Compliance measures had little *ethical force*, and penalties were often factored in as the consequences of getting caught. Overall, deontological compliance measures appeared to be used in response to organisational dishonesty, they were less likely to be used as a preventative or embedding measure.

Rules were similarly contentious. To be effective they had to be universally clear (Ambassador-USA and Charity Head-USA), directly communicated and lived (Ambassador-USA). Rules were fundamental and important (Lt-General-USA and Ambassador-USA), and had to be followed (Lt-General-USA). Whilst rules were thought to support organisational mission according to Charity Head-USA, they were also particularly useful for supporting policy decisions (Ambassador-USA). Rules, along with professional and ethical guidelines were credited with both enabling decision-making (Vicar-General-USA, Headmaster-USA, Lt-General-UK and Charity Head-UK) and ethical decision-making for Lt-General-USA, Headmaster-USA, Lt-General-UK and Principal-UK. However, there were times when they were too tight and didn't fit and constrained (Ambassador-USA). Both governmental respondents believed that in certain circumstances rule breaking was acceptable.

> *"When you decide to break the rules, you think it's important"*
> *(Ambassador-USA).*

According to Vardaman *et al.* (2014) 'pro-social rule breaking' was not underpinned by 'deviant intentions' (p108) but typified the 'trade-off between deontological and utilitarian approaches toward decision-making' (p110). Indeed, the benevolent (socially motivated) organisational purposes of the sectors in this study meant that the ends might in fact justify the means. According to Shapiro and Gross (2013) rule breaking manifested as a result of tensions between the leaders personal values and the organisation's professional code. Whilst Lt-General-USA and Principal-UK did not advocate rule breaking, both acknowledged that policies and rules needed to be dynamic and able to change with the times to support the organisational environment (Lt-General-USA).

Leaders were equally hesitant regarding laws, which were thought to concern contractual obligation and compliance (Headmaster-USA), in the for-profit sector (MP-UK). As highlighted by Kaptein *et al.* (2005) and Pelletier and Bligh (2006) , Ambassador-USA reinforced the notion that in politics and government this concerned legal and regulatory control. Laws and legal frameworks were credited as both decision-making (MP-UK) and ethical decision-making enablers (Lt-General-USA, Vicar-General-USA and Principal-UK). However, Lt-General-USA warned that despite the fact they might appear inflexible; laws, like other surveillance and sanction mechanisms could be ignored or (mis) interpreted:

> *"The hard piece is when you get people interpreting or ignoring certain parts of the law, whether it's an international law of land warfare, whether it's a policy that guides who is a combatant and who is not… it is very difficult to hold these guys responsible… when other people can drop a bomb… and they are not held accountable at all for that or the collateral damage" (Lt-General-USA).*

> *"Although there's clearly strong, strong moral leadership and less capable leadership even in the banking sector, whereas, some banks were prepared for their people to break the law" (Lt-General-UK).*

In parity with Johnson (2012) the data showed that leaders appeared cynical and sceptical. Accordingly laws, like ethical codes, rules, policies and practices could be broken. Despite the fact that legal violations would result in serious reprimands as mentioned earlier, law and order climates were thought to discourage unethical behaviour. But they differed from the other enforcement systems in that they would not engender organisational commitment or psychological wellbeing.

5.5.2.2 Between and across the sectors; similarities and differences

Whilst this section will present and summarise the most pertinent data regarding the *worlds* researched in this study, cross-references have also been made to specific theme related data found in other parts of the analysis and discussion. On review, the characteristics of the environment, organisational mandate and stakeholders were crucial influences on ethical leadership.

Similarly to Jeavons (2005) and Rothschild and Milofsky (2006) leaders identified fundamental distinctions between the types of people who led organisations, leadership and the operational environment; easily distinguishing between for-profit and not-for-profit leadership. Opinions were also offered on other types of organisations and agencies including the US State Department, the Department of Justice, large corporations, and the media industry in conjunction with their own, and others' sectors. Leaders were asked three questions concerning sectoral differences (*Appendix B – Leader Interview Schedule*; Q15: *Do you think that your organisation faces the same ethical challenges as others?* Q16: *Do you think that some types of organisations are more ethically disposed than others?* and Q17: *Are some organisations more difficult/easy to be ethical in?*). How leaders viewed the for-profit sector has been summarised in Figure 5:
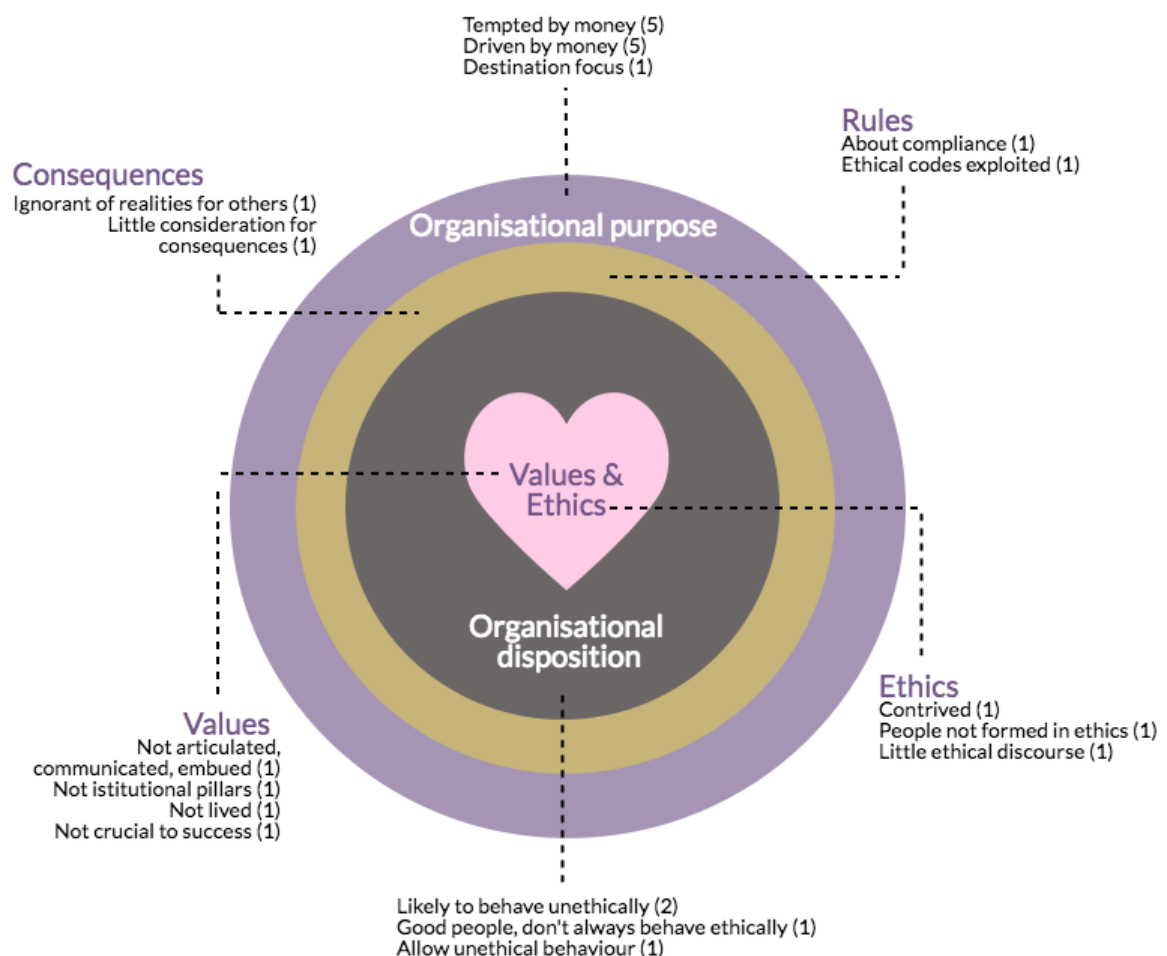
Figure 5: For-profit sectors as seen by the not-for-profit leaders

Treviño *et al.* (1998) found that efficiency was the criterion which drove the ethical climate. Like April *et al.* (2010, 2011) a *bottom-line mentality,* or emphasis on profits at the expense of service was both the dominant organisational driver according to Ambassador-USA and the chief stumbling block to leading ethically in a for-profit according to the leaders here. If Figure 5 is consulted, for-profit organisational purpose overwhelmingly concerned money. Outcomes were the bottom-line, not people according to Vicar-General-USA, Lt-General-UK and MP-UK:

> *"If you are a banker you have to spend less time worrying about your own people because they're incredibly highly educated and motivated and self-willed, self possessed and ambitious... the output is the bottom line" (Lt-General-UK).*

Ambassador-USA, Charity Head-USA, Headmaster-USA and Principal-UK also believed that satisfying shareholders, i.e. providing a financial dividend (Charity Head-USA) was a key driver for unethical leaders. Rewards in the form of personal financial gain, or greed in the form of high executive salaries were also an issue (Lt-General-USA and Charity Head-USA). High personal and organisational rewards were needed to offset risks and constraints (Lt-General-USA). For-profit leadership was a Faustian Pact (Archbishop-UK).

Money would always present as a challenge according to Lt-General-USA, Charity Head-USA, Headmaster-USA, and Archbishop-UK. But Lt-General-USA believed that the military were insulated from the temptations faced by other organisations; they did not face the same greed and profit decisions because money was not the barometer of success. Leaders in pursuit of either personal or organisational financial gain were more likely to overlook ethics according to seven respondents (both military, both Charity Heads, both educators and Archbishop-UK). And more likely to behave unethically or abuse their positions (Headmaster-USA and Lt-General-UK). Figure 5 shows that for-profits were about destination and not overly concerned about the nature of the behaviour along the way (Lt-General-USA). Some even encouraged unethical behaviour (Lt-General-UK). People were not formed in ethics (Headmaster-USA); there was no ethical

discourse (Principal-UK). Values were not articulated, communicated, nor imbued (Headmaster-USA). They were not lived because they were not crucial to organisational success (Charity Head-USA). Some may appear to be concerned with ethics, but this was only window-dressing.

In contrast, ethics was considered the 'bottom-line' in a not-for-profit according to Charity Head-USA, Lt-General-UK and Charity Head-UK.

> *"It's the bottom line and especially in a not-for-profit organisation. You are there to serve the public, and you cannot serve the public if you aren't including that as one of the top priorities of your thinking" (Charity Head-USA).*

> *"If you've got an unethical organisation that can kill people, then you've got murder squads... So, no, for this organisation [ethics] is probably fundamental, otherwise it's Hitlerian" (Lt-General-UK).*

Almost all of the leaders agreed that their professional sectors were unlike for-profits (Lt-General-USA, Ambassador-USA, Charity Head-USA, Headmaster-USA, Lt-General-UK, MP-UK, Charity Head-UK and Archbishop-UK). On analysis several of the studied sectors shared similar properties. Headmaster-USA maintained that because schools had a moral responsibility to shape the moral consciences of the young his setting had an explicit moral purpose and responsibility. The church was similarly unique, it dealt in morality and moral welfare according to both church leaders and existed for the good of all, to save souls and help people make sound decisions. It operated in conditions other organisations did not (Archbishop-UK). It was an ethical environment (Vicar-General-USA and Archbishop-UK); ethics was intrinsic (Vicar General-USA). Indeed, ethics was also the purpose of a charity (Charity Head-UK); serving the public was inherently ethical (Charity Head-USA).

Overall, the data presented schools, charities and the church as more ethically disposed and likely to attract more virtuous or ethical people according to half (Lt-General-USA, Charity Head-USA, Headmaster-USA, Charity Head-UK and Archbishop-UK). As such, it was easier to be ethical in a charity (Charity Head-UK) and the church according to Charity Head-USA, Vicar-General-USA, and Archbishop-UK. There was some support from the literature, the church like many

of the other sectors was considered a moral community according to Sama and Shoaf (2008) and thus capable of sustaining and supporting leader probity.

Lt-General-USA, Ambassador-USA, Charity Head-USA, MP-UK and Charity Head-UK also highlighted how their settings were different to each other. The military and the government had different objectives, tasks, purposes and challenges to other organisations according to Lt-General-USA, Ambassador-USA and MP-UK. Moreover, the military were similar to professions such as the police and fire departments (Lt-General-USA), where mistakes and consequences could be very great (Lt-General-USA, MP-UK). In other organisations this might cost jobs, reputation and money, but not people's lives as highlighted by Huntley (2003) . The data corresponded with the views of Zheng *et al.* (2015) who had also found decision-making in this setting highly consequential. Like Jennings and Hannah (2011) and Gill (2011) the military leaders in this study understood how lethality set them apart. Accordingly, military culture was different and unique (Lt-General-USA).

Morrell and Hartley (2006) believe the political setting to be different; politics was compliance based (see section 4.1.4 for details) and their views were supported in the data. MP-UK noted that government was diverse in task and purpose and Ambassador-USA believed politics concerned legal and regulatory control, with Charity Head-USA reporting that it concerned prevention. Decision-making could be influenced by a variety of unique pressures (MP-UK). Politics was different, but not in a positive way. People had agendas (Ambassador-USA); leaders could be driven by self-interest (Ambassador-USA and MP-UK). They were concerned for re-election, their careers or promotion, and susceptible to financial inducements (MP-UK). Political leaders sought praise and reward (Ambassador-USA). Unlike other sectors, it would appear that governmental systems did not support virtues or ethical decision-making (MP-UK); they were not valued. Very candidly, Ambassador-USA stated that government decisions were not underpinned by ethics or morals, and pessimistically argued that it was impossible to be ethical in politics. It was clear that both government representatives

understood the challenges and difficulties of maintaining a moral compass in this unique environment.

Whilst both charity leaders also identified their settings as different from not-for-profits, they made great distinction between their settings *and other charities*. Their leadership experiences were special because they were social entrepreneurial founders. As Pelletier and Bligh (2006) described; they were exceptional individuals. Not all charities were genuinely interested in social justice nor based upon morals or ethics (Charity Head-USA). Some leaders in this sector were motivated by career advancement, public praise (Charity Head-USA). In contrast, the charity leaders in this study gave the impression of being driven by the need to help others *at any cost* and unconcerned for empire or legacy building.

5.6 Societal (macro) awareness; responsibility to society

In congruence with the data in section 5.5 regarding leadership as a people orientated endeavour, Charity Head-USA, MP-UK, Principal-UK and Archbishop-UK reiterated how leadership was not about self. Whilst they typified their leadership as a collective effort (Principal-UK), including community (Charity Head-USA) and society (Vicar-General-USA), they also specified the importance of doing *good* (Lt-General-USA, MP-UK, Charity Head-UK and Archbishop-UK). Charity Head-USA, MP-UK and Principal-UK thought beyond the organisation to possible societal effects. Indeed, ethical leadership has been solidly linked to community orientation, particularly awareness of how actions might impact others (Resick *et al.*, 2006). Lt-General-USA, Charity Head-UK and Principal-UK were mindful of whom they served, *and* how the status of those affected enabled decision-making (Ambassador-USA and Principal-UK). The data suggested correlation with the concept of servant leadership, but also appealed to the welfare-driven aspects of the ethical leadership construct. As such, there was parity with aspects of responsible leadership as noted by Eisenbeiß and Brodbeck (2014) , particularly in relation to humane and citizen responsibilities (Starratt, 2005).

Leaders also noted that the decision-making aspects of ethical leadership were motivated by a moral obligation to donors and recipients (Charity Head-UK and Archbishop-UK). Lt-General-USA, Ambassador-USA and Charity Head-USA felt accountable to the public and others. Frisch and Huppenbauer (2014) have noted that the current conceptualisation of the ethical leadership construct neglect to consider *other stakeholders*. Whilst, Kalshoven *et al.* (2011a) and Eisenbeiß and Giessner (2012) had explored the tanglible and latent elements of certain societal antecedents to ethical leadership, the latter claimed that to embed ethical leadership leaders must also share their stakeholder's interests. Arguably, the leaders in this study did, and engaged in what Eisenbeiß and Giessner (2012) described as 'constant interaction with a broad group of stakeholders inside and outside the organization' (p14).

5.6.1 *Leading ethically in the current climate; understanding the environment*

Despite Poff's (2010) warnings regarding the current state of 'human engagement with the world' (p9), global moral attitudes have continued to decline (Caldwell and Anderson, 2017). Eisenbeiß and Brodbeck (2014) note that societal issues have become more important. Whilst there are challenges in every sector the stakes were higher in not-for-profits (see sections 1.4.1, 1.4.3 and 4.1.4). The leaders in this study were highly aware of the external environment in which they were operating; it was roundly acknowledged as a key constraint to ethical decision-making. Moreover, Ambassador-USA described it as *hostile*, for Headmaster-USA it was:

> *"All round us, whether it be leaders you see in the paper or just in life in general. The reality of it is that the follow through and the credibility of others continue to diminish…. Our society is not becoming more moral" (Headmaster-USA).*

Similarly to the views of Chandler (2009) Vicar-General-USA noted that *situation* and *unfamiliar contexts* were particularly unhelpful; with societal change, media pressures, and political motivations as contemporary challenges (Lt-General-USA and Charity Head-UK). The latter could come from within

government and from the public. Along with Thach and Thompson (2007) Lt-General-USA, Vicar-General-USA and Headmaster-USA acknowledged that social environmental changes impacted upon leader ethicality. These included the rise of secularity (Lt-General-USA, Vicar-General-US and Headmaster-USA), technological advances (Vicar-General-USA and Headmaster-USA), and economic demands (Charity Head-USA, Charity Head-UK and Archbishop-UK). Secularity was blamed for constraining ethical decision-making (Vicar-General-US), and for contributing to a general lack of *morality*, *decency* and *kindness* in society (Lt-General-USA and Headmaster-USA).

> *"Society has become less moral, secular even, the sense of decency and kindness has disappeared in some ways" (Headmaster-USA).*

Archbishop-UK also felt there was a rise in individualism and self-interest which counteracted utilitarian and altruistic aims; a point also noted by Ncube and Wasburn (2006) . Coupled with propaganda, populism could also influence decision-making, and as a result impacted upon national reputation (MP-UK).

Similarly to the findings of Sama and Shoaf (2008) the data indicated that society had grown to expect perfection. Although public expectations remained high, there was little forgiveness or capacity to be human (see section 5.4.2.3). People seemed preoccupied with judging others (leaders in particular) according to Lt-General-USA. Similarly, Lt-General-USA also noted that it was unwise to put leaders on pedestals, warning that prominent leaders produced a permanent, but checkable leadership record and the public expected this record to be (unrealistically) perfect. According to Ciulla (2004) leader morality is magnified, standards have become too high and society is disillusioned when leaders fail to reach expectations. As a result, individuals are reluctant to take on leadership roles, especially if there is a risk that their private lives become public. Ambassador-USA agreed that leadership responsibility was now so burdensome and under such scrutiny, that leaders were being put off leadership. In conjunction with the views of Price (2000) , Headmaster-USA believed that the focus on wrongdoing was detrimental for leadership. Media pressures and negativity

(Charity Head-UK) were recognised as societal constraints and endemic of new levels of toxicity (Headmaster-USA), which negatively influenced society.

Whilst there was no doubt that for-profit organisations were financially motivated as was seen in Figure 5, not-for-profits also had to contend with economic demands. Leaders were cognisant of the pressures this would bring. Money manifested as a micro (personal) constraint (see section 5.4.1.3) and as a meso concern, relating to organisational accountability. On a macro-level this would relate to funding and sources of donations. Funding pressures were not thought to positively contribute to ethical decision-making (Principal-UK). The operating environment had become more complex. Klingner, 1993, Jurkiewicz and Massey Jr, 1998, and Rothschild and Milofsky, 2006 document revenue instability (resource scarcity) and uncertainty as heightened pressures. And because educational leaders face sustained and profound challenges (Starratt, 2004, Duignan, 2006, Bush, 2009, Gill, 2011) schools had begun to adopt business approaches to support sustainability:

> *"It is a very interesting time at the moment. I don't have a problem because I have a code of ethics for social work that I've had since time began... But more recently, there's been such emphasis... We almost had a swing to 'all you lot who are doing, adhering to this sort of way of working', business approaches were brought in as almost salvation"*
> *(Principal-UK).*

Boards and stakeholders put new demands on organisational integrity (Principal-UK). The leaders in this study were clearly aware of the issues outlined by Morgan (2015) regarding contentious fundraising. Moreover, they also understood the negative organisational consequences, Archbishop-UK explained:

> *"If something is built on injustice...then it is bound to fail...you have touched on something very profound there actually, because according to any number of criteria...'we'll take the money and you can do good and you can bring good out of evil'. No. That which is evil is contaminated and no good will come of it".*

> *"If you say you're trying to raise money... and now you are turning down £100,000? Put me in a really difficult position because, on one side, it's money, you know, and they say money doesn't smell. But the*

> *other one, is actually... no, because this is money... which we can't take"*
> *(Charity Head-UK).*

Leaders understood the consequences for their organisations if they succumbed to such pressures, and how the adoption of for-profit practices might result in a displacement of organisational purposes and democratic values. According to van der Wal *et al.* (2008) they risked morphing into (im)moral hybrids, a point already noted by Principal-UK. As such, the tension between mission and financial viability were all too real; high standards of ethicality extended to resources (Helmig *et al.*, 2009, Gill, 2011).

Of the sectors, several leaders (MP-UK and Lt-General-UK) singled out others' moral challenges. Transgressions regarding the Catholic Church have been well documented (see sections 1.4.3 and 4.1.4). Although Lt-General-UK believed church leaders to be more moral, he also recognised the impact of recent ethical wrongdoings. He claimed that in setting ethical standards too high, the church had failed to meet them. Whilst others believed that the ethical challenges for the church were the same as other organisations, Vicar-General-USA believed that the church possessed the capacity to deal with them. Although, he did not specify, mention nor acknowledge specifics regarding recent media attention.

5.6.2 Socially responsible ethical leadership

As has been previously reported, responsibility has been soundly acknowledged as an intrinsic and meso concern, but here it would also be revealed as a macro leader concern. Singnificantly, seven of the ten leaders (Lt-General-USA, Ambassador-USA, Charity Head-USA, Headmaster-USA, Lt-General-UK, Archbishop-UK and Principal-UK) explicitly described their leadership in terms of social justice. It was a key driver for ethical leaders and enabled decision-making according to Charity Head-USA, Vicar-General-USA, MP-UK, Charity Head-UK, Archbishop-UK and Principal-UK. This research responded positively to the request made by Heck and Hallinger (2005) to move away from the scientific approach to explicating pockets in knowledge and disciplinary practice to instead focus on social justice and social

transformation. This type of socially responsible leadership 'taps directly into the need to assist and make a difference' (Van Wart, 2014, p36). Indeed, leadership provided the opportunities to change society (Archbishop-UK) and was underpinned by a concern for humanity. Similarly to previous data, there was an underlying concern for personhood (Charity Head-UK).

Indeed Charity Head-USA, MP-UK and Vicar-General-USA explained how fighting for others' rights and upholding and protecting principles (MP-UK and Principal-UK) epitomised ethical leadership. The data appeared indicative of what Eisenbeiß (2012) described as humane and justice orientations. In keeping with the views of Starratt (2005) it would appear that ethical leaders took 'a stand with other human beings' (p49). For instance, Charity Head-UK stated:

> *"I have a sense of outrage of being bamboozled, being patronised. I don't know what the components are but I just… absolutely refuse to… be run over by these people…. I have a distinctive dislike of people who tell me to do things… which I don't think are right… I'm quite determined… I won't be persuaded over something because it feels wrong" (Charity Head-UK).*

This was leadership focused on reshaping inequitable structures, and inclusion (Charity Head-USA and Lt-General-UK), community (Charity Head-USA), care and humanity (Archbishop-UK). The data compared favourably with the aspects of the responsible leadership construct as understood by Mària and Lozano (2011) . Indeed, Van Wart (2014) described the enhancement of human rights as voluntary in the for-profit sector, he distinguished it from public sector motivation, believing it to be embodied through commitment and dedication. Similarly to the findings of Eisenbeiß and Giessner (2012) and Frisch and Huppenbauer (2014) , Charity Head-USA, Vicar-General-USA, Headmaster-USA and Principal-UK were particularly motivated by a sense of fairness and concerned for equality (Charity Head-USA). And according to Clapham *et al.* (2014) this would in turn increase trust and public confidence.

Unlike the for-profit sector, and like charities my political leaders were not motivated by money but by campaigns. Common cause, national good

(Ambassador-USA) or public interest (MP-UK) supported both decision-making according to Charity Head-USA, Vicar-General-USA, MP-UK and Charity Head-UK, and enabled ethical decision-making (Charity Head-UK). Light (2005) described charity leaders as exceptional individuals, for Mair and Marti (2006) they were social entrepreneurs who founded their charities 'to alleviate social problems and catalyse social transformation' (p37). Charity Head-UK stated as such:

> *"One of the founding principles here is passion and not pay. So when we started everyone was a volunteer and I said I want to have everyone work for passion and not pay".*

According to Charity Head-USA some charity leaders were interested in easy campaigns rather than genuine social justice. Few charities were genuinely based upon morals and ethics. For Charity Head-USA and Charity Head-UK the focus was humanitarian and ethos driven, with a clear mission and vision concerning the helping of others, *at any cost*. This made it harder for Charity Head-UK to '*switch off*'; he was always concerned with credibility and reputation. On review, the data suggested that founders might be a different breed of charity leader.

5.6.3 Fostering the ethical leaders of the future

The review of extant literature painted a bleak picture of ethical leadership development research (see page 83). As such, leaders were asked two specific interrelated questions regarding the development of ethical leaders (*Appendix B – Leader Interview Schedule*), Q12: *Do you think it is possible to develop ethical leadership in others? Could it be taught?* Their answers broadly supported the problems identified by extant scholars. Whilst the efficacy of ethics education remains a contested area (Ritter, 2006, Bosco *et al.*, 2010), half of the leaders confirmed that it could indeed be taught (Lt-General-USA Charity Head-USA, Headmaster-USA, MP-UK and Charity Head-UK). Ambassador-USA felt it was important for leaders to be educated in ethics. However, Lt-General-USA noted that it was in fact application which was crucial. Since no further data was offered in regards to formal teaching processes the data would suggest that leaders were focused beyond the academic. Similarly to Starratt (2010) leaders educated in

ethics were a rarity, most gained their ethical foundations from what they had learned from others and personal experience coupled with the opportunity to reflect, and understand practice.

Notably, five leaders agreed that it was possible to develop ethical leadership in others (Lt-General-USA, Ambassador-USA, Headmaster-USA, MP-UK and Principal-UK), but up to a point (Lt-General-USA and MP-UK).

> *"Quite a lot of human character development is about how you can cope with that sort of adversity… you can teach people up to a point… to recognise that 1) matters have an ethical disposition, moral dimension and 2), that it's legitimate to talk about that" (MP-UK).*

> *"I thought that if somebody didn't have the raw material you couldn't make them, you couldn't manufacture them. They've got to…there's got to be a substantial natural foundation on which to build. But then people build at different rates and at different tolerances" (Lt-General-UK).*

Ambassador-USA stated that it could be refined and supported if there were adequate moral foundations to build upon. Leader ethical disposition was essential for ethical leadership development; it mitigated temptations (Headmaster-USA). Whilst people had different capacities (Vicar-General-USA), it was possible to change them (MP-UK). MP-UK believed that you could not turn an evil person into a good one, but you could turn a good one evil. Ethical leadership was hard work, not easy (Archbishop-UK), and required willing (Vicar-General-USA, Headmaster-USA, and MP-UK).

Lt-General-USA, Headmaster-USA and Lt-General-UK also noted how their own professional settings promoted ethical leadership development. Ethical responsibility needed to be developed early on in one's career (Ambassador-USA). In for-profit leadership responsibility came too late (in senior roles), whereas the military gave people high levels of responsibility early on. Ethical leaders needed to be nurtured (Lt-General-USA and Lt-General-UK) and ethical decision-making supported (Lt-General-UK). And as can be seen (section 5.5.2), the military had comprehensive formal and informal systems in place to embed ethical

organisational disposition. Of all the sectors the military system seemed the strongest regarding these purposes, or rather; military leaders valued them the most. As such, high public confidence in military leadership, as reported by Rosenthal (2012) was similarly justified.

Cumulatively, the data compared favourably with the holistic approach advocated by Elmuti *et al.* (2005) but also incorporated learning from life stories and trigger events (Avolio and Hannah, 2008) focused through levels of (ethical) self-awareness (Starratt, 2004, Gill, 2011). But the data has proved to be much more. The results and discussion section provide a mandate *for* ethical leadership development. In exploring prominent leaders' personal ethical foundations the data points the way toward possible frameworks for leaders in other sectors. Whilst scholars understand the different views and approaches to fostering (ethical) leadership I concur with Heres and Lasthuizen (2012) in that the not-for-profit world has something profound to teach their for-profit counterparts.

5.7   Summary

Solid connections were found between leadership and ethics in the data. Ethical awareness extended beyond self to encompass organisational and societal responsibility. Leadership was an overtly ethical endeavour, ethics was the central focus in contrast to previous conceptualisations. In keeping with Langlois (2011) and Crossan *et al.* (2013) the notion of ethics proved homogeneous. Perceptions of ethics and values, i.e. their etymological roots remained difficult to discern. But in congruence with scholars (Starratt, 2004, Hackett and Wang, 2012) articulations appeared to fit within a virtue ethics lens. Specific characterological elements were identified; *honesty* and *trust*, *moral courage* and *altruism,* and the notion of *responsibility* were found sub-consciously manifest and omnipresent. The latter represented both a motivational force and a humane orientation; it involved self, others and society.

Concurrent with recent scholarship (Kirkpatrick and Locke, 1991, Price, 2006, Eisenbeiß and Brodbeck, 2014), leaders associated *honesty* and *integrity* with ethical leadership. Whilst the notion of *trust* was found under-represented in the literature, along with *altruism* it was found to be highly significant in this study. The list of espoused leader traits were of particular interest, they did not present as positive, pro-social personality antecedents, but on analysis were found to correspond with notions of ethical leadership as envisaged by Aronson (2001) . In addition, the leaders in this study also noted how emotions, self-interest, individualism and ego had to be moderated and regulated to preserve ethical credentials. Leaders understood who and what they were, and what they were not.

High-levels of self-awareness were also evident in how leaders understood the personal and professional challenges of leading ethically. They appeared adept at accurate self- observation. Overall, data revealed specific challenges which diverged from the seminal work of April *et al.* (2010, 2011) . Arguably, discrepancies could be explained because the leaders were selected from alternative professional settings. The data supported and advanced current understandings regarding the for-profit and not-for-profit debate (Thach and Thompson, 2007). The leaders canvassed in this study and the professional settings proved highly significant, with the chosen environments found as more conducive to leading ethically.

Although the findings were broadly consistent with extant research regarding the variety of frameworks underpinning ethical leadership and decision-making, the data were more revealing concerning the origins and weighting of the elements used to support leader moral disposition. Social learning theory (Brown *et al.*, 2005) as sole lens was found insufficient to accurately reflect the complex and interactive nature of the (ethical) leadership depicted here. Whilst a sociological lens might account for how experience, formation, upbringing, role models and ethical others were crucial for the development of *moral approbation* (Jones and Ryan, 1997), it did not sufficiently indicate how religion and other philosophical frameworks were intertwined.

Whilst pluralistic conceptions (Whetstone, 2001, 2005, Resick *et al.*, 2006, Eisenbeiß, 2012) more readily reflected the everyday realities of making ethically challenging decisions, extant studies had neglected to canvass the very people who would make those decisions. The data has depicted virtues ethics, religious influences, consequentialist and non-consequentialist ethical theories as interconnected and in constant interaction as support for the practice of the leadership described in this study. From this symbiosis it would be fair to state that (ethical) decision-making and (ethical) leadership are conceptually fused. As such, this study has built upon the growing body of work from scholars (Messick and Bazerman, 1996, Treviño *et al.*, 2003, Winston, 2007, Shapiro and Stefkovich, 2011) who had realised the integration, but neglected to capitalise upon it.

The leadership described in this study is a welfare driven endeavour, and overwhelmingly concerned moral obligation and duty to all stakeholders. Leaders appeared highly cognisant of current operating conditions, and how they impacted their leadership. Not-for-profit sectors were not immune to situational and contextual challenges, and although, some professional settings were found to overlap with the for-profit sector, the key distinction concerned organisational purpose and mission. The majority of the leaders in this study saw their leadership and their organisations as inherently moral, with leaders able to lean on what Eisenbeiß (2012) described as *humane and justice orientations*. Leaders were able to tap intrinsic and extrinsic social motivations to, not only support their own ethicality, but to enable it in others.

In returning to the latter half of the study title '*learning from prominent leaders in not-for-profit organisations*', it remains to be said that the data as a whole presents as a blueprint for ethical leadership development. The typology is a mandate for (ethical) leadership. Indeed, leaders believed that ethical leadership could be taught, refined and supported, but that some moral foundation was required. The data here stands as testimony that these views need to become more widespread, and form a more deliberate part of the ethical leader education narrative.

Chapter Six – Leadership: an ethical and socially responsible endeavour

The ten prominent leaders from not-for-profit organisations interviewed in this study have offered insights regarding the realities of leading ethically. Although not initially selected for being ethical leaders, the data has shown that they see themselves as ethically aware individuals who feel responsibility for themselves, their organisations and to society. This research has provided an opportunity for them to articulate their understandings through the cathartic and confessional nature of the interview. This final chapter brings together the key findings to provide a final analytical stage of the data analysis (see Figure 2 – Analytical Overview). It is a closing synthesis which takes for granted the detail and minutiae described in previous chapters. The threads have been pulled together to offer an exemplification of the type of leadership hoped for by Ciulla (1995, 2005) and Rost (1995) . Ethics *is* at the forefront, *alive and well* as Langlois (2011) contended; but also multi-dimensional and complex. This research proposes a new way of conceptualising ethical leadership as such, distinction is drawn between the leadership depicted in this study and the ethical leadership construct as envisaged by Brown *et al.* (2005) . I present a more accessible, practicable, transferrable, and actionable leadership for all.

Contemporaneous leadership is tenuous, with countless ethical transgressions spotlighted. Scandals and ethical failures have resulted in a research field focussed on the negative. The ethical credentials of leaders have been summarily overlooked in favour of uncovering rationales for organisational dishonesty. Examining unethical behaviour has not clarified ethical leadership constructs. My research centred on alternative contexts; moving away from research conducted in for-profit settings to more fully explicate the practice of leading ethically. In this final chapter I discuss how the sample chosen in my study demonstrated how leadership might be better understood. As Hodges and Howieson (2017) advised; I did not *tinker* with old models, but allowed the data to reveal its own patterns and processes to advance the field.

Theoretical and empirical literature at the intersection of leadership and ethics has been found flawed (see Chapter Two). I have shown how definitions were purposively inadequate (see section 2.4) and theoretical underpinnings delineated and unrepresentative of the realities of leadership in a fast-paced, morally challenging, modern society. This study has shown that in current operating conditions leaders have demonstrated levels of awareness and responsibility rarely seen or explicated in previous research. The leadership presented in this thesis depicts individuals who understand what supports their decision-making, how their leadership differs from for-profits and the impacts beyond the self. In researching the nature of ethical decision-making across a variety of not-for-profit organisational settings, this research has summarily:

- Explored philosophical ethical and moral theory and investigated the ways in which they were integrated with the leadership literature;
- Advanced current understandings regarding the ethical challenges of leadership in specific settings by conducting qualitative, in-depth interviews with 'elite and specialised' respondents;
- Examined the interface between ethics and leadership in terms of the frameworks leaders used to understand who they were, what they did and how decision-making was informed and directed by moral disposition.

The objectives were addressed by accessing hard-to-reach, under-researched elite and specialised respondents (n=10) in both the USA and the UK. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted as detailed in Chapter Four (section 4.1.2: Elite and specialised interviewing as method). These leaders also presented as experienced, principled, ethical decision-makers (Davies, 2001, Woiceshyn, 2011) who faced daily ethical dilemmas in a range of unique professional settings. This was in contrast to the commonly pooled student and middle management populous favoured by extant researchers (see sections 3.1.2 and 3.1.3).

6.1   Summary of the contributions

The remainder of the chapter represents a further organisation of the research, but first I present a series of statements that summarise the key messages regarding the contributions to knowledge. They are grounded by the extensive typology offered in the previous chapter and are the linking device between the typology and the aggregated, major contributions to follow. As such, this research definitively states that:

- Ethics is fundamental to leadership, there is no separation and without ethics, leadership is something else.
- (Ethical) leadership and (ethical) decision-making are symbiotic; scholars should not treat them as discrete entities.
- (Ethical) leadership is underpinned by interacting philosophical, sociological, and theological frameworks and shares aspects with diverse normative leadership constructs.
- (Ethical) leadership requires heightened levels of personal, organisational and societal awareness which underpins a sense of responsibility to self, others, and society.
- Constraints and enablers to (ethical) leadership extend to macro influences.
- Not-for-profit settings are inherently ethical and attract (ethical) leaders.

These statements are not isolated claims. They are interwoven and interdependent, none stands without reference to the other. From these it was possible to broaden to a set of conclusive high-order contributions which deliberately and holistically draw the research together.

As such, my research contributions fulfil the following obligations. Firstly, they attend to the theoretical and methodological weaknesses highlighted in earlier chapters (see 2.5.4), and specifically address the third research objective in conjunction with several research sub-questions (see 1.2). Secondly, my research

is able to advance the field *because* of the importance of the sample. Indeed, this has been made clear in Chapters Three and Four. Thirdly, and as consequence, current understandings have been extended by establishing the significance of the organisational setting for leader ethical decision-making. This relates particularly to the usefulness of the research as a wider template for ethical leadership where the notion of leader responsibility was a limited consideration. This chapter also includes an acknowledgment of unanticipated findings, implications for practice and makes recommendations for future research. I also discuss what I feel has restrained and biased the research, and link to measures such as ethical reflexivity which were used to mitigate. The study draws to a close following a personal discussion and reflection concerning my journey in the production of this original scholarly work.

6.1.1 Theoretical and conceptual (con)fusion

The critical review of the literature carried out in Chapter Two showed how conceptual delineation, definitional ambiguity and deficient frameworks had restricted research at the intersection of leadership and ethics. The central premise of this study was that leadership had to be ethical, and that an over-reliance on sociological frameworks did not adequately explicate the practice of ethical leadership. Furthermore, decision-making was considered the enactment of (ethical) leadership. As discussed in section 2.5.3 (Ethical decision-making and ethical leadership: conceptual fusion), few scholars had considered them as symbiotic. Fewer still (Treviño *et al.*, 2003, Crossan *et al.*, 2013) had attempted to research them holistically, given that they could not be discrete. The literature review (section 2.5.2) revealed decision-making and ethical decision-making models to be flawed, naïve, lacking insight and integration (Pimentel *et al.*, 2010); only useful post hoc for retrospective framing. In contrast, this research was unconcerned with processes; instead it sought the *when and how* leaders acquired their ethical legitimacy.

Leaders understood ethics in a variety of ways, and consistent with extant research my leaders used ethics realted terms interchangeably. In correspondence

with Riggio *et al.* (2010) a virtue ethics lens was found predominant and central. Although the terminology was ambiguous when leaders listed values and traits, analysis showed that they were expressing them in terms of practice, enactment and maintenance of the virtuous mean. Moreover, virtue theory could accommodate for cultural relativity and the perpetuation and practice of ethics. But it was not sole lens; other philosophical theories and ideological frameworks were also at play. To further understand what Eisenbeiß (2012) described as interconnectivity and interpersonal dynamics, I treated the findings to a further level of analysis. I returned to the typology and aggregated the data, and from this scrutiny I developed a concept map to show the prevalence and weighting of the theoretical frames (Figure 6):
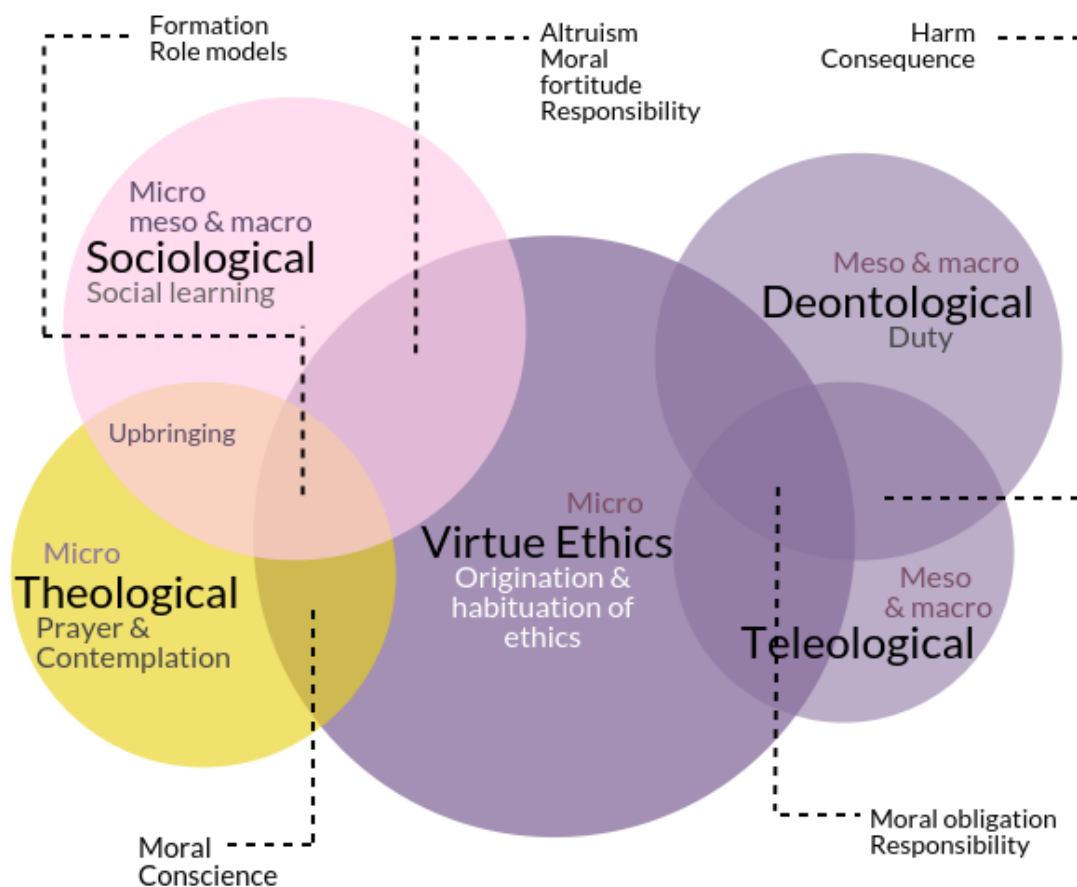

Figure 6: Theoretical & conceptual (con)fusion- elements of overlap

As can be observed, circle sizes portray the prominence of each ideological framework. This depiction goes some way to demonstrate the interplay between these frameworks, highlighting shared themes. The purple circles depict a tripartite philosophical interpretation, and represent an advancement of the work of Whetstone (2005) .

Unsurprisingly, virtue ethics shares aspects with other normative philosophical theories; namely deontology and teleological theories such as utilitarianism. Indeed, *moral obligation*, *responsibility*, *formation* and *role models* were the key crossovers. Whilst Figure 6 clearly demonstrates the ethical pluralism spoken of in sections 2.3.7 and 2.5.3, these findings also shows the prevalence of theological and sociological frameworks and how they interact. This exemplified the sought after, and until now, out of reach theoretical relationship requested by Eisenbeiß (2012) . There was an expectation that the much-favoured sociological lens would prove over-arching, possibly patriarchal. Instead, it appeared fraternal to the other frameworks. This has not been expressed before in the literature, not in this detail, nor in this way. Although Tenbrunsel and Smith ‑ Crowe (2008) and Eisenbeiß (2012) felt that religion enhanced the social scientific perspective, the data shows that it deserves singular recognition. It was explicit for some, and implicit for others, but undeniably evident in the data (see section 5.4.2.2). Whilst the hybrid interrelated framework depicted in this study magnified underlying deficiencies in the accepted ethical leadership construct (Brown *et al.*, 2005), it simultaneously offered deeper understandings regarding what it should represent.

For some time the construct and its definition has been described as deliberately vague by the field (see section 2.4, page 57). Indeed, this ambiguity extended to how the ethical leadership construct differed from other related leadership constructs (see section 2.4.2). In response to the first research sub-question: *was ethical leadership ideologically distinct from extant leadership theories,* the data proved interesting. It is clear that the leadership depicted in this study shares properties with other normative constructs. Whilst it shows some

affiliation with the current conceptions of ethical leadership, broadly appealing to the *moral person*, *moral manager* aspects concerning enabling ethical followership and the ethical organisation (see 5.5.1 and 5.5.2), it is not included in figure 7 because the construct as we know it, is superseded by what is presented here.

For instance, societal concerns were not fully reflected in the accepted ethical leadership construct. But in this research it was fundamental (see sections 5.6: Societal (macro) awareness; responsibility to society). Similarly to Brown and Treviño (2006) the ethical leadership construct was found to crossover with transformational, spiritual and authentic leadership. However, my data revealed a much more complex relationship. Figure 7 shows a transposition of the data collected in this study. Specific aspects were identified as mutual, with those in pink also fundamental features of the (ethical) leadership found in this study.
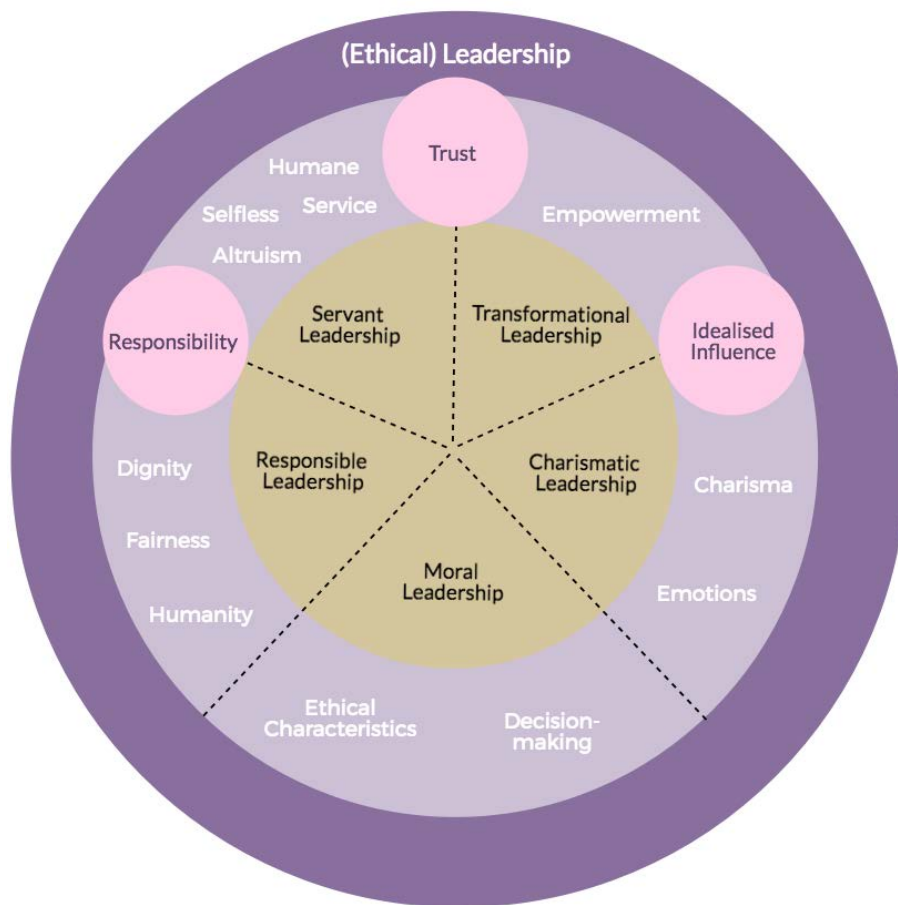

Figure 7: Construct comparison chart

Similarly to scholars (see section 2.4.2 page 63) there were strong associations with servant leadership. But fresh associations were found with the relatively new construct of responsible leadership (Starratt, 2005). Significantly, *trust, idealised influence* and *responsibility* were conspicuous and shared. In this study, leaders had already identified trust as the most prominent value (see Figure 3). Like Toor and Ofori (2009) idealised influence was also shown to be instrumental, but here it was as also an enabler to ethical followership. Unsurprisingly, responsibility re-emerged in the data, having already been recognised as pivotal in Figure 6. Voegtlin (2016) calls for strongly qualitative studies, which 'could theorize further on the interrelation between ethics and responsibility' (p24). As such, the data were also consistent with the views of Starratt (2004) and Knights and O'Leary (2006) in that responsibility was multi-dimensional. Taken as a whole, analyses of the theoretical frames indicate how the concept of responsibility permeated (ethical) leadership. This reinforces the work of De Hoogh and Den Hartog (2008) concerning *internal obligation* and *concern for others*. Clearly, the leadership illustrated in this study was mediated, moderated and enabled by leaders' underlying sense of responsibility.

As indicated in Chapter Two (page 83) there was also an overt intention to more fully understand the enablers and constraints to morally challenging leadership. Studies neglected to consider the extrinsic challenges leaders faced. In contrast, this research revealed organisational and societal enablers and constraints, as well as the personal. To begin with, the findings from April *et al.* (2010, 2011) were broadly congruent with the data, but there were notable differences. Figure 8 overleaf shows their findings on the left in each vertical section, mine adjacent. The horizontal sections categorised enablers and constraints as micro, meso and macro. And as can be seen, my data went beyond self and organisation to encompass the societal. There are levels of awareness unique to the not-for-profit sector. Notably, this data was acquired as a result of asking leaders *what* affected their decision-making, not leadership. As such, answers were framed in practical terms, and enabled the respondents to draw on their own experiences, framed by their own definitions. This was unlike April *et al.*

(2010, 2011) who had defined ethics for their respondents, or others who had unwisely used given scenarios (see section 3.1.3) which skewed the data.

Enablers April et al (2010; 2011)		Constraints April et al (2010; 2011)	
Upbringing Spirituality	Upbringing Formation: Religion Experience	Bottom-line mentality	
Mentors Role Models	+ve Role models Expert/ethical others	Peer Pressure Fear Humour	Power Position Self-Interest Individualism Ego/Pride Emotions
Honesty Integrity Courage	Trust Honesty Integrity		
Conscience	Moral conscience Judgment Confidence Deliberation Doubt/indecision Emotions		
Standing up for beliefs	Strong values Consistency		
Self-control Self-knowledge			
Defining moments	Injustice		

Codes of Conduct	Rules & Codes	Compliance Organisational influences	Rules & Codes
	Being a role model Communication Internal work Mission		Unhealthy Organisational Climate Incongruent values

	Society as Stakeholder Social responsibility & injustice		Social environment Unfamiliar contexts Secularity Unrealistic Expectations Funding

Figure 8- Enablers and constraints comparison chart

On close examination of figure 8 two further observations can be made. Emotions were recorded as both enabler and constraint, as were rules and codes. Similarly to scholars (as detailed in section 2.3.4), rules and codes had been recognised as inflexible and unsuccessful when used in isolation. But they were also instrumental in the institution of organisational ethical standards (see the comprehensive discussion in section 5.5.2.1). Emotions also presented as binary, they simultaneously concerned emotional instability and supported moral awareness and judgment. The data confirmed that this was a fresh and promising avenue; few scholars had understood the influence of emotions, despite Thiel *et al's* (2012) research showing that they could be counteracted and regulated.

Whilst April *et al.* (2010, 2011) also presented a series of respondent recommendations for leading ethically (see page 71), my data exemplified this in practice. My leaders described their actions and decision-making in a way that implied that they:

- acted according to their values (e.g. courage) and beliefs (e.g. religious);
- displayed high levels of self-awareness;
- developed and used their support networks;
- practiced reflection, meditation and mindfulness;
- were open, honest and transparent;
- embraced diversity;
- were aware of, and understood the influence of context.

But there were significant differences; whilst April *et al.* (2010, 2011) noted that their respondents feared challenging the status quo, and were reluctant to shift ethical constraints, my data stated otherwise. The leaders' acceptance of risk, blame and a sense of duty (responsibility) set them apart (see 5.5.1.3). Moreover, as the typology and subsequent contributions show, this research has mandate to extend the above to include what is required for leaders to understand who they are, *what they do, and how leadership has been informed and directed by moral disposition*.

The leaders canvassed in this research; namely prominent, principled, ethical decision-makers (Woiceshyn, 2011) are an under-researched and under-represented group (Delaney, 2007) because they are not easy to access. I researched individuals at the top of their field, who possessed unique information, generally inaccessible to others. Theirs was *expert knowledge* as opposed to *everyday knowledge* (see section 4.1.2 for details on sample status). Figure 9 draws attention to how I saw the sample in terms of Littig's (2009) framework. It is augmented from the original (see Figure 1) and accommodates a further, recent elevation of status for MP-UK. The sample was highly appropriate in contrast to extant research, where insights and nuance had been sacrificed for convenience (see sections 3.1.1, 3.1.2 and 3.1.3).
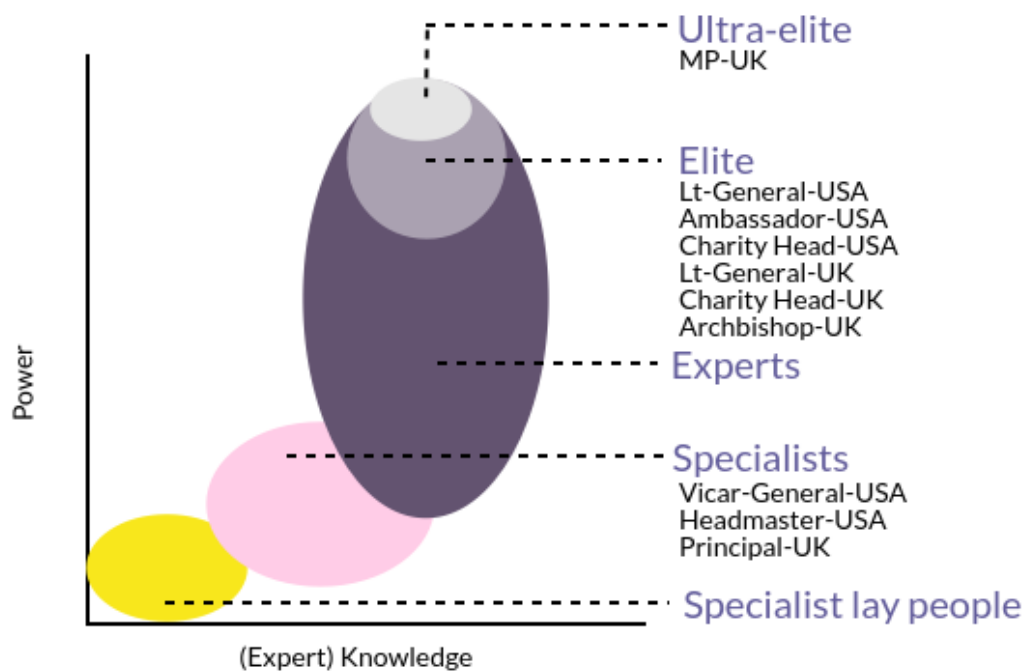

Figure 9 - Sample status

Although I have reviewed how qualitative research methodologies have been used in leadership research (see sections 3.1.4 and 3.1.5), my approach was more innovative. The data collection tools of other studies inhibited new insights. My

review of the empirical studies justifies my research design, wherein surveys, pre-sets, scenarios and vignettes were rejected both for bias, and inability to produce naturally emerging data. My research design was not preoccupied with the positivist. This was interpretive, qualitative research using deliberately open-ended interviews. Spontaneity was explicitly sought in the interview; little was off-limits. Leaders were extremely frank on several occasions (see sections 5.4.1.2: The paradox of (un) ethical leader characteristics and traits, and 5.4.2.6: Deliberation, doubt and indecision). Trust and honesty were both espoused (ethical) leader characteristics (see Figure 3), but also omnipresent in the data. On review, it was clear that leaders had used the opportunity to engage in this confidential, anonymous platform to reflect. The relationships of trust, generated by personal connections and patronage enabled me to access and thus receive the profound testimonies presented in this thesis.

The significance of this research design should not be underestimated in furthering the scholarship regarding leadership. These leaders were *hiding in plain sight*, overlooked by others interested in learning about leadership by examining negative leader behaviour (Mayer *et al.*, 2010). To understand ethical leadership it made sense to ask *bona fide* ethical leaders (though this was not a criteria for selection). Through the data collection phase it became clear that leadership was an ethical endeavour (see section 5.4.1). Therefore, this study concerned genuine (ethical) leadership. Whilst there was no initial intention to produce a new leadership model the taxonomy presented in this thesis (see 5.3) offers scholars and practitioners a new and comprehensive way to approach and thus examine, understand and develop (ethical) leadership.

I do however, acknowledge the limited, but foundational qualitative study by Treviño *et al.* (2003) which stimulated the field (see 3.1.5). I have built upon that work by focussing attention on the views of the high-value leaders and what underpinned their leadership, rather than ethics compliance officers. I would contend that the quantitative research reviewed in this study provided analytical support and avenues to pursue, rather than the traditional view that qualitative

research provided leads for investigations (Bryman, 2004). I have not presented ethical leadership as interpreted by Brown *et al.* (2005) and the entrenched ethical leadership community. I have used their construct and others' to show distinctiveness in my findings. I took the view that to advance current understandings I could not use these conceptions as foundation since I did not agree with how they were developed.

6.1.3   Learning from the not-for-profit sector

Mainstream press headlines concerning national and international scandals continued to throw the spotlight on leadership. Confidence in both political and corporate leaders continued to decline (Yukl *et al.*, 2013); there were reported challenges in every sector. This research sought to test the premise that not-for-profit organisations were more ethical environments, and as such, attracted a different type of individual, as discussed in sections 5.5.2.2, 5.6.1 and 5.6.2. Scholars had reported differences between the for-profit and not-for-profit sectors as noted in sections 1.4.3 and 4.1.4; some were also beginning to question not-for-profit, inter-sectoral nuances (Morrell and Hartley, 2006, Gill, 2011, Athanasopoulou, 2012).

Indeed, an examination of Figure 5: For-profit sectors as seen by the not-for-profit leaders) and section 5.5.2.2 shows the key distinctions found in this study. As expected, and in support of April *et al.* (2010, 2011) concern for money, greed, salaries and personal rewards were for-profit challenges, and seconded by issues concerning unethical organisational disposition. Ethics was considered the bottom-line, not money in respective not-for-profits. However, not-for-profit leaders were not immune to temptation either, as noted by Athanasopoulou (2012) . Financial challenges manifested as funding pressures; sustainability issues had put new demands on leaders and organisations according to the data. Like Tenbrunsel and Messick (2004) , Brown and Treviño (2006) and Price (2006) my leaders appeared to recognise these challenges and employ mechanisms to resist them.

The not-for-profit leaders in this study were altruistically orientated. Similarly to Kanungo and Mendonca (1996) and Resick *et al.* (2006) they displayed genuine, moral altruism (selflessness); internalised responsibility was reported in the data. However this research extended to, and encompassed the altruistic tendencies of the organisations themselves. Indeed, purpose, mission (see 5.5.1.2) and environment (see 5.6.1) were found to be both different and instrumental as enablers to (ethical) leadership. Unsurprisingly, the data also revealed that not-for-profit organisations were considered as having an ethical mandate, and thus attracted like-minded people; leadership was found to reflect the constituency (see section 4.1.4). Thus, ethical organisational climate was perpetuated and cultivated to be a mutual and symbiotic exchange between leader and follower(s).

Jurkiewicz and Massey Jr (1998) noted that the stakes were higher and the scrutiny tighter in not-for-profits. They were differentiated by a socially responsible purpose (Rothschild and Milofsky, 2006). Each sector in this study had a moral responsibility and operated in conditions others did not. For instance, schools, charities and the church were singled out as more ethically disposed than the other sectors in my study. Similarly to Morrell and Hartley (2006) politics were also found to be different. The data indicated that politicians operated in different conditions. The system was thought incapable of supporting ethicality. Whilst this was revelatory, it simply reinforced the notion that (ethical) leaders in this sector would need to possess strong values and demonstrate behavioural consistency, as reported in section 5.4.2.3 and thus, be highly aware of their operating conditions.

Although Resick *et al.* (2006) linked ethical leadership to community orientation, the data here incorporated other types of moral obligation. Responsibility extended to society, and concern for others meant concern for humanity and personhood. The not-for-profit (ethical) leaders in this study were stimulated, motivated and supported by a desire for social justice. There appeared to be what Voegtlin (2016) suggested; the perfect conditions for ethically responsible leadership. Although indicative of the humane and justice orientations

presented by Eisenbeiß and Giessner (2012) , the data further revealed that the leaders possessed a desire for fairness, equality, common cause, national good and public interest. This was welfare driven leadership *writ large,* carried out by individuals who were expert at tapping intrinsic and extrinsic social motivations to support their leadership.

On review, the literature at the intersection of leadership and ethics continues to be overtly concerned with for-profit and commercial settings. Whereas this research explored the antecedents and practice of leadership in organisations committed and dedicated to genuine social justice. I have presented a typology of leadership which is predicated on heightened (ethical) awareness and responsibility concerning the micro-personal (see 5.4), meso-organisational (see 5.5) and macro-societal (see 5.6) aspects of leading in today's ethical climate as conceptualised in Figure 10 below. Ethical understanding radiates from the leader, but this awareness is nourished by a desire for social responsibility. This sustains and supports the leader and in turn, drives and gives meaning and purpose to the organisation and those within it. It might reasonably be conceptualised as:
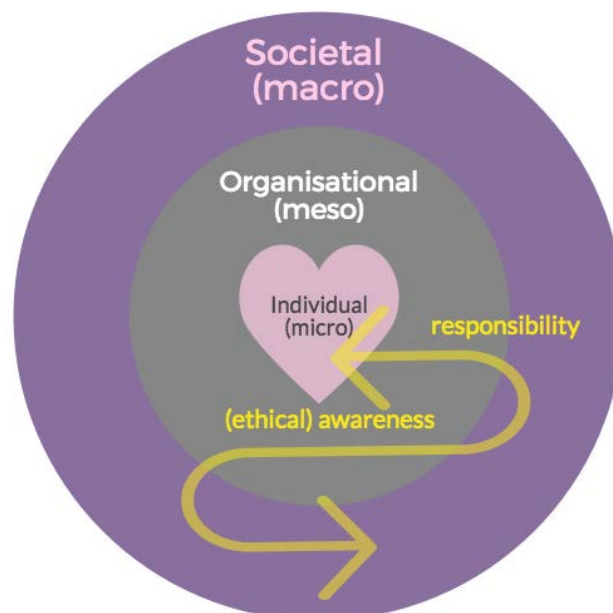
Figure 10 - (Ethical) leadership

Significantly, my research has also shown that it is possible to teach and develop this type of leadership. Concordant with Floyd *et al.* (2013) , the gap needed to be bridged between teaching and application. But there was acknowledgment that it would not be easy. Leaders were not keen on formal systems of ethics education. Informal approaches for supporting and developing ethicality were roundly appreciated in the data (see section 5.6.3). Although some moral foundation was pre-requisite, practical suggestions included developing ethical responsibility early on in careers, nurturing leaders, and learning from life stories and trigger events. Whilst this data represented explicit recommendations, taken as a whole the findings also stand as implicit guidance for those embarking upon their leadership journeys. It is hoped that this research will inform the for-profit sector. Leadership theory originated in the realms of popular psychology, business and political science and was largely carried out in commercial settings. Given the relatively recent economic crises and the surge in unethical behaviour reported by Chandler (2009) , leaders and organisations need to look elsewhere for better examples, advice and direction. The time has come for research to 'advance a social democratic vision of a moral society' (Wade, 2009, p39). Indeed, this research stands as remedy by encouraging reflective ethical discourse.

6.1.4 Unanticipated findings

The findings were comprehensive, and as discussed fell naturally into the typology presented in Chapter Five and illustrated in Figure 10. The literature review had highlighted the anticipated gaps, both theoretically and methodologically, and have been resolved in this chapter. But there were also several unexpected findings, and although they initially caused concern, further analysis and discussion revealed them as important aspects of (ethical) leadership. For instance, Ambassador-USA, Charity Head-USA, Headmaster-USA, MP-UK and Charity Head-UK all disclosed controversial, rarely espoused personality based antecedents which appeared incongruent with the accepted ethical leadership construct (Treviño, 1986, Brown *et al.*, 2005) . Whilst the role of experience was also of interest as enabler (see

section 5.4.2.1), the real revelations concerned upbringing and formation, and latterly regarding doubt and indecision.

As outlined in section 5.4.1.2 several leaders were *modest*, *humble*, *unconfident*, *private* and *removed*. The (ethical) leadership depicted here compared favourably to servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977), less so with the accepted ethical leadership construct (Brown *et al.*, 2005). And despite their negative, unethical leadership connotations (Hofmann and Jones, 2005, Kalshoven *et al.*, 2011a) others felt comfortable to reveal themselves as *determined*, *entrepreneurial*, *passionate*, *emotional*, *obsessive, driven, bloody-minded, intolerant, selfish, stubborn, blunt, arrogant and charismatic.* Whilst I have argued that these traits sat within in the ethical leadership spectrum according to Aronson (2001) and Judge *et al.* (2009) I did not anticipate this data. Given the status of the participants I was unprepared for them to acknowledge, let alone share on record, their perceived imperfections and flaws.

The implicit displays of trust and honesty extended to other data. Like April *et al.* (2011) and Johnson (2012) I had expected experience and upbringing to be noteworthy considerations. Whilst the data showed the impact of positive formative influences, it also revealed that adverse trigger events could impact positively. Ambassador-USA, Charity Head-USA, Charity Head-UK and Principal-UK disclosed harrowing, profound and emotive stories (see section 5.4.2.2), all but one was female. For ethical reasons not all verbatim details have been reported. Adversity could help develop moral character, resilience, trust and self-sufficiency. For these leaders it did not damage moral foundation as Price (2005) and Vicar-General-USA contended. Moral fortitude (strong values and consistency) were important (see section 5.4.2.3), but it was equally important to understand how ethicality originated. It was through the interview process that leaders had the opportunity to reflect on these events and contextualise them, and thus enable me to present them as the seeds of the socially responsible aspects of their (ethical) leadership.

As detailed in section 5.4.2.6 doubt and indecision played a significant part in the enactment of (ethical) leadership. Doubt was found to be interlinked, it was a constraint to decision-making for Lt-General-USA, Vicar-General-UAS and Principal-UK, and arguably led to indecision; but it was also unexpectedly, an enabler for Vicar-General-USA. And whilst this was only one opinion, the word 'doubt' was specifically used, not deliberation. As such, the data on doubt was contradictory, but certainly worthy of further scholarly exploration. On the whole, the data detailed how leaders worked on cognitive dissonance (Eberlin and Tatum, 2005), their *blindsides*, and inner conflicts. Leaders offered heartfelt accounts of how they overcame self-recognised limitations. Both military leaders and Ambassador-USA understood all too well how indecision and prevarication were worse than making bad decisions. Although Shanteau (1988) described how these might be overcome, he did not include how leaders perceived nor accounted for wider consequences, namely how leaders saw beyond themselves; my research has clarified this.

Unanticipated findings also extended to the contextual. Certainly, I expected significant differences between for-profit and not-for-profit sectors, but I was unprepared for the substantial disparities within or across the sectors as intimated in section 4.1.4. Moreover, it was impossible to ignore the way in which the charity leaders and political leaders in this study appeared different. The charity leaders represented a unique sub-set; both were founders of their respective charities. Indeed, if the unanticipated findings are aggregated, the charity leaders show significant distinction. They were different, not appointed, elected nor chosen. Responsibility appeared to weigh very heavily upon them (see section 5.5.1.3); their leadership was at times a burden to them, both physiologically and emotionally. They further distinguished themselves from other charity leaders who were recruited and appointed, and according to them, not driven by genuine social justice.

Like the charity leaders, both governmental respondents also disclosed seemingly uncharacteristic traits (see 5.4.1.2), and acknowledged the role of

emotions. But they also understood more readily how *power*, *self-interest*, *ego* and *stress* constrained. Of all of the leaders in this study, and despite their socially responsible mission, they also disclosed that their decisions were not always underpinned by morals or ethics. Whilst Morrell and Hartley (2006) also found the political setting different, unlike my study, they did not find governmental systems incapable of supporting ethics or ethical decision-making, nor did the claim that virtues were not a valued commodity. In conclusion, these unanticipated findings demonstrate that I did not seek to simply fill theoretical or empirical gaps, but undertook an enquiry where data would not be ignored, nor filtered. The intention was to offer an holistic interpretation of the lived (ethical) leadership experiences of prominent not-for-profit leaders. As such, these findings add to that picture, and ought to be considered in conjunction with the recommendations for future research.

6.1.5 Recommendations for future research

As has been noted above, the unanticipated findings also present as future research opportunities. Notably, how leaders mediate and moderate what appear to be less desirable personality characteristics to overcome self-recognised limitations, and as corollary, how cognitive dissonance and doubt can both enable and constrain leadership. Whilst discrepancies between research contexts and leader gender have also been reported, they add to the fertile areas for further scholarly exploration. What follows represents the more tangible recommendations.

My research supports the case for sector specific delineation. The *worlds* in this study were considered ethical, or values expressive environments (Jeavons, 2005). The church, charities and schools appeared more ethically disposed than others. Indeed, governmental and charity leaders were different again, for different reasons (see sections 5.5.2.2 and 5.6.1). Although both had to operate under the auspices of high public opinion, as founders, the charity leaders fell into a subset worthy of future scholarly examination. Both charity leaders in this study

had experienced adversity, and demonstrated openness in describing their characters (see 6.1.4). As such, the founders in this study appeared more emotional, and felt entirely responsible for organisational and societal others; they were a breed apart. A comparative study of charity founders and appointed charity leaders could prove very interesting.

In contrast to compliance focused extant political research (Kaptein *et al.*, 2005, Pelletier and Bligh, 2006), this study also revealed nuances regarding how political leaders understood the vagaries of their setting. It was interesting to learn that the system would not sustain ethicality, as reported earlier. Although strong and consistent values coupled with other enablers might support moral disposition, the data suggested that despite these, over time, values would be weakened as individuals succumbed to the prevailing organisational culture. Whilst the leaders in this study understood the personal (see section 5.4.1.3) and environmental challenges (see also section 5.6.1) only too well, it would be useful to explore how (ethical) leadership could be sustained, or perhaps the political system might be made more ethical. As such, my recommendations are to conduct a larger qualitative study examining ethical leadership in politics (or government). There are clearly leaders who can thrive in this environment, might there also be leaders who are prepared to change it?

Commensurate with the weaknesses outlined at the beginning of this study regarding gender imbalance in the sample (see 1.5.2), there remains a strong rationale to explore whether women are morally different to men. There is a growing body of research examining the relationship between gender and ethical decision-making (as described in sections 4.1.8 and 5.4.2.2) and ethical perceptions (Franke *et al.*, 1997, McCabe *et al.*, 2006) sympathetic to the seminal work of Gilligan (1977) . The central thesis to these collective arguments is that women construct their responses to moral dilemmas differently than that of men. Certainly, my data offered glimpses of nuance regarding the recollection of critical formative events, but it is not sufficient for robust acknowledgment. As such, a

study concerning an equal number of men and women leaders for comparative purposes might offer healthier data.

Finally, this thesis has reported extensively on the role of responsibility as a micro, meso and macro concern. It was manifest in and in Figure 7: Construct comparison chart). It was multi-dimensional as Starratt (2004) and Knights and O'Leary (2006) noted, and significant enough to warrant separate attention in section 5.5.1.3. Although it appeared to encompass the full range of Starratt's (2004) *responsibility as, responsibility to and responsibility for* approach, few have recognised its real role. Scholars such as Thomas *et al.* (2004) , Johnson (2012) and Werhane *et al.* (2014) have made advances. But this study has shown some interesting findings in relation to how responsibility can also be a burden. How ethical leaders consider and deal with substantial moral weight. I contend, like Voegtlin (2016) that more qualitative studies are necessary to thoroughly examine the interface between leadership ethics and responsibility.

6.1.6 Implications for practice

The title of this research was directive; it concerned 'learning from prominent leaders', and thus included understanding how the practice of leadership could be made more accessible, practicable, transferrable, and actionable. I have argued in section 3.1.6 that insightful, progressive qualitative research was needed. Results have lacked practicability (Bryman, 2004) and continue to languish in tables built upon the unsound methodological choices outlined in Chapter Three. Langlois (2011) noted that there were 'few conclusive studies' (p55). Unlike Schriesheim (2003) I believe that leadership research can be relevant for leader development, but contend that scholars have been looking for the 'wrong things' (p182) in arguably the wrong places. Day (2011) and Drumwright *et al.* (2015) believe unconnected leadership development to be inadequate for preparing nascent leaders for prescient, contemporary challenges. Whilst this research responds to the call from Elmuti *et al.* (2005) for an holistic approach, it replies directly to the combined requests of Starratt (2004) , Langlois and Lapointe (2010) and Gill

(2011) whereby focus must be on leader (ethical) self-awareness first. Although Langlois (2011) recommends training programs for ethical leader development, this research advocates the adoption of an experiential learning approach instead.

The findings of this study were implicit and explicit with regards to the implications for practice. Whilst section 5.6.3 reported the views of the leaders in response to a posed research question regarding ethics education (Q12 - *Appendix B – Leader Interview Schedule*), the results typology also presents as a suitable vehicle with which to frame (ethical) leadership development. To attend to the explicit, the data inferred that not-for-profit settings were unlike for-profits. Similarly to Rothschild and Milofsky (2006) they were more ethical, and as corollary attracted more ethical individuals. Ethics and responsibility were of micro, meso and macro concern; they were natural pre-requisites. Given this data it would be reasonable to suggest that those seeking to embark on a leadership path ought to experience working at a not-for-profit since they appear to be moral communities (Sama and Shoaf, 2008). This is justifiable for several reasons. Firstly, leaders noted that a social justice motivation catalysed ethicality. Secondly, like Dane and Sonenshein (2015) the data suggested nascent leaders needed to be exposed to trigger events, or value-laden circumstances; scenarios were no substitute for the real thing. But crucially, exposure to ethical responsibility had to be experienced early on in careers.

Indeed, the importance of experience has been acknowledged in this study as integral to the practice of (ethical) leadership (see section 5.4.2.1). Concordant with Shanteau (1988) Lt-General-USA, Ambassador-USA, Headmaster-USA and Principal-UK acknowledged experience as necessary to contextualise theory regarding exposure to success and failure; the latter were key. This study however, makes two further important points about experience, leaders need to be in the type of environment where mistakes are accepted, and that the organisational systems enable the type of reflection which allows leaders to safely explore the antecedents to failure. Indeed, six of the ten leaders in this study understood the fallibility of leadership (Lt-General-USA, Ambassador-USA, Headmaster-USA, MP-

UK, Charity Head-UK and Archbishop-UK). Whilst this research has manifested as an external stimulus, it is clear that some organisations appear better equipped than others to enable retrospective ethical framing.

For example, this research has shown that the military go to great lengths to help individuals understand morals and ethics and work hard to support staff at all levels with their decision-making. They use a complementary range of deliberate formal and informal embedding mechanisms and techniques to support organisational ethicality (see sections 5.5.1 and 5.5.2). They go beyond traditional command-and-control, or transactional approaches (Tyler, 2005). And because most military personnel, regardless of seniority are exposed to morally intense situations they have the opportunity to better understand, practice and develop their ethical underpinnings and moral antennae. The data roundly supports the views of Dickson et al (2001) in that the military appeared to have strong commitments for ensuring a positive ethical environment. Given this, I suggest that nascent leaders need to be exposed to situations in organisations, which necessitate and support ethical decision-making. They need opportunities to test, refine and develop ethical disposition as they make their way through levels of ethical self-awareness. I am also proposing that the typology itself is an holistic (ethical) leadership primer, which when applied provides direction regarding how leaders need to envisage leadership and responsibility.

Although not explicit in the data, the entire process appeared predicated on reflection. Caldwell and Hayes (2016) recognised the importance of reflection for leader self-efficacy and self-awareness, but this research presents this in practice. As noted earlier, the interview itself enabled this introspection. The data shows how leaders evaluated themselves against their individual identities, and used their beliefs to frame actions and decisions. It is only by standing back, and through aggregation of the findings that it is possible to see how these busy, important, seemingly inaccessible individuals understood their practice and what underpinned it, for us to learn. We have seen them examine their moral standards and reveal their motivations to lead. Nascent leaders need to have the facility to

reflect, and this ought to happen at the beginning and throughout careers, and as suggested earlier, involves an analysis of both success and failure.

Leader education programmes have summarily ignored ethics *and* leadership (Northouse, 2010), *and* disregarded key aspects of decision-making (Werhane *et al.*, 2014). In contrast, this research also answers Langlois and Lapointe's (2010) call for better understanding of the ethical stakes and practices necessary to increase ethical awareness. As I have shown (see section 6.1.3), scholars have been wedded to research settings, which do not see leadership as a socially motivated, ethical or responsible endeavour. Not-for-profit sectors have borrowed and adapted leadership theory from dominant commercial research fields such as psychology, and business for some time. This work returns the favour; and contends that leaders in not-for-profit organisations have much to teach their for-profit counterparts.

6.1.7 Limitations and biases acknowledged

I took the liberty in the introductory chapter to foreground specific limitations, which necessitated advanced acknowledgement. Whilst I have defended and mitigated the majority, on reflection I feel that there may be others, which require attention. All studies have limitations, but according to Delaney (2007) elite and specialised interviewing has its own unique challenges. In concordance with earlier arguments, this type of research design rarely involves sample unrepresentativeness and size. What is more concerning in interpretive, qualitative research is the extent to which the researcher has gained *the truth*. Dean and Whyte (2006) warn that '"objective reality" depends on how much distortion has been introduced into the report and how much we can correct for this distortion' (p105).

In the absence of follower corroboration (see 1.5.2) the interview data collected for this study could contain source bias; testimonies could appear selective (Richards, 1996, Lilleker, 2003, Dean and Whyte, 2006). Although I was

able to access pre-existing historiometric information on Lt-General-USA, Ambassador-USA, MP-UK and Charity Head-UK, I did not use this device. Firstly, I did not have reason to doubt my respondents, they passed several of Dean and Whyte's (2006) distortion checks, i.e. they were plausible, appeared reliable and I believed them to be free to express their opinions without prejudice. Secondly, public information was not available on all. Thirdly, I suspected the provenance of several of the sources. Indeed, to seek out contrasting cases (negative case sampling) seemed disloyal. My respondents had placed their trust in me; I did not wish to seem disingenuous. Moreover, historiometric data would have to be researched, analysed and presented; it did not fit with me epistemologically. I was very conscious of the status I had been afforded, and did not wish to be perceived as abusing it.

I had unprecedented access to my target group, and had adopted an informal approach to gaining access (specified in section 4.1.5). My status could be described as 'insider' with all-but-one of the leaders, and 'outsider' with Charity Head-USA. With Lt-General-USA, Lt-General-UK, MP-UK and Charity Head-UK the relationship was based upon the advantageous, privileged position afforded by an unofficial sponsor organisation. Although I was not an elite, I was perceived as *belonging*, as Herod (1999) contended, information was readily given. But I also belonged in two other social categories; I was a Christian and an army wife. Of my respondents, four described themselves as Roman Catholic, and one a Christian Scientist. Although two respondents were described as military, two others had served at some stage in their lives, although I cannot acknowledge which for ethical reasons, in case it compromises anonymity.

I questioned whether I had enjoyed too much insider status (Cousin, 2010), and grown accustomed to the implicit trust. Indeed, overfamiliarity with respondents is not advised (Grinyer and Thomas, 2012). Like Berger (2015) I chose to 'focus on self-knowledge and sensitivity' to 'maintain the balance between the personal and the universal' (p220). Mirroring the leadership literature reviewed in Chapter Two regarding frameworks for ethical behaviour, I found it

helpful to reconceptualise epistemology and reflexivity in terms of the principles of duty, consequences, and virtue ethics (Kvale, 1996). I countered my biases by ensuring I adhered to the ethical codes of my institution, behaved with integrity in gaining permissions to increase the sum of the good for all concerned. But in an epistemological sense, I agree with Dean and Whyte (2006) , elite interviewers ought not to be asking whether they have gained the truth, but to what extent the testimonies expose 'feelings and perceptions and what inferences can be made from them about the actual environment or events he has experienced' (p108). I think the data speaks for itself in this regard.

6.1.8 Ethical reflexivity; recognising and acknowledging the self

Costley and Gibbs (2006) cited in Williams (2010) state that 'it is the ontological emphasis of character rather than the methodological emphasis of custom that is foremost' (p258) when it comes to addressing reflexive awareness in educational research. My research is discerned entirely by its ethicality, in respect of epistemological content, design and execution. It is a product of the foregrounding of my character, and the backgrounding of ethical codes and guidelines and reliant upon my moral disposition. Rossman and Rallis (2010) relate to this, observing that 'moral principles guiding research practice have become trivialized and proceduralized' (p380). Like Symonette (2009) they posit that 'sterile, routinized tasks' (Rossman and Rallis, 2010, p382) are inadequate to meet the unpredictability of individual research instances, contending 'that the researcher is a decision-maker about both procedural and ethical matters' (p379). Thus, every decision regarding my research design and delivery had its own moral dimensions necessitating 'iterative reflection and action' (Rossman and Rallis, 2010, p379).

As Duncan and Watson (2010) suggested, I took a stance that was both socially responsible ethics and informed consent, which represented the constant struggle for 'transparency, representivity and reflexivity as normal instances toward emergent ethical dilemmas in social inquiry' (p49). Indeed, my research was not without its own ethical challenges. There were 'difficult, often subtle, and

usually unpredictable situations' (Guillemin and Gillam, 2004, p262), as reported in sections 4.1.6, 4.1.8 and 4.2) . Research dilemmas were magnified by the fact that the elite interviewees occupied elevated positions of power. I counteracted the perceived gap by adopting a technique employed by Herod (1999) in absence of the presumed privilege afforded by the highly respected sponsor organisation. As advised by Kezar (2003) , I reflected upon my privilege, attended to personal bias, to demonstrate my own self-awareness regarding the research relationship.

According to Welch *et al.* (2002) 'the exchange between researcher and elite interviewee has profound implications for the reliability and validity of research findings' (p626). Elite interviewees are considered more practiced at fielding questions (Welch *et al.*, 2002) and dominating the interview. However, as reported (see section 5.4.1.2) some were open, very frank and eager to assert their own opinions (see section 5.5.2.2). Dean and Whyte (2006) advise elite interviewers to distinguish between the objective and the subjective, and further recognise the diverse types of subjective data. They also warned that interpretation was more difficult when informants recollect past events. On their advice and that of Grinyer and Thomas (2012) I considered interviewee ulterior *motives*, *bars to spontaneity, desires to please* and any other *idiosyncratic factors* (Dean and Whyte, 2006, p102-103) to become attuned. I moderated the level of intimacy to avoid overfamiliarity to achieve a 'balanced understanding of the phenomenon being studied' (Beamer, 2002, p93).

I did however have to contend with researcher guilt, and examine my own conscience. To this day, I question whether I caused distress to Ambassador-USA or instigated feelings of disquiet in Vicar-General-USA (see section 4.2)? Retrospectively, and in accordance with McNamee (2002a) my guilt demonstrated that I was registering moral concern for my respondents. Like them, I had a moral antennae (Butterfield *et al.*, 2000) and felt affected by the exposure to their experiences (Israel, 2015). But my ethical dilemma also concerned data use. Would it's use cause more harm (McNamee, 2002a, Israel, 2015)? On reflection, several important issues underpinned my use of the data. Like Josselson (2013) I believed

that respondents were not in the habit of revealing information they did not want made public. Many of the elite and specialised leaders canvassed in this study were seasoned interviewees, accustomed to challenging interviews. And whilst the data were freely given, albeit under strict ethical conditions, I must contend that I felt an overwhelming moral responsibility to share these testimonies. They had been gifted, and I felt compelled to use them. As such, I adopted a range of approaches to mitigate which are outlined in sections 1.6, 4.1.8 and 4.2. This extended to how the data were treated and presented, and thus, the resulting typology is an honest and fulsome depiction of the data.

At times, and in relation to specific respondents, I also had to be mindful of researcher positionality regarding possible asymmetric power relations. I was the status subordinate. Delaney (2007) notes that 'problems of control arise more frequently in elite interviewing' (p215). As such, I had to engage in a constant balancing act to reconcile the roles of 'insider, outsider, subordinate and sounding board, sympathizer and critic, therapist and spy, academic and consultant' (Welch *et al.*, 2002, p625). This negotiation included an awareness of my age, sex, specialist knowledge, linguistic competence, and institutional background as recommended by Bogner *et al.* (2009) . Section 4.2.3 shows how I felt a deep appreciation for my personal position, understood bias, and attended to my ethical stance to assure the trustworthiness of this research.

Indeed, gender has already been identified as having important research implications (see 2.4.1, 2.5.1, 2.5.2, 4.1.6, 4.1.7, 4.1.8 and 4.2). Whilst Herod (1993) does not advise simplistic role generalisations, he believes that interviews are dynamic and fluid, joint reconstructions. Several researchers of the elite (Kezar, 2003, Smith, 2006, Conti and O'Neil, 2007, Harvey, 2010, Hales *et al.*, 2013) praise the work of feminist researchers in providing insight into how elite interviewing like any interview space is a place of multiple narratives with sophisticated power relations between male and female. However, I hold the view, that I am first and foremost a researcher, authentic and professional. I did not intend for my biological disposition to be of issue. Although I recognise, on reflection that it may

have biased the interview process, I contend that my thorough approach to all aspects of this research was sufficient to mitigate.

Credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability in qualitative research, or trustworthiness (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, Klenke, 2008) were pressing concerns. Certainly in the quantitative paradigm transferability and confirmability in the form of replicability are considered the gold standard for rigour. However, replication by either this researcher or another in relation to this study was never an option. Like Kezar (2003) my elites were busy people with limited time. The likelihood of canvassing their opinions again were not only slim but non-existent. Elite interviewing by its nature is about capturing moments, highly specific incidents and processes (Tansey, 2007). It is about leaders' lived experiences and critical voices (Klenke, 2008) where 'the participant is as an active co-creator of the research process' (p11). At the heart of this research was the respondent's perspective, as such, stories were respected and accepted as valuable contributions to increasing the understanding of the phenomenon through the appreciation and promotion of the role of context.

6.1.9 Researchers insights and final thoughts

This final section adds to the explicit conversations regarding reflexivity, which have permeated this study. Pring (2002) and Dean and Whyte (2006) believe that educational researchers must see themselves as part of a moral community, adopt a disposition to find and tell the truth, whilst respecting respondents and showing modesty in the presentation of conclusions. On aggregate, as I glance back, the major takeaways from this research concern (ethical) awareness, trust and responsibility, and how they emanated from self, to organisation and society. Not only was this endemic in the research, but also endemic in my approach to it. Like my leaders I identified with the values (virtues) in Figure 3. According to Pendlebury and Enslin (2002) and Israel (2015) *trust* and *integrity* are necessary for the survival of research. They offer reassurance and confidence in the accuracy and originality of the work. Research concerns duty, obligation and beneficence

(Israel, 2015). As such, I keenly felt *responsibility for self, to the community of educational researchers, and to society* through the publication of this scholarly work. I believe this research to be socially relevant and useful, with potential to inform public opinion and contribute to the leadership debate; therefore the insights must be shared.

Whilst I have openly acknowledged of a range of reflexive research processes in this thesis (see sections 1.6, 4.2 and 6.1.8), I now take the opportunity to reflect on the personal challenges of carrying out this piece of research. Similarly to Seidman (2013) I gained a great deal from carrying out the interviews. As Basit (2010) suggested, the 'desire to know, to learn people's views and perceptions of the facts, hear their stories, discover their feelings, and overcome difficulties' (p111) was a powerful focus. I gained a deeper understanding of the phenomenon in question through an appreciation of the complexity of others' lives. I felt privileged to hear and share these stories and took great pleasure from the interactions. I sought to be both a responsible and worthy witness, and a respectful and honest reporter.

Similarly to my leaders, the experience of leading this research is also reflected in Figure 8. With hindsight, I can see how confidence, doubt, and emotions influenced me. Few researchers acknowledge that 'values, feelings, culture and history shape and define the enquiry' because focus is largely on 'rational and technical competencies' (Herman, 2010, p283). Qualitative research is 'time consuming, intimate and intense' (Herman, 2010, p283). Interviewers need courage to avoid self-destruction, resilience to manage rejection, and self-management to realise experience and to deal with inconsistencies (Patton, 2002, p35). Indeed, I have acknowledged my difficulties as a researcher achieving rapport with Vicar-General-USA. Whilst it was a one-off experience, it caused me to re-evaluate my technique, and question whether I had simply missed cues and signs (see page 142). Indeed, interpretive, qualitative research is rarely smooth (Silverman, 2016).

I began my research journey as a relative novice in the UK. Of the seven years on this project, I spent the first two years living in the USA. Although geographically distant from my research institution, I was welcomed as a visiting scholar by The George Washington University, Graduate School of Human and Organisational Development. I was given full access to resources, expert staff and treated as a full member of the research fraternity. This helped in two major ways; formal and informal scholarly interactions allowed me to refine and shape the initial proposition, but it was the exposure to the community of scholar/practitioners which catalysed and sustained my interest. Professional curiosity is important according to Peabody *et al.* (1990) ; it was the stimulus for this study, but also manifested as a powerful motivational force.

Indeed, following the economic crisis, and more recently given media reports, like others (Brown and Treviño, 2006, Eisenbeiß, 2012) I began to wonder where the ethical leaders were. This research has shown they are amongst us *alive and well* (Winston, 2007, Zheng *et al.*, 2015); but under-represented. As a platform, this research provides a solid starting point for a new type of (ethical) leadership and its development. Through the lens of high-value leaders, my research allows us to appreciate what is really involved in leading ethically in alternative settings and represents the grounding spoken of by Hodges and Howieson (2017) . Although it appears to be leadership for specific sectors, it is also leadership for the benefit of all. And whilst this research does not concern enlightenment regarding policy, or policy-makers, it offers a different route to bringing about desirable social change. It asks nascent leaders to focus on developing heightened levels of (ethical) self-awareness; moreover it provides a road map to show the way.

Leaders must understand who they are, what underpins personal ethical disposition, recognise and acknowledge weaknesses and flaws in order to initiate measures to overcome the personal and organisational challenges to leading ethically. The leaders in this study have revealed leadership to be an ethical endeavour underpinned by responsibility to self, others and society. It is hoped that this research can inspire and motivate leaders in for-profit contexts to see

beyond the obvious stakeholders, to consider the wider, far-reaching socially salient consequences of personal and organisational conduct. This research responds directly to scholars such as Voegtlin (2016) and celebrates the intrinsic and extrinsic value of tapping into humane and justice orientations to support a welfare-driven leadership for the 21st Century.

> *"We are now faced with the fact that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. In this unfolding conundrum of life and history, there "is" such a thing as being too late. This is no time for apathy or complacency. This is a time for vigorous and positive action"*
>
> *Martin Luther King Jr, 1967*

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Appendices

Appendix A – Sampling Frame

Leader Code	Pseudonym	Sector USA	Gender	Age	Status	Date of interview	Length of Interview	Access/Gatekeeper	Location
A	Lt-General-USA	Military	M	58	Retired	03/05/12	1:35:28	**Imprimatur (Military)**	Office, downtown DC
B	Ambassador-USA	Government	F	64	Retired	22/05/12	1:46:53	Personal Contact	Restaurant, over lunch
C	Charity Head-USA	Charity	F	61	Active	05/06/12	1:37:37	Serendipitous call	Charity HQ
D	Vicar-General-USA	Clergy	M	82	<mark>Deceased 2015</mark>	24/05/12	1:15:08	Serendipitous call	Diocesan Office
E	Headmaster-USA	Education	M		Active	10/05/12	1:34:10	Personal Contact	Headmaster's Office, School

Leader Code	Pseudonym	Sector UK	Gender	Age	Status	Date of Interview	Length of Interview	Access/Gatekeeper	Location
F	Lt-General-UK	Military	M	49	Active	29/07/13	48:46	**Imprimatur (Military)**	Officers Mess
G	MP-UK	Government	M	65	Active	13/01/13	1:25:31	**Imprimatur (Military)**	Parliamentary Office
H	Charity Head-UK	Charity	M		Active	12/12/13	1:18:25	**Imprimatur (Military)**	Charity HQ
I	Archbishop-UK	Clergy	M	67	Active	07/03/14	1:30:38	Family Priest (UK)	Archbishop's Residence
J	Principal-UK	Education	F		Retired	24/09/13	1:31:19	Personal Contact	Lounge – Hotel

N.B. Some ages were not known.
Blue: Military facilitation of access.

1. How would you describe your leadership *style*? (A)
2. Have you heard of ethical leadership; (E) what does this suggest to you? (B)(Component of leadership or more fundamental)? (D)
3. What ethical challenges did you face in your career? (E)
4. What helped or hindered decision-making for you? (C)
5. What shaped the decision that you made (D) (situational influences/factors/personal values)?
6. How did you 'know' whether you were doing the right thing? (D) What did people affected think? (C) Any further reflection now? (D)

7. Have you ever been asked to take a course of action, which was against your moral principles? (E) How did you resolve this? (B)
8. Do you think that every decision you make has ethical implications? (F)
9. Are ethical decisions particularly problematic? (E) Why? (D)
10. Do you always feel confident exercising your moral judgment? (E) Why do you think that is? (D)
11. Were there specific incidents, environments, or experiences, which shaped your morals & values? (A) Perhaps you were naturally able to do this? (F) Did you continue to develop your capacity throughout your career? (D) How? (C)
12. Do you think it is possible to develop ethical leadership in others? (F) Could it be taught? (B)

13. Does your organization help individuals make the right decisions? (A) How? (B)
14. Is decision-making the same at all levels in your organization? (F) Are decisions easier or harder to make depending on rank and responsibility? (F)
15. Do you think that your organization faces the same ethical challenges as others? (F)
16. Do you think that some types of organizations are more ethical (morally disposed) than others? (F)
17. Are some organizations more difficult/easy to be ethical in? (F)

Appendix C – Protocol Statement

Dear Participant,

As you may already know, I am currently working toward a Doctor of Philosophy in Education at Worcester University, United Kingdom. My thesis topic currently reads as '*Is ethical decision-making problematic: A qualitative study of prominent leaders in not-for-profit organisations'*. I seek to further understand the nature of leadership in relation to possible decision making enablers and constraints and how they influence the decisions leaders make *in situ.*

I am particularly interested in leaders and followers from non-profit organizations, and these I define as charitable organizations, the clergy, the military, and educational establishments. I am keen to gather data in the USA and the UK. My hope is that this might offer a further cultural dimension to the study. I would like to carry out a series of semi-structured interviews in order to gather this data, and once transcribed individual interview transcripts will be sent electronically to their owners for endorsement. The data will not be used for any other purposes, or other studies in compliance with the accepted ethical guidelines relevant for educational research (BERA, 2011) and the University of Worcester Ethical Guidelines for Good research Conduct (2013).

Any information that you disclose during this study will be held in the strictest confidence, and your identity anonymised in both the transcripts and in the final thesis (which may become a public document). This research will only be genuine and useful if you are able to express your opinions and experiences freely, and in a safe environment. It is my express intention to use your valuable contribution in a wise and ethical manner, as befits this project.

I believe the time has come to more fully understand the role that ethics plays in the leadership process, and what better way than to ask those who have had experienced challenging decisions and their consequences in real-life situations.

Your participation is graciously received,

Marie Stephenson
Graduate School of Education
University of Worcester

Appendix D – Field notes diary excerpt

Respondent	Date	Interview Notes
Leader A	03/05/12	10.00am – Private Office, Washington DC Respondent very relaxed, and pleased to see me, offered me coffee, and introduced me to a colleague and the rest of his team at the location. There follows a brief discussion regarding the interview and the protocol statement, which was given again because the respondent had not recalled reading it. The respondent was comfortable being recorded, consented to the research again formally on record, and moved closer to the microphone to ensure he was being heard/recorded properly. The respondent maintained eye contact throughout the interview and was very animated (hands) as I asked questions and he answered. To begin with the respondent was asked a rudimentary question about leadership style, to get acquainted and I felt that, although he went 'off message' slightly, it would have been rude to interrupt, and curtail his free dialogue. Throughout the rest of the interview I was able to manage the discussion by waiting, then interjecting at appropriate moments to ensure that the information (data) was what was required. I had to use hand gestures, and facial expressions to indicate I wanted more, or that we needed to return to the focus. This didn't always work. Senior leaders are used to being listened to by subordinates, who due to rank, won't intervene. I began to be a little more bold when the respondent veered off, thankfully this did not hamper the discussion, instead it sometimes lead to more fascinating elucidation of the respondents understanding of their behaviour. The interview over-ran, and I will try to prevent this happening in the future, however, I suspect that because I had met the respondent socially, and we shared a common connection through the Military, he felt really comfortable in my company. At the end, I thanked the respondent for his honesty, genuine views and reiterated that the transcript would be sent to him for endorsement and that particular names would be redacted for both security and ethical reasons. The respondent was happy to meet again, if required.

Respondent	Date	Interview Notes
Leader D	24/05/12	Arrived at respondents office Diocesan Centre, USA No drink offered. Respondent continued to take and make calls throughout the interview. The general feeling was that the respondent was doing me an enormous favour, and that my questions would need to be very expert in order to elicit the right answers (this was verbalised to me). There was a constant feeling of patronisation throughout the interview, and the questions were expertly deflected away from anything contentious. There was a considerable distance between us physically. The exchange however, was friendly enough, although that was down to me adopting a deferential position (the respondent was very senior – in age). I had a distinct feeling that I was being judged (my strength of faith), my work (PhD topic and approach) and that my gender was an issue. Although, the respondent asked many times 'if that was what I was looking for'; this was more of a passive aggressive approach. There was a 'holding back', and the respondent made attempts to deflect any probing questions. I would describe the interview as unsuccessful overall, there was little genuine rapport, but the data was not completely useless. I was relieved when the interview had ended, I hadn't enjoyed it, and I suspect that the respondent had viewed it as an inconvenience to his day.

Respondent	Date	Interview Notes
Leader G	13/01/13	2:45pm – Houses of Parliament 3.40pm – Escorted to MPs office for interview 3.45pm – Interview commenced. Respondent was very welcoming, and before the interview commenced asked about my husband's current post. This established a relaxed the tone for the conversation, and allowed for a pre-set understanding of trust and confidence. The respondent was able, as was the interviewer, to settle into the rhythm of honest exchange. There were several interruptions (calls), which is expected when taking a considerable amount of time out of the day of such a busy, popular, senior MP. These did not faze the respondent, calls were taken in my presence; but the recording paused for confidentiality reasons.

		The first few warm-up questions elicited lengthy responses, which were a little off topic, however I did not interrupt nor censure at this early stage. The interviewee needed to know that I was interested in his voice, and I felt it unwise at such an early stage to 'stamp' my authority or take control. There were times where I had to 'reel in' the respondent, but this was done sensitively, playback techniques were used to restore structure. Overall, the exchange was relaxed, frank, uninterrupted (as it could be) by other individuals at the respondents office. We sat informally on sofa and chair and I was offered a cup of tea. The atmosphere was convivial, rarely was the respondent stuck for words, and only one question engendered a longish pause. When the interview was concluded, having lasted approximately 1 hour 25 minutes. The respondent helped me on with my coat, casually leaned on the walls of his office and invited my husband and I to join him in the Parliamentary Bar at a mutually convenient time in the future. He remarked how much he had enjoyed the interview, and recommended some reading for me. **Further notes**: My husband spoke to the respondent at a function in February 2016, and he warmly remembered the interview and how much he had enjoyed it, and extended his best wishes for completion of my PhD.

Appendix E – Abridged transcript

Leader B

MS: Have you ever… get a decision without an ethical twist?
Leader B: Well I mean on, on one level, every decision has consequence. I mean the fact that we had lunch here instead of some place else you know, this place now has two more customers than it had. You, you, could run yourself ragged if you take it… too far. And I don't go that far, I don't, I don't worry about the ethics of having gazpacho over, over clam chowder! But, um, and so, yeah. I mean there are decisions; there are some decisions that you're making for… Maybe, I, I, I'm aware that on some level people are going to be affected, and that the kind of policy people that I , I have no time for, are the ones who are, are kind of operating on some macro chessboard. You know, of states and governments and things like that, and you know, you, you have to be aware of, of the consequences of what you are doing. And sometimes you will take a look at it and you'll kind of go, I'm not particularly keen about you know, the great consequences on this. There aren't bad ones, um, not everything rises to the level of the ethics are the one of the prime factors. That's not there in every single decision you make, but there is a consequence to every decision you make. Um, and so I guess that sense of a, accountability is there. Um, if you, if you, turned everything into a major ethical debate um, you first of all would probably end up paralyzed. Ah, and then you could also take it to the silly extreme, you know I mean, you know, is it more important to support the corn farmers of Iowa or the tomato growers of California! Yeah. You know, that 's getting to the silly range. (1:02:02)
MS: So have you always felt confident exercising your moral judgment? Do you feel confident when you do it?
Leader B: Yeah. I do. I do.
MS: Why do you think that is? Where, what gives you that inner confidence?
Leader B: Mmm. I think some of it is um; I was forced to rely on myself and my own judgment, um, fr… very, very early. Um, and I really had no one to check things with, um. I had to make decisions and I had to live with it, and I, you know and I can't even remember how far back I felt that way. And so…
MS: So was that something you were born with then ▮▮▮, because I'm get… am I getting the sense that you didn't have anybody to role model from? So it had to be somewhere?
Leader B: Yeah. Um…
MS: Was it just you, that you're, genetic you?
Leader B: I'm not you know, I mean, I don't, I don't know you know, exactly who I modeled. Um, I mean, negative models I can come up with um, um, but positive models, not really. And so, and, and, you know I was, really I was, I was…
MS: Were the negative models saying, saying to you, this is how I don't want to be? Rather than how I want to be?
Leader B: No. It was, it was more, I mean it was… Without getting deeply psychological I mean it… I was essentially abandoned when I was very young.
MS: (Sighs)
Leader B: and I yes, I lived with my grandmother who I have a lot of respect for um, and I lived with my aunt, who I have a lot of affection for, um, but, you know, the kind of, you know what, at least my romantic idea of you know, of a parent…

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Maybe it was watching too much you know, of the 1950's and 60's family you know, shows. You know, my parents were not Ozzie & Harriet, they were not Donna Reed and that kind of you know, *'Leave it to beaver'*, going into the house and asking your wise parents, you know what is the right thing or the wrong thing to do and having that nice… I don't remember any of that.

MS: So we are talking about self-reliance?

Leader B: Yeah. And, and…

MS: And, survival?

Leader: Uhmm, and having to live with myself. Um…

MS: So you must know yourself pretty well?

Leader B: I think on one level I do, um, in the sense that… yeah… I mean, and I've, I, I guess because I've had to rely on my own judgment um, and, I mean I've had friends, absolutely. But, but, but, yeah. It's been more you know, I don't, I don't have a, you know, a priest or a grandfather or anybody else who, you know is sort of the wise person whose knee I sat at. (1:05:32)

MS: So has that had, so how has your sort of moral dispensation developed then over the years?

Leader B: Mm, mm, maybe in a sense you know, because if you look at some of these stories, I understand what it means to be abandoned. And so, you know looking at ████ um, that somebody needs to be there to help her, and I'm that person right now. Right now, I'm the one who is going to figure out if she 's going. And in a sense…

MS: So empathy's really important? That's what I'm getting from you… self awareness… and empathy?

Leader B: Yeah. Yeah. Mm huh. Um, you know.

MS: Those are great qualities.

Leader B: Yeah. Um, and so yeah. I think, I think that's part of it, and being able to project what some…. You know. And it's probably also why I, you know I, I really like my student who is struggling and fighting to figure out something, rather than the kid who is just coasting because he always kind of reminds me of… You ever seen that movie 'they way we were'?

MS: I think I have.

Leader B: Oh it's a great; it's a great schlocky chick flick. With Robert Redford and Barbara Streisand.

MS: Oh I love Barbara Streisand. She is my ultimate favorite.

Leader B: Yeah. Yeah. It's a great movie but there is a um, he's, kind of this very privileged preppy and he writes an essay in college which, that, um you know, he was like… his country it all came too easily for him. And, and so you know, Alan my coasting kid, is… you've never been pushed, you've never been tested, you've never really gone out there and found out. You know, who are you? You know what, what is important to you? Um, if you are completely on your own in the world, with nobody around you, who would you be? (1:07:36)

MS: Wow?

Leader B: and, and I guess that's the question that I had to answer, um…

MS: Yeah, when you had to look in the mirror what are you, what's staring back at you?

Leader B: Yeah. And is, is, you know…

MS: And do you like that person?

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Leader B: Yes. Ahuh. And can I live with the decisions that I am making um, and so you know, in all of these cases you know, I didn't ask somebody else you know 'what should I do'?

MS: Oh right! (1:08:01)

Leader B: Yeah. And I also understood you know if I was wrong there would be consequences.

MS: But, then you, if you, if you didn't need to ask somebody else what to do. That, I mean that, that shows a real conf... a real confidence in your moral judgment?

Leader B: UAhmm.

MS: You know.

Leader B: I mean I guess so. I mean I guess I am. Um, I mean, I'm sure I've made mistakes, I know I've made mistakes, um, and, and there have been times when after those mistakes it's been 'what were you thinking' you know, you know why did you do that you know, why do you feel so crappy about it now?

MS & Leader B: (Laugh) (1:08:36)

Appendix F - Leader contact record (US)

Leader	Initial contact	Follow-up					
A	Dinner **19th May 2011** guests of foreign Military Diplomatic Attaché. Seated beside Leader A, had a conversation about my research, and how Leader A had experienced a specific ethical dilemma during career.	Leader A contacted my military connection (26th May 2011) offering a willingness to be interviewed. Email forwarded to me (27th May 2011) I was advised to make further contact personally.	E-mail sent 17th Jan 2012 seeking confirmation of interest and availability. Same day response from Leader A, offering service, and proposing to contact his friend (a Cardinal) to add to my sample.	I e-mail 5th March 2012, asking for availability, and reporting that the interview questions are ready. In response 6th March 2012 he asks for prospective dates, and that the Cardinal's Office is being non-committal.	I reply by e-mail 28th March suggesting last week of April 2012, and first week of May 2012.	11th April 2012 Leader A e-mails to report no success with Cardinal's Office.	I e-mail Leader A 18th April 2012, suggesting **Thursday 3rd May 2012**, and attach the protocol statement for the study. He responds suggesting 10am-12pm, but could make more time if necessary. In further exchanges, we confirm the location, his office downtown DC.
B	Meet fellow parents at 8th Grade Cocktail party (**23rd Sept 2011)**. Following a discussion regarding my research, parent (ex Clinton Administration) offers her friend as a respondent, and volunteers an introduction.	I am forwarded the e-mail response from Leader B offering to be part of my PhD research (7th Feb 2012).	I send an initial introductory e-mail to Leader B explaining my circumstances, and re-affirming my connection with our shared contact, and my military imprimatur. I suggest April 2012 for the interview. Lead B responds, April is inconvenient and suggests I 'nudge' her again around May 1st to check availability.	I e-mail 1st May, suggesting 21st May 2012, Leader B replies 3rd May 2012, suggesting Thursday 24th May. Following enquiries about my transport, Leader B offers to meet at 1pm in a Café for lunch/coffee/tea. I send Leader B the protocol statement.	Leader B e-mails, 11th May 2012, requesting a change to the date. I respond with flexibility and several alternatives. Leader B suggests the same location and time, but **Tuesday 21st May 2012** instead. Following a few more friendly e-mails the interview is confirmed.		
C	Phone call was made to a National US Charity **18th April 2012)**; spoke to Director of Personnel & Finance (gatekeeper) regarding potential of founder to be PhD respondent. Explained study, and offered to send further information to secure respondent.	Email sent 18th April 2012, to gatekeeper explaining my credentials, circumstances and the study. The request is to gain consent and participation from charity head. Gatekeeper responds saying she will reply when she has checked CEOs schedule. I get same day response letting me know that the diary will be finalized 17th May, she will get back to me then.	I e-mail 17th May 2012, nudging gatekeeper, and confirming my willingness.	Gatekeeper replies 18th May 2012, informing me that I am scheduled in the founder's diary for **5th June 2012** from 1-2pm. She gives address and parking details. She also requests a list of questions prior to the interview. In reply I offer to re-send the protocol statement, but decline to send the interview questions, explaining how I haven't sent the questions to any respondents, and was after a spontaneous, rather than a scripted exchange. I conclude by saying how much I am looking forward to meeting everyone at the Charity.			
D	18th April contact made via e-mail to Parish Priest, asking for access to Bishop for PhD.	Parish Priest replies (20th April 2012), the Bishop is too busy.	My host Professor at George Washington University Graduate School of Education suggests I contact a fellow PhD student who has contacts with clergy. I e-mail 8th May 2012, however the response is unhelpful.	Call made to Diocesan Office; spoke to secretary asking who in the leadership would be available or willing to be interviewed for my PhD. She suggests the Vicar General.	An apt is made with the Vicar General for **24th May 2012** at Diocesan Offices. A protocol statement is brought on the day.		
E	Leader E was approached directly. Following a discussion, he was interested in the project and was keen to participate, feeling strongly about ethical leadership.	I emailed Leader E **2nd April 2012** asking for about an hour of his time, and to find his availability. He responded, happy to meet suggesting specific days at the end of April.	He was sent the protocol statement, and research intentions (18th April 2012), I suggested 1st May 9.30am, and offered to bring refreshments. He responded that 1st May was inconvenient; I was to suggest another day. I suggested Tuesday 8th May 2012 same time, he agreed.	I sent Leader E an e-mail reminder 7th May. He thanked me for the reminder and changed the time to 9.45am, then changed the time once more, back to 9.30am, because he had a further apt after me. I offered to change the day because I make it clear that I would need more than an hour, he agreed, and we settled on **Thursday 10th May 2012** at 10am.			

Appendix G - Leader contact record (UK)

Leader	Initial contact	Follow-up				
F	My military connection speaks directly to Leader F, asking if they could spare time for my PhD research. Leader F agrees on principle.	Interview scheduled for **29th July 2013,** Officer's Mess.				
G	On my request, my military connection forwards a request to his contact regarding Leader G. This contact responds explaining that he will have to go through a further associated organisation, but also asks for details of the study.	I respond by sending a lengthy e-mail explanation, and how I am connected to the imprimatur (Military). My e-mail is forwarded to Leader G's outer office. A further, chance meeting with Leader G at national event reveals that he had not seen the forwarded e-mails from the Military contact, and promised to dig them out.	I am contacted by MPs private secretary and asked to arrange a day and time for the interview.	I reply asking for prospective dates.	I am invited to Portcullis House, and given almost 2 hours of the MPs time. **N.B. From first contact to interview was four months.**	
H	I make the initial by telephoning the Charity Headquarters and asking to speak to the person in charge of the founder's diary. I leave my details with the Charity and they assure me the PA will call back. I explain my connections and the research.	The founder's PA calls back, and requests I send information, which will be passed onto the founder for consideration. I send an e-mail explaining the study, my connections, and my proposed schedule of completion and the protocol statement (**23rd Oct 2013**). My e-mail is acknowledged as received by the PA, who assures me she will be in touch when she has discussed it with the founder.	I hear nothing, and then e-mail to nudge (11th Nov 2013). The PA apologizes for the lack of contact, and promises to get back to me.	The PA e-mails me 15th Nov 2013, offering the afternoon of the 12th December 2013.	I respond 16th November 2013, asking to firm up the arrangements.	18th November 2013, PA responds with location, and time (2pm, Charity HQ). I confirm by return for **12th December 2013**
I	I ask my Parish Priest (**14th Jan 2014**) if he can make introductions and contact Archbishop on my behalf. I provide a protocol statement by e-mail and suggested dates for Leader I. My Priest replies that he has forwarded the information, but is not hopeful.	I decide to e-mail Leader I myself, and send a long e-mail explaining the project, and apologize for the direct contact. I also send the protocol statement (10th Feb 2014). This does not work either.	I call the Diocesan Office 27th Feb 2014), and speak to Leader I's administrator (PA). I forward the e-mail I sent, and wait for a response. The PA expects His Grace to e-mail me in a few days.	Another of the Leader I's secretaries e-mails me, Leader I offers me 10-11am on **Friday 7th March 2014.** I accept by remittance.	**N.B.** *In between waiting for Leader I to respond, I spoke to one of his acquaintances, who advised me that he preferred letters. I decided to write up a formal letter, I include the protocol statement and a small biography of my academic accomplishments. It is following this that Leader I responds with a date and time.*	
J	I encounter Leader J in the local Doctor's Surgery, we get talking and I explain my research and we discuss old times. Leader J agrees to be interviewed for my PhD.	I contact Leader J directly by e-mail (**5th August 2013**), following the chance encounter in the Doctor's Surgery. I remind Leader J of the research purposes and attach a protocol statement for examination. The exchange is lively and friendly.	Leader J responds 16th August, apologizes for not replying sooner, but was on holidays.	I reply 4th September, send the protocol statement again, at Leader J's request.	Leader J replies 17th September 2013, suggesting we meet at a local Hotel and interview over coffee, but leaves it up to me. We eventually settle on **Tuesday 24th September 2013**, at 10.30am in the local Hotel.	

Appendix H – E-mail communication

Marie STEPHENSON

To

PA to Leader H

10/23/13 at 9:31 AM

Hi Leader H PA,

Very many thanks for getting back to regarding the possibility of including Leader H in my PhD studies.

I thought it would be wise for you to know a little about myself.
Certainly in the academic sense I have included a link to my page at the University of Worcester to verify my credentials, and give you an idea of my professional background. However, on a more personal level, I am an ███

We have lived in ███████████████ where among many other roles ████████████
████████████████████████████████████

For my PhD, which is now titled 'Ethical decision-making: A qualitative study of prominent leaders in not-for-profit organisations', I have carried out a series of semi-structured in depth interviews, these have been undertaken in both the USA and here in the UK. I have conducted 5 in the USA already and 2 here in the UK, I have chosen organisations such as the military, Government, the clergy, charities and educational settings as my 'not-for-profit' contexts. I have only interviewed very senior leaders, for example the CEO of a very prominent US charity, and a US Ambassador. Since I believe too much (scholarly) emphasis is put on the ethical transgressions of leaders of commercial organisations, my aim is to highlight the ethical decision-making processes leaders experience when there is no overt profit motive. The project is due for completion toward the end of 2014.

With this in mind, I am currently arranging and scheduling the final 3 interviews. Interviews last approximately one and a half hours (at the most). They take the format of a series of seventeen questions, split into 3 sections regarding leadership, decision-making and organisational concerns. Respondents have not been given the questions in advance because I am after a really spontaneous, relaxed, conversational atmosphere of honest exchange, and this format sets my study apart from others where answers sound scripted and rehearsed or involve lengthy questionnaires. The attached protocol statement explains what I will do with contribution, and if ███████ has any further questions I am very happy to oblige.

As we briefly discussed on the telephone, an interview date of December 2013 would be most helpful, this gives me adequate time to transcribe, analyse and use all of my data before final the write-up.

I sincerely hope that ███████ is able to participate; he will be in very good company,
I have been extremely lucky that all of my chosen participants have been open, engaging and interesting people, and like me, they are keen to show that there are ethical leaders out there making these difficult, high-pressure decisions every day.

I look forward to your response, and am, of course at your disposal,

Marie Stephenson MSc Educational Leadership & Management
Research Student Graduate School of Education Worcester University

Appendix I – Member Check E-mail

Marie STEPHENSON

To

Leader A

10/04/14 at 11:14 AM

Hi General,

I know this seems like such a long time ago, and this message will likely come as a bolt out of the blue.
However, since we got back from the USA in 2012 I have been extremely busy working on my PhD, of which you are a fundamental part.
All the data has been collected here now also (5 UK leaders from similar contexts), and the transcriptions complete.

So, as agreed, I am ready to send you your transcript.
Now of course, I recognise that you are a very busy person, and think that it might be more sensible to offer you a few solutions since the transcript is 30 pages long.
Would you like the full transcript sent for you to read; or would you prefer that I analyse the transcript and send you what I intend to use as direct quotes?
Now of course I can also do both, and will be delighted to do whatever you wish.

I also want to reassure you of my integrity, you will be completely anonymised in the thesis, and any references in the transcript which allude to you, or other people whom it would be possible to identify you through will be redacted. I will also send you a list of the questions I asked, and whether you would be so kind as to look through them and if you had time, see if there is anything new you would like to add to your testimony.

I am truly grateful for all the help you have given thus far.

We returned to the UK 2012, and ▮▮▮▮▮ now works at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ so all good news.
On the research front, I have successfully passed all my 'boards' and I am pressing for an end of year completion!

I sincerely hope that you and your family are well,
with my warmest wishes,

Marie

Marie Stephenson MSc Educational Leadership & Management
Research Student | Graduate School of Education | University of Worcester

Leader	Interview text	Inductive code	A Priori Code	Interpretive notes	Time
A	I think for the military that I have been in part of this is fitness, part of this is being out in the field with soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines. Sharing their pain, understanding that. Some of it is understanding their family challenges, so it's holistically being out there. Demonstrating through execution, participation, and open, honest communication. So those are the, I think those are the things that would define me more than others.	Sharing Understanding challenges Holistic Execution Participation Holistic Open Honest communication	Military different Leader understandings Defining leadership Role modelling	Understand followers from same experiences. Understanding the unique challenges of the job Role Thus is how he understands himself.	
A	I guess doing is, is more, is, is, is, is more than anything else. I mean, I, I, I prefer to help people take apart what they've done.	Helping Doing Actions	Role modeling Positive	Leadership is about positive actions	
A	I don't think you can be an effective leader unless you're present.	Being present	Effective		
A	if you don't show yourself and your organization at multiple levels so people know who their leaders are and communicate what it is you expect from them, Whether it's a strategic vision, whether you're at a tactical or operational level, and you've got to get down to what you're trying to do inside of your smaller organization, but I mean, you got to, be present to do that. They need to be able to interact with you, 'cos communication is not one-way but many, many leaders feel it is. I mean its message sent…message received…	Being present Show yourself Consistent Free interaction 2-way communication	Different levels of leadership Strategic Tactical Operational	Must be consistent at all levels Leaders must be seen and accessible	
A	I think trust is the core piece that underpins your ability to be an effective leader. Your, your organization has to trust you and the people you deal with have to trust you, your clients have to trust you. The society, the nation, whom-ever you serve, in, in a larger level has to trust you, and I think that's the core, ah… fibre that runs through an effective leader, and, and trust of course, is values based.	Universal trust is core Trust is a value Trust is a fibre	Leader abilities Trait	Some values are more important than others Leadership is service Effective leaders are trusted and trust others	4:38
A	in professions. If we take a profession, whether it's a doctor, or a lawyer, a military… we like to believe that we are a profession, and that we have a professional military ethic ah…that defines our values, you know.	Profession Values	Military context different Military ethic	Military is a profession like others, but is different in that ethics defines them.	
A	Loyalty, duty, ah… respect… ah… um… ah, honor, integrity, personal courage. Those are kind of six out of seven of the army's values that they inculcate in you all along. Going to WestPoint was duty, honor, country. Ah… you know duty, doing the right thing, doing your job. Honor being honest, mostly a cadet will not lie, cheat or steal, nor tolerate those who do	Army values Reinforced Duty Honor Country Honest	Military values Values education	Military are taught how to behave, what is right and wrong? Little tolerance for transgressions.	
A	So it's such a climate where someone lies to you has broken the trust relationship.	Trust	Organisational Climate		

N. B. In purple, the theme of **trust** is followed as means to demonstrate the process of tracing.

Leadership Philosophy	Personal philosophy	Leadership (Style)	Leader Role	On being a leader	Effective leader	Leadership Skills	Communication
Be, know, do	Can be religious based	Interactive	Mentor	Honorary	Presence	Honest Communicator	Strategic
What you see is what you get	Spiritually based	Direct	Coach	Chosen	People want predictability		Tactical
Doing is more	About people	Clear	Teacher	Effective	Make information more permeable		Operational
More than self	High standards of behavior	Interaction with environment	Comrade	Consistent	Not isolated		Up and down the line
'Walking the talk'		Being present Showing oneself	Help others understand their behavior	Accountable	Getting out		Sense of org at different levels
'You are the sum of what you were, what you are and what you will be'		Open	Model positive Behavior	Live with yourself	Ethics crucial		Of expectations
'Values based'		Sympathize (really means empathize)	Custodian of organizational culture				Gaining feedback for EDM
		Leadership is values-based					Explaining EDM to others affected

Ethics & Values	Ethics	Values	Trust x2	Personal Courage	Duty	Loyalty
More than human interaction (transcend)	Permeates everything	Defined by military ethic	Underpins effectiveness	Physical	Doing the right thing when nobody's looking	Throughout org
People are generally good	Ethics fundamental to effectiveness & successful leader	Loyalty x3	Societal	Moral		Communicated through moral courage
	Not separable	Duty x2	Fiber that runs through effective leader	Necessary to do the right thing		
	Judeo-Christian	Respect	Values based			
	Different from legal	Honor x 2	Relationship to be upheld & protected			
	Situational	Being honest	Police & fire dept also built on trust			
	Duty concept	Integrity	Foundational			
	Responsibility to do what's right	Personal Courage				

N. B. This is a small sample of the data. I have chosen to follow the concept and appearance of the word *trust* to demonstrate how I can trace its manifestation from transcript to findings.

Appendix L – Mini (half) stages of categorisation

Leader characteristics	Ethical leader characteristic	Unethical leader characteristics	What are values	Important values:	Leader values	Ethical leader values	Org values
Private, removed (B)	Selflessness (A, B, C, G, H, I)	Self-indulgence (E)	Developed through formation (D)	Honesty (A, B, E, F, H)	Respect (I) Respect for others (A, C)	Genuine –true to self (D, G, I)	Institutional pillars (A)
Modest, humble (E)		Narcissistic (B)	Life experiences & events (A, C)	Trust (A, B, C, E, J, H, I)	Courage (I), Personal Courage (A, B) Physical courage (A)	Honest (G, I)	Defined by professional setting (A)
Unconfident (H)		Lack of humanity (A)	Developed in formative years (A, C)	Consistency (A, E)	Honesty (I)	Moral courage (C, G, I)	Inculcated, debated, discussed at WestPoint (A)
Arrogant, charismatic (C)		Dishonest & untrustworthy (F)	Informed by upbringing (E)	Integrity (A, F)	Integrity (C, I, J)	Prudent (E, J)	Reinforced by professional Ed systems (A)
Fierce (G)		Lie, cheat, disrespect (B, E)	Need to be tested (B, D)	Authenticity (E)		Resilient (C)	Embedded (J)

Important values:	Leader values	Ethical leader values
	Respect (I) Respect for others (A, C)	
	Courage (I), Personal Courage (A, B) Physical courage (A)	Moral courage (C, G, I)
Honesty (A, B, E, F, H)	Honesty (I)	Honest (G, I)
Integrity (A, F)	Integrity (C, I, J)	
Authenticity (E)		Resilient (C)
Honour (A) Duty (A)		Genuine –true to self (D, G, I)
Trust (A, B, C, E, J, H, I)		Prudent (E, J)
Consistency (A, E)		

Subtle distinction between leadership + EL as demonstrated by my leaders definitions.

LEADERSHIP

	Interpretive notes
Leadership has an ethical dimension. Leader A describes it as values based. Leader G states that it 'has to be ethical', and for Leader B leadership is about setting ethical standards (ethical tone).	Some see leadership per se' as an ethical endeavour – explicitly ethical – but only 3/10 – Military + Government
Trust is crucial (B, E, J, H I), it must be mutual (B, I), built (E) Leaders valued honesty (A, E, H).	Seems to be the only 'value' that leaders actually use in their definition of what leadership is.

3/10   Amb/Ach

8/10 — people focus

According to Leaders (A, B, C, E, F, H, I and J) leadership is largely a people orientated endeavour directed outwardly from the self. Leaders B and H were concerned about others, not self. Leaders C, H, J and I, believed that their purpose was to serve others as directed by the organisational mission (Leader J). Leader I was unequivocal, stating 'Bishop is servant'.	This is very normative – and has aspects of "servant" leadership to it. – both charity leaders - educator + clergyman.
Some characterised their leadership as being in partnership with others (B, C, and I). Whilst Leaders C, H E, and J described leadership as a collaboration, which strengthened leadership (Leader E), where ideas were shared (Leader H) and opinions valued (Leader C). Leader J summarised her leadership as a relationship with others based upon learning and growth. For leader C, it was a collegial and democratic enterprise.	Shared + distributed leadership – leadership is a relationship. Again, these are normative aspects. Humanitarian focussed leaders *
The purpose of this friendly (Leader H) and mutual (Leader B) 'journey together' (Leader F) was to develop (Leaders A and B) and	Shared.

8/10

8/10.

Much more about the functional aspects of leadership – the tangibles – ethical leadership concerns is more concerned with intangibles.

1