

WOMEN IN LEADER ROLES IN HIGHER EDUCATION: THE RHETORIC AND  
REALITY OF AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP

by

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## **Abstract**

This study explores the gendered experience of twenty senior women leaders within universities across the West and East Midland region. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to examine the women's perceptions of factors which influenced their characterisation of authenticity, the construct of their leadership identity, and the impact of leadership on their health and wellbeing. Unlike earlier work in the field of educational leadership, here the key focus is on exploring the rhetoric and reality of authentic leadership constructed through the experiences of twenty senior women leaders in early twenty-first century Higher Education (HE), and the impact of the enactment of leadership on health and wellbeing.

This study gives a voice to women senior leaders in HE. It reveals the complex interplay of the personal and professional worlds, and the impact on leadership identity, and health and wellbeing. These women strive for 'real' genuine leadership, however, they are not sufficiently positioned in the hierarchical structure to disrupt hegemonic structures and practices. The significance of the study for policy and practice is in its endorsement of an integrated approach, taking into account the personal and professional lives of women, to support their realisation of authenticity, and promote a work-life balance.

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## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS/ WORKING DEFINITIONS**

**Authentic Leadership** – An approach to leadership focusing on the character of the leader rather than the characteristics of leadership and whether the leader is genuine.

**Biological Determinism** – The notion that the fundamental biological nature of human beings does not change regardless of the amount of social change.

**Discourse** – Logical groups of meanings relating to certain social and cultural practices for example feminism. Discourse is the institutionalised use of language, occurring at a disciplinary, political, cultural and small group level.

**Discrimination** – Is the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, especially on the grounds of race, age or gender.

**Feminine** – a visual appearance and a set of performed behaviours traditionally associated with women.

**Feminism** - a range of political movements, ideologies, and social movements that share a common goal: to define, establish, and achieve political, economic, personal, and social rights for women.

**Gender** – a socially constructed identity based on perceived differences between the sexes. The concept men and women have different character traits such as disposition, outlook, attitudes, beliefs and abilities, and the traits characterising men define masculinity, and similarly, the traits characterising women, define femininity.

**Habitus** – An individual's set of learned dispositions operating as organised principles for experiencing, evaluating and living one's daily life. One's habitus determines an individual's thoughts, feelings and actions in their everyday life.

**Hegemony** – the dominance through social and cultural forces of one group over another.

**Identity** – socially and historically constructed qualities and beliefs, of which individuals have several that intersect e.g. class, ethnicity, and gender.

**Othering** – To distance, silence or dismiss aspects of individuals deemed unimportant or marginal from within cultural and social expectations.

**Patriarchy** – A system within society or government where men dominate and women are kept subordinate and oppressed.

**Power** – The ability or capacity of an individual or group to influence or control the course of events or behaviour of others; generally associated with individuals in a position of authority.

Voice – An intentional way of making discernible the view point of the marginalised, the silenced and the oppressed from the more dominant viewpoints, to achieve a goal, including legitimacy and acceptance.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.0 Setting the Scene**

This thesis is a study of gender, leaders, leading, and leadership in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The thesis takes a gendered approach to exploring the practice of authentic leadership and the effect on health and wellbeing. My interest in the field of gender and leadership, and in particular authentic leadership, defined as ‘genuine’ or ‘real’ (Northouse, 2010, p. 205), was first stimulated by the work of Northouse (2010), who examined the developing interest in the field following the advent of global crises such as the 9/11 destruction of the world trade towers, and the world banking failures of 2008. Northouse (2010) argues these events have triggered insecurity amongst individuals, creating the need for ‘genuine’ leaders.

The exploration of issues between gender and leader roles in HEIs is important on several fronts: first, women are still poorly represented in senior leadership positions in HEIs despite greater access to Higher Education (HE), for the academic year 2013/14 women made up 45% of the academic workforce yet accounted for just 20% of Vice Chancellors/ Principals, 29.9% of heads of major academic fields such as science and technology and 22.3% of Professors (Equality Challenge Unit (ECU), 2015); second, disparities in pay evidenced by ECU (2011), demonstrated nearly fifty per cent more men were earning over £50,000 compared to women; third, there have been a plethora of equality and diversity policies, David (2014) argues to little avail; and fourth, there has been a persistence of traditional masculine hegemonic institutional cultures (Teelken and Cole, 2013) as HEIs become ensconced in

marketisation (David, 2014). Competitiveness and commerciality has the potential to problematise the enactment of authentic leadership for leaders, and cause conflict, impacting on a leader's health and wellbeing, this premise is explored in this study. I acknowledge marketisation impacts on men as well as women, however, this research explores the impact on women.

In this study, gender is defined as a socially constructed identity based on perceived differences between the sexes (Collard and Reynolds, 2005), the reason the study uses this definition is because the research explores the construction of gender and the dichotomy of the sexes in the performance of gender. Moreover, Scott's definition of gender recognises the power melees therein, and argues 'gender becomes implicated in the conception and construction of power itself' (Scott, 1986, p. 1069), recognising gender power relations. In addition, intersectionality is an important aspect of this study, defined as interactions between race, age, class, religion, ethnicity, as well as gender, which operate to further marginalise minority groups (Collins, 2015). Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) still only make up 1.3% of the workforce in HE (David, 2014), this underrepresentation in a predominantly white environment can have an emotional and psychological impact on the incumbent (David, 2014). Issues of intersectionality are problematic for marginalised groups, in particular, ethnic minority women, whose gender and ethnicity accentuates their location at the periphery of HEIs (Fitzgerald, 2014).

Having defined what is meant by gender and intersectionality, I will now move on to give an overview of the research aims, research questions, methodology and methods, and the contribution this study makes to the field. The aims of the study are: (i) To broaden the knowledge and understanding of the construct of leadership by senior

women leaders within a HEI context; (ii) Determine whether their leadership practice is authentic; (iii) What influences the adoption of authentic leadership practices; and (iv) To broaden the knowledge and understanding of the impact of leadership on the health and wellbeing of women leaders.

Based on the aims of the study four research questions were formulated:

1. What influences the construct of leadership identity and how does this impact on the practice of leadership?
2. How does gender impact on leadership identity?
3. What authentic leadership practices do women leaders describe?
4. How does the enactment of leadership affect health and wellbeing?

My chosen methodology for this study is narrative inquiry which gathers information on facets of personal experience (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000), through semi structured interviews (Denscombe, 2010), aspects of life story (Busher, 2003) were articulated by each participant.

This research makes an important contribution to the field, first, in the exploration of gendered authentic leadership as this is absent from the scholarly work of George (2003) and George and Sims (2007) in the development of the five dimensions of authentic leadership as examined in this study. Second, there has been insufficient consideration of the enactment of leadership on health and wellbeing within a HEI context. This contribution is relevant as the experiences of women in HEIs remains a neglected area of study (Cole and Gunter, 2010).

Within HEIs there are a number of leadership roles, from senior executive roles such as Vice-Chancellor and Pro Vice-Chancellor to academic leadership roles such as Deans or Heads of School, and including leadership roles which combine teaching,

research and scholarly activity (Black, 2015), this study needs to centre on one role. Hence, the study will focus on academic leadership roles, namely Associate Deans and Heads of School. The reason I have chosen senior academic roles is to reduce variability in the participants as this will enable transferability of the findings (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), and also accessibility, as I utilised an incumbent Associate Dean as a gate keeper who through introduction enabled access to the participants.

Having identified leader roles in HEIs, I will now discuss the definition of leaders, leading and leadership used within this study: 'a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal' (Northouse, 2010, p.3). Leadership is not a trait of an individual leader, but rather an interactional practice between leaders and followers. This conceptualisation renders leadership accessible to everyone not just those in a position of authority. Leaders influence followers in achieving shared objectives, and leaders lead by collaborating and working with followers (Northouse, 2010). The reason I chose this definition of leadership is because it demonstrates the relational aspect between a leader and follower which is one of five key dimensions of authentic leadership (George, 2003), this is discussed later in the thesis.

In summary, endeavouring to understand in greater depth how authentic leadership is constructed through the lived experience (Burkinshaw, 2015) formed the basis of my study. Gaining insights into the enactment of leadership and the impact on the women's health and wellbeing will broaden the knowledge and understanding of the issues women encounter in an HEI context, and support the development of policies and practices that promote equity across the HE workforce.

I will now discuss the background and key concepts of the study.

## **1.1 Background and Key Concepts**

Presently there is much exploration of the underrepresentation of women in leadership within HEI both nationally and internationally, including attempts to address the imbalance. First, the Athena SWAN Charter, this was established in 2005, the Charter seeks to improve gender equality in HEIs through improved representation of women, recognising work to address inequality. Initially focused on science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine, the Charter has since been extended to include other sectors such the arts, humanities and social sciences, and now recognises broader actions to tackle inequalities, such as pay disparities and other discriminatory practices (ECU, 2015). In addition, a unique five-year longitudinal study, the Aurora project, is an effort to redress the balance, and will trace the experiences of women in HE. The project is measuring the impact of the Leadership Foundation's Aurora leadership programme. The aim is to improve the understanding of women's motivation; their leadership aspirations; provide a baseline for the barriers and opportunities to women's advancement; and measure the impact of the programme (Barnard et al., 2016). However, at present this underrepresentation continues despite more women attending university, and completing doctoral programmes (Morley, 2013). Ultimately to disrupt the status quo attention to the advancement of women in senior positions in HEIs needs to be sustained.

The research explores gendered leadership, therefore, it is important to understand how gender is constructed, thus I draw on some of the key concepts in feminist theory and research, including works from Blackmore (1999), Hughes (2002), and Shakeshaft (1987). My rationale for investigating leadership through a gender lens is threefold: first, as indicated earlier, traditionally there has been a predominance of male



researchers in the field of leadership (Northouse, 2010), and the issue of gender, until relatively recently, has largely been ignored; second, as women leaders in the academy are still in the minority I endeavour to investigate their lived experience (Burkinshaw, 2015), and give them a voice; and third, many of the practices identified in scholarly texts originated from testimonies of male leaders (Northouse, 2010).

Arguably traditional dominant discourse on leadership practice has impacted on how good leaders are perceived, with leadership practices immersed in stereotypical masculine practices such as authority, and dominance (Northouse, 2010). Latterly, stereotypical 'feminine' practices such as nurturance, support, and collegiality have come to the fore as a more effective means of managing change in a HEI environment (Blackmore, 1999). However, scholars argue with the global emphasis on universities contribution to socio-economic recovery there has been a revival of traditional leadership practices in an increasingly competitive environment (Blackmore et al., 2015).

The emphasis of this thesis is on the practice of authentic leadership as developed by George (2003). This approach outlines five essential dimensions of authentic leaders namely: passion, whereby leaders have a real sense of purpose for their responsibilities; behaviour, they have strong moral values about the right thing to do; connectedness, they form trusting relationships with peers; consistency, they are self-disciplined and act on their values; and finally, compassion, they are considerate of other's cultures and backgrounds. Authentic leaders have 'a clear idea of who they are, where they are going, and what the right thing is to do' (Northouse, 2010, p. 213).

In conceptualising the development of authentic leadership, I draw on the work of Northouse (2010) who asserts critical life events, either negative or positive, such as

an unexpected promotion, having a child or having a loved one die, can act as the catalyst for an individual's development, and are influential in shaping the construct of authentic leadership. These critical events are similarly described by Cliffe (2016) who used the phrase 'emotional turning points' in her study of female headship. In investigating this approach to the study of female leaders, I acknowledge few studies of senior women in HEIs have sought to understand authentic leadership practice, and the impact of leading and leadership on health and wellbeing.

Before exploring the participants' construction of their leadership practice, it is essential to develop an understanding of how individuals construct their identity, a perception of who they are through their social, cultural, and spiritual experiences (Hogg and Abrams, 1988). However, making sense of lived experience (Burkinshaw, 2015) of women is subjective, as an individual's reality is a product of their own creation, with each person seeing, interpreting the world, and their experiences through their own personal belief system. Arguably this is invaluable as it represents how women make sense of their lives. While there is no single universal woman's experience, focusing on similarities within the women's narratives enables the production of original mutual truths (Blackmore, 1999). To summarise, the investigation examines the complex interplay between lived experience, leaders, leading and leadership within an HEI context.

I will now look to contextualise my study in the relevant literature.

## **1.2 Context of the Study**

Recent studies exploring women's leadership within HEI include those of Barnard et al. (2016), David (2014), Fitzgerald (2014), Morley (2013), and Teelken and Deem (2013). First, Barnard et al. (2016), as highlighted previously, published a first-year

report of a five-year longitudinal study in the UK. The study gathers data on the experiences and aspirations of over 1500 women in HE, and is intended to stimulate change, and identify the support required for women to reach their leadership potential. The findings of the first-year report indicate institutional barriers and constraints to women leaders particularly Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) respondents, who when compared to White British women, were more motivated, and work oriented (Barnard et al., 2016). Second, David (2014) through use of feminist scholar's biographies seeks to emphasise the impact of feminism on HEIs in a dynamic environment of political and social change. Third, Fitzgerald (2014) draws on the everyday experiences of women leaders, indicating some of the ambiguities, and contradictions women in leadership positions face. Fourth, Morley (2013) reviews both national and international data on the prevalence of men in senior positions in HEI, and literature on the challenges women face, before recommending initiatives such as leadership programmes for women, and affirmative action to shift the balance. Fifth, Teelken and Deem (2013) explore the influence of managerialism on gender equality in HEIs from the perception of men and women in a range of roles. The findings indicate that masculine hegemony persists, and managerialism has done little to disrupt the status quo, arguing the nuances of gender inequality are less visible, and therefore more problematic to contest. It is evident in the studies outlined above (Barnard et al., 2016; David, 2014; Fitzgerald, 2014; Morley, 2013; and Teelken and Deem, 2013) aspects of women's authentic leadership practices, its enactment, and the impact of leadership on health and wellbeing are absent.

Next, I will discuss my methodological approach to the study.

### **1.3 Methodological Approach**

In the design and execution of the research the thesis has been informed by a subjective approach to knowledge based on an interpretative epistemology. The research methodology is situated within a constructivist paradigm supporting the use of a narrative inquiry strategy through semi-structured interviews. Narrative inquiry enables the researcher to hear how individuals construct meaning from their belief systems, attitudes, values, and ideas forming their sense of self and identity (Clandinin and Connolly, 2000). The study is located within qualitative methodology as I seek to problematise a positivist approach, and shift emphasis from the 'characteristics of leadership' towards the 'character of leaders' (Rayner and Ribbins, 1999, p.3). Although Rayner and Ribbins (1999) work is in a school context, the distinction drawn between characteristics and character of a leader is pertinent to this study and the five dimensions of authentic leadership (George, 2003). I have chosen narrative inquiry to ensure the voices of the women are heard.

To fulfil the aims of the research (see page 2) I interviewed twenty senior women leaders working in HEIs across the West and East Midland region. As a result, this study offers new proposals for the support of women in HE aspiring to authentic leadership, and an improved work-life balance. Hence, it takes an integrated approach to the recommendations, and implications for future research.

Having set the context of the research this next section will present a summary and address the structure of the thesis.

## **1.4 Structure of the Thesis**

In this introductory chapter, I outlined the development of my interest in authentic leadership, and its impact on health and wellbeing; provided background information about gender and leadership in the UK; introduced the theoretical framework, and indicated what I set out to achieve in this study, and how. The remaining chapters are organised as follows. Chapter two contextualises the study by reviewing the relevant literature framed within George's (2003) five dimensions of authentic leadership. The study seeks to investigate HE leadership through a gender lens, and shift the emphasis from an androcentric approach, therefore, I am sensible of Shakeshaft's (1989, p.327) six stage typology of research amongst women administrators including: (1) absence of women documented, (2) search for women who have been or are administrators, (3) women as disadvantaged or subordinate, (4) women studied on their own terms, (5) women as challenge to theory, (6) transformation of theory. The study does not faithfully utilise the typology, however, I have ordered the literature to indicate first where there is a gender blind approach, and second where the literature is gendered. Chapter three describes the research design exploring the ontology and epistemology determining the choice of methodology, and method for the study. Chapter four presents pen portraits of nineteen of the women interviewed. Chapter five presents the findings of the fieldwork interviews, including a vignette of one participant. Chapter six is a discussion of the findings concluding with a summary of the key findings, and chapter seven sets out the conclusion and recommendations of the study, and presents areas for future research.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter will present a synthesis of various literature, set the study within the current context of HE in the UK, and discuss the potential impact of contextual changes on issues of gender, leaders, leading and leadership. To start, I discuss dominant leadership discourse to highlight traditional conceptualisations, before focusing on authentic leadership, and critical leadership. Next, the literature about women leading in HEI notably the scholarship of Jill Blackmore, Miriam David, Rosemary Deem, Tanya Fitzgerald, Louise Morley, and Pat O'Connor. This section will review gender theory to position my research, and will include key concepts of 'difference', 'experience', 'care' and 'time' in relation to gender identity from the work of Christina Hughes. Finally, I will explore relevant literature on the impact of leadership on health and wellbeing. I will then synthesise my reading framing gender theory within George's (2003) five dimensions of authentic leadership. The thematic approach adopted forms the thematic framework on women's experience of gendered leadership construction in the field of HE, and this will inform the research design.

#### **2.1 The Landscape of Higher Education in England 1980 to Present Day**

Over the past forty years, transformation in both global socio economic, and socio political arenas has led to fundamental change in HE, with HEIs now playing a key role in the global economy (David, 2014). This narrative has become a common perspective to view the relationship between HEIs, and socio-economic development. Evaluative discourses of HE and socio-economic development explore the knowledge society and related concepts of knowledge production, transmission, and transfer.

Within these discourses, lies a dichotomy, on the one hand, the traditionally dominant role of HE in knowledge production and transmission is under challenge. On the other, its place in knowledge production and knowledge transfer is viewed as an intrinsic part of knowledge economies, and socio-economic development (Blackmore et al., 2015).

A knowledge economy is defined as:

Production and services based on knowledge-intensive activities that contribute to an accelerated pace of technical and scientific advance, as well as rapid obsolescence. The key component of a knowledge economy is a greater reliance on intellectual capabilities than on physical inputs or natural resources.  
(Powell and Snellman, 2004, p. 199)

Thus the very survival of universities as idiosyncratic institutions is at risk in a knowledge economy. Knowledge is being produced and communicated by all manner of organisations, and processes, resulting in the loss of universities' claims to 'exclusivity' and 'uniqueness' previously underlined by a long tradition of scholarship (Brennan, 2011).

Likewise the institutional culture of HE, Gruening (2001) argues has been challenged by new forms of management. New Public Management (NPM) is a management system that emerged in the 1980s and is utilized in companies, agencies, and countries. NPM uses market like reforms within the public sector to provide the government with the necessary power to implement a development plan on the economy, while also using competitive market based techniques to enhance public sector production. NPM addresses recipients of public services as customers, and conversely, citizens as shareholders. Therefore, NPM is achieved by applying competition to organisations in the public sector, emphasizing economic, and leadership principles such as: competition; budget cuts; strategic planning; and

improved financial management; evaluation of impact, and hence performance management (Gruening, 2001).

Therefore, with universities over the last few decades moving to a market-based system this has led to several outcomes: universities becoming more autonomous; an increase in the number of providers, both public and private; a lowering of barriers to facilitate competition; public funding for teaching and research has decreased; costs of tuition are met by fees rather than government grants; allocation of research funds are more selective; funders of programmes whether students or employers have increased knowledge and choice; and providers have become more competitive in terms of quality and cost (Brown, 2010a; 2010b). Arguably this managerialism has eroded the academics role and prestige in the management and governance of universities (Deem et al., 2008). This suggests that rather than diminishing masculine hegemonic practices new managerialism has accentuated its existence (Teelken and Deem, 2013).

Further, this element of competitiveness has been underlined by the plethora of information captured for university league tables. This publicly available data currently includes: subject level data, National Student Survey, employment, and salary data. Also available is institution level data regarding bursaries, accommodation costs, and information about the student union. In addition, published information on the UNISTATS website cover elements such as entry qualifications/salary points, students' attrition and completion rates, First Destinations, and links to QAA (Quality Assurance Agency for HE) reports. These datasets, described as Key Information Sets, have reinforced competition amongst providers as the market has diversified, and purchasers shop for the best deal in terms of quality and cost (Brown, 2011).



Consequently, in response to the emphasis on knowledge economies and increased competition, universities are aggressively attempting to locate themselves propitiously in the global rankings, this has arguably led to a revival of traditional forms of leadership, and an emphasis in constructions of 'good' leaders in HEIs (David, 2014). Fitzgerald (2014) argues expectations of HEI leaders to develop institutions to support global economic recovery has had an impact on leaders, with the most impact on women leaders. Moreover, there is evidence the impact on women from ethnic backgrounds aspiring to leadership is far greater than any other group as they operate at the margins of HEIs, and carry the weight of additional burdens such as community expectations. Thus these neo-liberal regimes, a regime whose policies and practices support competitive market-based systems (David, 2014), have resulted in the management, and leadership of HEIs becoming ever more complex, arguably reinforcing exclusionary processes, and practices, leading to an underrepresentation of women in leadership roles (Fitzgerald, 2014). This marginalisation of women is further supported by Duberley and Cohen (2010) who argue the organisational culture of institutions does little to enhance gender equity. Despite prohibiting policies and practices, one of the ways women can negotiate the promotional ladder is through their experience of mentoring which arguably can propel one's career prospects (Searby et al., 2015).

However, during times of turmoil women are appointed to insecure senior leadership roles within the organisation, the 'Glass Cliff' phenomenon (Peterson, 2016). This study demonstrated that women were promoted to senior management roles in a climate where such roles were burdensome, and were waning in importance and notability. Further, Woodward's (2007, p.11) study of women HE leaders reported

‘unmanageable large workloads’. Subsequently, Devine et al.’s (2011) study found the need for leaders to operate within an environment without boundaries, expecting leaders to work long hours, exerting physical and emotional energy. These observations have raised concerns regarding increased stress, a poor work-life balance, and sustainability in academic institutions (Barrett and Barrett, 2007; Edwards et al., 2009; Kinman et al., 2006; 2008). Scholars claim the perception is enacting leadership is an overwhelming endeavour consuming enormous amounts of time, physical energy, and psychological exertion (Fitzgerald, 2014; Fanghanel and Trowler, 2008; Lynch, 2006; Morley, 2003). Within this increasingly competitive and aggressive market, leaders are expected to operate as autonomous individuals, who are self-regulating, and self-maximising entities (Blackmore and Sachs, 2007; Davies et al., 2006). Given the above, this competitive culture has promulgated rivalries between women colleagues (Miner and Longino, 1987), and stultified the advancement of women (Mavin, 2006). Women may even have been deterred from seeking leadership positions due to this pressurised environment (Fitzgerald, 2014).

Accordingly, it is important to look at the workforce profile of academic institutions as barriers to furthering women in leadership roles is further supported by workforce data from the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU). ECU (2011) data demonstrated there has been a marked increase in the number of women academics over the last 15 years, however, there has been no comparable increase of women academics in senior leadership roles. Areas where an increase of women’s representation in senior leadership roles has been observed has mainly occurred in administrative positions (Burkinshaw, 2015). This underrepresentation of women in senior executive and academic leadership roles continues despite women making up 45% of the academic

workforce in HE (ECU, 2015). However, there is potential for the academic workforce profile to change (David , 2014), as ECU figures for students presents a profile where women are in the majority across all degree levels, with the exception of full-time postgraduates where 50.4 per cent were male. This trend has continued for nearly a decade in HE in the UK (David, 2014). Consequently, with more women attaining doctorates, and the number of full-time and part-time women students either on a par or exceeding men, there is an opportunity to change the profile of the academic workforce with the right Government support (David, 2014).

The UK Government has committed to an increase in the appointment of women to all public appointments (Public Administration Select Committee, 2014). However, a symbolic approach to the equality of opportunity for women continues with little change to the profile of the academic labour workforce (David, 2014). This can be seen in the widening diversity policy programme, perhaps influenced by austerity measures under the guise of better value for money, seeking to broaden its impact on other groups not just those defined by gender, demonstrating a rather tepid approach to gender inequalities (David, 2014). Similarly, the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) took a broad brush approach to equality of various groups failing in its commitment to equality of opportunity for women in HE (David, 2014). Despite the diluted approach, the Research Council UK's (RCUK) report: Sustainability of the UK Research Workforce Annual Report to the UK Research Base Funders Forum (RCUK) (2009) highlighted over time the proportion of women had increased in most career disciplines at each level, and there is an ongoing initiative to encourage organisations to report on the numbers of women at each level within their organisation. It can be concluded that these official reports and policy statements demonstrate a lack of understanding of

equality of opportunity for women across the academy, and the wider labour market. David (2014) argues these reports are the product of white middle class males who may have a vested interest in maintaining the existing state of affairs. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the former universities minister David Willetts in 2011 impugned university-educated women for taking working class men's jobs, he also promoted traditional conservative values such as traditional roles for men and women. Unfortunately, misogyny within government ranks does little to promote the cause for equality of opportunity (David, 2014).

Nonetheless, several change initiatives have sought to increase the proportion of women in senior roles in the academy, these have been focused on three distinct areas: development of women in terms of confidence, assertiveness, and risk-taking; institutional change such as gender equality policies, processes and practices, gender impact assessments, and work-life balance initiatives; and improving knowledge, and understanding by the introduction of gender as a topic of analysis across disciplines (David, 2014). Arguably a fix on one approach can be detrimental, and a combination of approaches is desirable (Morley, 2013). However, the focus on 'fixing' women draws attention away from organisational culture and the need to change practices and processes (Burkinshaw and White, 2017). In the same way the study by Edmunds et al. (2016) advocates a shift in emphasis from personal choices to the context within which choices are made, focusing on organisational and societal environment. Many policy initiatives have been implemented with few resources attached (David, 2014). Blackmore et al. (2015) argues gender equity policies to advance women into leadership positions have been hindered, and coupled with insufficient political will, inadequate resources, and strategies there is little prospect for change. The

persistence of this inequity in the academy is unethical, an ethical university needs to acknowledge the different experiences of men and women, and design processes and practices that value everyone's contribution (Aiston, 2011).

In the next section, I will discuss traditional dominant leadership discourse, first discussing male centric literature in the field.

## **2.2 Dominant Leadership Discourse**

Early research on leadership took the male leader as the norm, hence studies were based solely on men's experiences with the focus being to understand the practices required for leadership from a male perspective (Northouse, 2010). This has endured even in professions predominantly inhabited by women (Blackmore, 2006). One of the first systematic attempts to understand leadership was the study of leadership practices in order to establish what made a good leader. Twentieth century scholars concentrated on determining the practices displayed by great leaders, crediting only 'great' people were born with such innate abilities (Bass, 1990; Jago, 1982). Other leadership theories include; the skills approach focusing on the skills, and abilities of the leader; the style approach, highlighting the behaviour of the leader, emphasizing what a leader does, how they act, and treat subordinates (Northouse, 2010); and finally, the situational approach emphasizing that an effective leader must adapt their practice according to the exigencies of any given situation (Hersey and Blanchard, 1969a).

Gendered leadership is a contentious issue, and the literature presents a confusing picture. Some scholars argue for a gender perspective, citing authoritative, decisive, and challenging as stereotypically masculine practices; nurturing and collaborative as stereotypically feminine practices (Court, 2005). Others assert there is no compelling

evidence for such a perspective (Dobbins and Platz, 1986; van Engen et al., 2001; Powell, 1990), with much of the literature on leadership being gender-blind (Berg et al., 2012). However, for those who acknowledge a gender perspective there is a difference of opinion in how gendered leadership manifests (Kark, 2004). On the one hand, some relate the difference to an individual's formation of their personality according to their gender, for others, it relates to how masculine, and feminine practices are enacted regardless of gender (Broadbridge and Hearn, 2008). For instance, Young's (2004) review of the literature revealed women in school education (Coleman, 2000; Groue and Montgomery, 2001), and further education (Shain, 2000) demonstrated feminine leadership practices such as nurturing, and collegiality, with the exception of those in HE (Pritchard, 2000; Currie et al., 2002). Likewise, Fennell's (2005) study of women leaders highlighted stereotypical feminine leadership practices were used to overcome perceived barriers, and bring about change.

Other scholars argue women possess certain practices well suited to leadership (Groue and Montgomery, 2001; Cranwell-Ward, 2001), especially in times of change (Richart, 2002; Alimo-Metcalf, 2002). These practices are particularly aligned to transformational style of leadership (Segall, 1993; Cranwell-Ward, 2001). The discourse on leading change promotes feminine leadership practices (Segall, 1993; Cranwell-Ward, 2001; Institute of Management, 2001). However, adopting such practices can be problematic for men as expectations of gender stereotyping can preclude men assuming feminine practices (Segall, 1993; Saunders, 2000; Cranwell-Ward, 2001). Ramsay (2000) and Knight and Trowler (2001) however, argue men can and do adopt feminine practices, as various leadership practices reflect personal

characteristics and style. Arguably, leadership and gender is influenced by other dimensions such as organisational culture (O'Connor, 2014).

Nonetheless, traditional dominant discourses about good leadership were designed to exclude women (Blackmore, 1999). In this context women may have been inclined to adopt masculine values, and practices to be perceived as a good leader (Blackmore, 1999). Likewise, McTavish and Miller (2009) found women perceived it was necessary to adopt stereotypical masculine practices to be successful, this is also supported by Reay and Ball (2000). Moreover, there is evidence that female leaders who have assimilated masculine practices to succeed expect the same from others, which has impacted on the presence of positive female role models (Fitzgerald, 2014). However, operating in a stereotypical feminine way may empower women, and provide them with greater agency. This feminine practice can be viewed as 'double-edged', operating within boundaries, it may only manipulate constraints rather than over turn masculinist power (Ross-Smith and Huppatz, 2010, p.558).

Feminist and critical theory have provided an alternative discourse to the traditional concept of leadership, with a significant body of literature highlighting a feminine approach focusing on the caring, democratic, ethical, and collaborative practices of a leader (Blackmore, 2006). For Fitzgerald (2014) this view depicts women as somehow lacking in harder more masculine practices such as competitiveness, risk taking, and decision-making, and therefore in need of additional training and mentoring. Moreover, suggesting all women lead in the same way is reductionist, and ultimately renders leadership difficult for women (Fitzgerald, 2014).

Some leadership strategies value 'soft' skills such as collaboration, and consultation to manage change in organisations, Hughes (2002) argues this preference is due to a

shift from autocratic practice of management to a more relational practice, favouring teamwork, empowerment, and listening, often termed 'people management skills' or 'soft' skills. This discourse on 'people management skills' is more suited to horizontal organisational structures as opposed to the traditional hierarchical structure, and are key to developing a competitive edge within an organisation (Hughes, 2002). Indeed, practices such as smiling, politeness, and caring are seen as key corporate assets (Forseth and Dahl-Jorgensen, 2001). Correspondingly, research into women's practice of leadership has indicated how they favour a more relational practice as opposed to an authoritarian practice of leadership (Ozga and Deem, 2000). Several factors have been highlighted to account for this feminine masculine divide in leadership practice including internal factors such as socialisation, and gender identity formation, and external factors such as organisational culture (Meehan, 1999). Further, conceptualising caring as a relational practice of leadership potentially has a positive effect on women's career advancement (Hughes, 2002). Moreover, feminist research has distinguished two aspects of female leadership namely a commitment to social justice, and the performance of caring for oneself and others (Strachan, 1999). These aspects of female leadership challenge the traditional masculinist hegemonic organisational practices, and imbue a caring ethic into organisational leadership (Tanton and Hughes, 1999), and relate to the discussion on authenticity, and critical leadership later in the thesis.

It can be concluded that the notion of good leadership has been changing from the more traditional understanding of leadership as hierarchical, and positional, to a distributed, and shared decision-making view of leadership (Northouse, 2010). This shift in perception of what is considered 'good' leadership is seen in many public



service areas such as education, and health. Eddy and VanDerLinden (2006) argue as a consequence new definitions of leadership have emerged. However, what has more recently transpired from the literature is a return to a preference for traditional leadership practices as HEIs becomes more competitive, and commercialised (Blackmore et al., 2015). Financial prowess, and hard decision-making are in ascendance in what are being termed 'greedy' institutions (Fitzgerald, 2014). To illustrate, a recent report has noted the growth of 'executive power' in the administration of universities, and the waning of 'representative democracy' as the standard form of governance (Klemenčič, 2011).

To summarise, it is evident from the literature there is little understanding, and agreement on what 'good' leadership is (Rost, 1991). This ambiguity is mirrored within the leadership literature in a HE context (Young, 2004). Scholars have argued this is related to the ambiguity of leadership as a social construct, and the influence of inherent biases in perception (Northouse, 2010; Fleishman et al., 1991).

In the next section, I discuss alternative interpretations of leadership with an emphasis on authentic leadership.

### **2.3 Alternative Interpretations of Leadership**

Alternative interpretations of leadership have emerged these include authentic leadership, and critical leadership, also referred to as critical leadership scholarship or critical leadership studies. There are several parallels between the two interpretations not least is the idea leaders need to be more ethical in their approach to decision-making (Northouse, 2010; Grace, 2000), and both interpretations will be considered here. It is acknowledged Grace (2000) research into critical leadership is based in a

school context, however, this conceptualisation of critical leadership is used in this study as similar research in HE is absent.

First the notion of authentic leadership which is based on the leader's principles defined through their experiences, and life story. According to Northouse (2010) the hallmark of an authentic leader is they are true to their values, and are compassionate. Regardless of the pressure or stress they encounter they can remain calm, and consistent, and have greater regard for others. It is this tremendous emotional labour, self-discipline, predictability, and compassion that enables greater communication, and confidence with followers. Further, Walumbwa et al. (2008) argue this pattern of leadership practice is founded in the leaders' positive psychological qualities, and strong ethics, speaking to the character of the leader not the characteristics of leadership.

Conversely, early research on authentic leadership focused on designing strategies for authentic leadership development (Avolio and Gardner, 2005; Avolio et al., 2004a). Cooper et al. (2005) then sought to legitimise authentic leadership, they proposed designing interventions was premature without first robustly researching, defining, and measuring the construct. For Cooper et al. (2005), being able to measure authentic leadership was a prerequisite to designing effective training programmes, central to this is the development of a theoretically-based definition, and identification of key elements of authentic leadership.

However, the three viewpoints proposed by Northouse (2010) contribute towards a definition of authentic leadership: First, an intrapersonal perspective (Shamir and Eilam, 2005), the leader and their sense of self is the foci. This viewpoint purports the construction of authentic leadership dependent on an individual's life story, and how

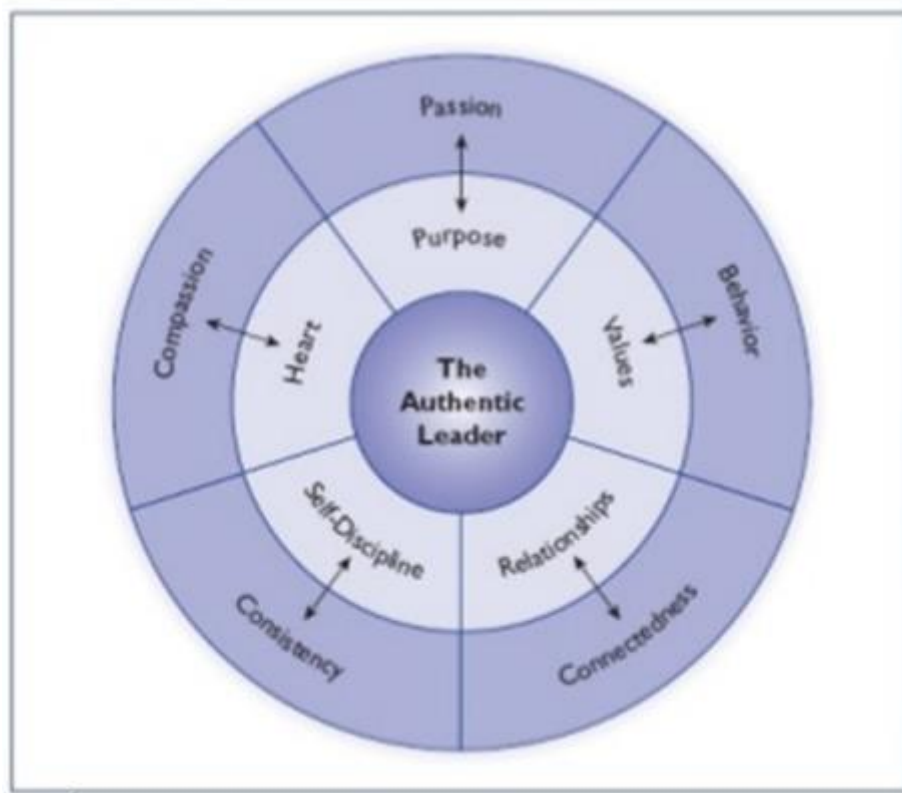
the person makes sense of their experiences. They also acknowledge followers play a critical role in endorsing the leader's practice; Second, from a developmental perspective, authentic leadership is developed over a lifetime, and is influenced by critical life events such as acute illness (Avolio and Gardner, 2005; Gardner, Avolio and Walumbwa, 2005; Walumbwa et al., 2008). Over the course of a lifetime authentic leaders learn and develop four interrelated practices: 'self-awareness, internalised moral perspective, balanced processing, and relational transparency' (Avolio, Walumbwa and Weber, 2009, p. 424); the third perspective is interpersonal, and is generated from interactions between leaders and followers (Eagly, 2005). There is reciprocity in the process, and more is required than strong moral values, followers need to 'buy-into' the leader's values. There is also a requirement for leaders to adapt their goals to the beliefs, and values of their followers to effect change (Northouse, 2010). This perspective of the leader – follower relationship is supported by George (2003) who claims followers are seeking a trusting, and transparent relationship with their leaders in exchange for loyalty, and commitment.

More recently there has been a call for gendered authentic leadership theory. Previous studies considering gender concluded women are not always perceived as authentic due to gender bias (Eagly and Karau, 2002). Hopkins and O'Neil (2015) argue authentic leadership is problematic for women leaders due to the gendered context of the workplace; the dominance of practices and structures developed by men; the expectations of followers to perform to stereotypical norms; and the emphasis on being true to oneself within a hegemonic male environment. Consequently, within authentic leadership literature a masculinist construction of power as a form of control endures (Terry, 1993). Having discussed the conceptualisation of authentic leadership and

examined gendered authentic leadership theory, I will now discuss George (2003) five dimensions of authentic leadership.

The key dimensions defined by George (2003) introduced earlier (see page 6 of this thesis), include purpose, values, heart, relationships, and self-discipline. These practices are illustrated in the figure below:

**Figure 1 Five Dimensions of Authentic Leadership**



George (2003) Authentic Leadership: Rediscovering the Secrets to Creating Lasting Value

According to George (2003) authentic leaders have a clear sense of direction, know their purpose; care passionately about what they do; are cognisant of their personal values, and relate to conflict situations and individuals based on their values; develop close relationships with others, establishing trust and mutual respect; are self-disciplined, remain focused on their goals by controlling their emotions and remaining

consistent; and finally they exhibit compassion towards others, and are considerate of a person's culture and background.

Similarly, these essential practices are reflected in the discourse on critical leadership notably the emphasis on an ethical, and moral standpoint, and demonstrating concern and compassion for others. Moreover, critical Leadership argues ethical considerations are paramount for leaders (Foster, 1989). Grace (2000) argues critical leadership attempts to maintain the philosophical and moral principles of education such as ethics, morality, spirituality, and humanity, as well as the technical aspects of managerialism. Likewise, Blackmore (1999) argues educational leadership should be concerned with aspects of social inequality, educational reform, and social justice. Gunter (2016) argues critical leadership is concerned with liberating leaders and followers from social injustice, and subjugation of traditional power structures. In exploring the power structures the leader has, therefore, the opportunity to challenge professional practice, and develop alternative ways of working. Further, critical leadership embraces feminist scholars' attempts to shift the dominant discourse on leadership from a masculine hegemonic practice to a more relational approach (Grace, 2000). In fact, critical leadership was born out of a rejection of the dominant educational management discourse, and favours a more democratised form of leadership, a change in thinking from traditional patriarchal leadership (Grace, 2000). An institution democratically administered enables a leader to be more genuine (White, 1982). Leadership, in contrast to management, is purported to be more wide-ranging, hence requires a culturally and politically cognisant approach. From this perspective aspects of advocacy, interrelations, and motivational cohesiveness of followers are key for the enactment of leadership (Grace, 2000).

Grace (2000) asserts critical leadership has value in supporting leaders to face the challenges in today's education system. Grace discusses this approach in a school context, however, we can draw parallels with HEIs. Indeed, education per se faces similar challenges, as highlighted by Bernstein (1996; p. 87) who stated:

The sacred conception of education faces a major cultural transformation into a totally secular, commodified and marketised form [...] this movement has profound implications from primary school to university.

This alternative discourse on leadership was spearheaded by feminist scholars (Blackmore, 1989; Ozga, 1993; Adler et al., 1993), and signalled a change in thinking moving away from power and authority to a more relational approach.

From a review of alternative leadership discourses it is evident there are some similarities between authentic leadership and critical leadership studies. With both being grounded in ethical and moral principles and having a consideration of followers. However, while critical leadership scholars investigate gendered leadership practices (Collinson, 2011), gendered discourse on authentic leadership practices is minimal, and there is a need for further research.

In the next section I discuss the construction of leadership identity.

## **2.4 Construction of Leadership Identity**

In this next section I consider aspects of life story followed by a discussion of the value paradigm defined by Hodgkinson (1991). First, I define professional identity as one's professional self-concept based on attributes, beliefs, values, and experiences (Ibarra, 1999; Schein, 1978). Experience is highlighted in this section as an important aspect in the construct of leadership identity. Further, identity formation is a dynamic process, and involves various knowledge sources, such as knowledge of affect, human

relations, and subject matter (Beijaard et al., 2004). Thus, as individuals engage in different discourses they form and reform their social self (Gee et al., 1996).

Earlier empirical studies reveal aspects of life story, namely Busher (2003), Butt et al. (1988); Dimmock and O'Donoghue, (1997); Keltchermans, (1993); and Parker (2002), and are based in school education, and are not gendered, the findings nonetheless, are pertinent to HE, and are referred to in this section, as similar studies are absent from HE. These scholars focused on how leaders learn to lead, and the studies have revealed aspects of life story have a significant impact on leadership development. These authors also argue life story is fundamental to the development of an individual's moral values and belief, further adding these values and beliefs inspire them to become leaders. Moreover, these studies conclude values and beliefs are developed over time, and influence the way leaders lead, arguing actions of leaders are grounded not just in life story but within their current context. Thus, life story provides the leader with a way of comprehending, and reflecting on their behaviour and attitudes, and the impact these have on the people around them, and can also enable individuals to acquire self-knowledge to develop themselves and others (Busher, 2003).

Busher (2003) argues a central aspect of life story is the quest for professional identity, and the ratification of 'self'. This identity is not fixed (Hughes, 2004) but is a constant process of constructing, and reconstructing experiences within a given context, individuals constantly reframe their experiences according to time and context. Consequently, many factors influence a leader's sense of self, including historical, sociological, psychological, and cultural influences. Understanding 'self' within the context of one's life story cannot be achieved without reflection. Several aspects including child-

hood experiences, family relationships, and interactions with peers form a leader's values and beliefs. Moreover, job promotion also creates a sense of identity, with a concept of 'self' linked to formal position within the organisational hierarchy. Consequently, the making of professional identity is influenced not only by biography but also by professional experience (Busher, 2003). Arguably, knowledge, skills, and attitudes of a leader coupled with aspects of life story, and experience act as filters refining best practice (Dimmock and O'Donoghue, 1997).

Other aspects which impact on leadership formation are critical life events (Northouse, 2010). Having a sense of self, and professional identity learned through one's experiences has a significant impact on learning to lead. This is supported by Cliffe (2016) who describes critical life events as emotional turning points in research on female headship, there is no similar research in HE. Critical events, and significant people such as mentors have an impact on how leaders have learnt to lead (Kelchtermans, 1993 and Parker, 2002). Significant people impact on the development of leaders (Johnson, 2002), and take on different guises such as 'coach', or 'critical friend'. These individuals are fundamental to a leader's advancement encouraging them to take on leadership roles (Parker, 2002).

In a more recent study in HE, Inman (2014) utilised in-depth interviews, and middle managers articulated how they had developed as leaders, and how their learning experiences could be harnessed for future reference. Moreover, Oleson (2001) argues the relationship with a job role is subjective, and grounded in lived experience, this subjective factor contributes to the learning process and the development of the individual. Consequently both subject, and historical processes fashion leadership learning and development. A leaders cognisant 'self' is formed through interaction with



peers, and a good leader will 'develop awareness of others and of themselves as other people perceive them' (Busher, 2003; p. 3). In summary, this understanding of people, environment, and context is crucial for the success of a leader (Busher, 2005).

Thus, through this complex process of identity formation, individuals assimilate the values, and perceptions of others (Busher, 2003). Values are defined here as:

An enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally and socially preferable to alternate modes of conduct or end-states of existence  
(Rokeach, 1973, p. 159-160, as cited in Hambrick & Brandon, 1988, p. 5).

These perceptions influence individuals' sense of what is right and wrong, and how the social world is formed. Hence, our social self is constructed within the everyday realities we inhabit (Lundell and Collins, 2001). Further, in this increasingly marketised environment where the responsibilities of leaders are more complex and varied (Currie et al., 2002), arguably educational leaders need to maintain an ethical stance (Grace, 2000). Ethics is a key concept in alternative leadership discourses, and maintaining an ethical approach is viewed as essential to performing good leadership in areas such as decision-making, and improving student experience (Grace, 2000).

Having discussed leadership identity formation, I will now turn to Hodgkinson's (1991) value paradigm. This value paradigm subdivides the values used by leaders in their decision-making processes, and supports the resolution of value conflicts arising when enacting leadership. The three values include: transrational, rational, and subrational. Transrational values are defined as those adopted on principle, they are based on commitment or faith, and cannot be scientifically verified or justified by logical argument. Rational values are based on logical reasoning, and are further divided into those centred on the computation of consequence, and those based on consensus of

opinion. Subrational values are described as wants, and are usually reactive without due consideration. Transrational values, and many rational values, usually have an ethical or moral element for the individual (Hodgkinson, 1991). Ethics are defined as:

Ethics are principles which guide us to identify that which is good or bad and therefore inform us as to which values we should act upon (Hodgkinson, 1991, p. 50).

Hence, subrational values are more emotive, and impulsive, and represent what is desired by the individual. Resolving value conflicts in the decision-making process, the higher values such as transrational, and rational are preferable as they have an ethical or moral principle, and hence act as a guide to what is 'good' or 'bad' (Hodgkinson 1991).

Gilligan's (1993) research into the differences between men, and women's decision-making processes in relation to ethical dilemmas, demonstrated men favour rights-based approach where the solution is logically deduced from a set of rules; whereas women's connectedness is fundamental to their identity, and feelings of responsibility for others augmenting the ethical dilemmas of decision-making. This feeling of responsibility to others has two outcomes for women: first, it inhibits a sense of self as an autonomous independent being; and second, any feeling of responsibility to oneself is viewed as a selfish act. Earlier research by Gilligan (1993) into women's moral development found the evidence was systematically biased. Men were the constructors of these systems, and the theorising was based on research into western men's lives. This male dominance ensures women who do not conform to these normative theories are considered to be morally under-developed (Gilligan, 1993).

To summarise, constructing one's leadership identity is a gradual process over time (Northouse, 2010). While elements of leadership can be taught, leaders acquire knowledge throughout their lives impacting on their leadership practice. Aspects of life story are an essential factor in determining a leader's construction of their leadership identity. It is also evident a leader's moral values also form over time, playing a distinct role in their decision-making, and conflict resolution.

In the next section I turn first to gender constructs, and then to concepts of 'care', 'time', 'difference', 'power', and 'experience' from a feminist perspective. This is relevant as I seek to explore how gender is constructed, and highlight the constraints and barriers for women.

## **2.5 The Gender Lens – A Feminist Perspective**

Feminists have used the word 'gender' as a means of depicting the socially constructed meaning of 'woman' (Hughes, 2002). It signifies the dismissal of any biological meaning apparent in the use of terms such as 'sex' and 'sexual difference', and a relational aspect between men and women, implying the understanding of one cannot be achieved in isolation from the other (Scott, 1986). This gender debate with the incumbent power melees are as relevant today as twenty years ago (Spencer, 2010). Further, Scott (1986) argues the use of the word 'gender' in academic works of the 1980s had a neutralising effect, and posed less of a critical threat than the word 'women'. It had the impact of dissociating itself from the politics of feminism, nullifying notions of inequality, and power, and failed to identify women as the marginalised sex. Moreover, in a social context, the use of 'gender' refutes an essentialist view, and signifies cultural constructions whereby the roles for men and women are entirely socially constructed. Gender in this respect is a socialised notion imposed on a sexed

body (Gatens, 1983). Hence, gender identities are substantively constructed from a range of social, and cultural influences including religion, and education (Scott, 1986). It is argued gender is not fixed, and is formed from what one does, repetition is key to doing gender. Butler (1999) emphasises the performance of gender is constituted by a series of acts, and it is what we do not what we are. Therefore, notions of masculinity and femininity are dynamic, and alter daily as a consequence of 'doing gender' (West and Zimmerman, 1991).

However, gender in organisations was not recognised until studies in the 1970s following the impact of 'second-wave feminism', these studies acknowledged the significance of cultural mechanisms (Carvalho and De Lurdes Machado, 2010). In addition, gender categories are not homogeneous. An indigenous Australian feminist Lucashenko (1994), cited in Blackmore (2010, p. 46) stated:

Our reality is not your reality. What you call patriarchy, I call one aspect of colonisation: for all their commonalities, for all your wishing and hoping it, our oppressions are not interchangeable. Whether you like it or not, as a white Australian woman you are at the root of my indigenous problem.

Issues of intersectionality impact on the experiences of women as they aspire to leadership roles (Blackmore, 1997). In contrast, William (1991) asserts within the masculine culture pervading education, women who wish to succeed 'act male', and ethnic minorities who wish to succeed 'act white'. The recent report from the Aurora project supports this, where 59% of participants reported it is obligatory to act in ways not natural to them in order to succeed (Barnard et al., 2016).

From an essentialist perspective, the link between the biological nature of a woman, and feminine practices such as carer, nurturer, and kindness are considered some way innate (Grosz, 1990b). With care described as an empirical concept relying on experience, and observation, as opposed to a theoretical one (Thomas, 1993), and

within feminist research care has been shown to be women's work (Hughes, 2002). However, care has a variety of meanings situated in both public, and private domains, and is usually divided into physical and emotional facets, consisting of an array of variables including cooking, shopping, cleaning, creating and sustaining relationships, feeling concern, and empathy. There are several frameworks illustrating the meaning of care (Tronto, 1993; Williams, 1993; Thomas, 1993). These frameworks identify a range of issues when split into 'paid' and 'unpaid' divisions, and labelled as work, resulting in economic implications for women as care of family members is unpaid work, and contributes to the propagation, and preservation of the labour force. Paid work such as nursing, and education are still relatively lower status, and lower paid compared to traditional male domains such as medicine, and the law (Tronto, 1993). Thus, the structural effects of women's responsibility for care disadvantages women's economic status, and feminists have linked issues of care to campaigns for equal rights (Hughes, 2002).

Tronto's (1993) framework demonstrates how views associated with care are gendered, and hierarchical across public and private domains. For example, politicians or statesmen who care about the state are seen as powerful, and of high value. In contrast, mothers who care for their children, are viewed as less powerful, and of lower value. Two arguments are presented here, first motherhood is 'dangerous for women because it defines them solely in terms of their ability to give birth' (Sikes, 1997, p. 5). Second, motherhood 'is a positive female identity' framing women as advocates of the female cause (Sikes, 1997, p. 5). The premise care is gendered, and women are the primary care givers is unequivocal (Corti et al., 1994; Lewis et al., 1992). It follows that the sexual division of labour in the household has fallen disproportionately to the realm

of women, and women in heterosexual relationships who are mothers continue to take responsibility for the domestic care of the family (Press and Townsley, 1998; Pilcher, 1999). Suggesting that the public and private domains of care mutually reinforce social structures. Blackmore and Sachs (2007) argue the inter-connection between a woman's caring responsibilities in both paid and unpaid work can have a significant impact on promotion into leadership positions. Indeed women in senior academic positions are more likely to be single or divorced. Moreover, a review of women's careers in educational management emphasised a multitude of barriers to career progression, such as: the uneven distribution of domestic responsibilities; career breaks; the psychological status of combining the dual role of parenthood and teaching; the absence of family leave to care for young children; inadequate provision of childcare facilities for preschool children; and differing levels of maternity/paternity leave (Wilson, 1997). Motherhood is viewed as detrimental to career progression, whereas fatherhood is considered to have no harmful effect (Deem, 2003). To tackle these inequalities changes to government policy introducing flexible working arrangements for parents, and paid paternity leave have been developed (Bagilhole and White, 2011). However, while there have been improvements, policies to support working parents in the United Kingdom (UK) have developed at a slow pace, these work-life balance policies such as statutory maternity leave, paternity leave, shared Parental Leave, and the Right to Request Flexible Working still disadvantage fathers more than mothers (O'Brien et al., 2017). Nonetheless, despite the continued inequalities these policies seem popular with the number of stay-at-home fathers on the increase. These men are breaking down traditional social constructs by performing non-traditional gender roles (Petroski and Edley, 2006). With childcare highlighted as

a social right there is a call for greater parity in the organisation of childcare between the sexes (Charles, 2000).

Care invokes a range of concepts including obligation, responsibility, dependency, duty, and trust. Research into family care has emphasised the inter-connections, and moral dimensions imperative in understanding the responsibility for care in the family. Specifically, the connection between moral values and identity determine how people view a 'good' mother. The enactment of care can impact on an individual's reputation as a 'good' person, and hence their construction as a moral being (Finch and Mason, 1993). Universally there seems to be an expectation women will act motherly, and enact a caring approach in their work, regardless of whether they have children (Deem, 2003).

In offering ethics of care discourse feminists have sought to deconstruct essentialist assumptions differentiating between a 'feminine' ethic of care, and the traditional patriarchal social order of autonomy and rationality (Hughes, 2002). Essentialist assumptions that these practices are fixed, and do not differ across class, race, or religion, proposes a rather sanitised conceptualisation of care. This perspective is the foundation for social and cultural feminisms, cultural feminism insists women's practices are ethically superior to men's, and they have been devalued over the years by men, arguing it is feminism's task to reappraise them (Evans, 1995). From a cultural feminist perspective, social structures and processes were developed by men to favour men, they seek to revalue women's experience. The marginalisation of feminist practices offers greater explanation of women's underrepresentation in leadership roles (Blackmore, 1999).

Walby (1991) identifies six social structures in patriarchal relations keeping women subordinate to men: 1. Relations within the home and the unequal sexual division of labour; 2. Unequal pay with women in traditionally low paid, low skilled employment; 3. A predisposition towards patriarchal interests in state policies; 4. Male violence relates to the state's traditional reluctance to intervene in systematic abuse of women by men; 5. Obligatory heterosexuality and a sexual double standard; 6. Patriarchal views of women in the cultural sphere. These structures are relatively autonomous, although, they do interact simultaneously reinforcing the position of women, and impeding change. Some scholars argue capitalism played a key role in transforming gender relations with the divergence of home, and work (Oakley, 1976; Davidoff and Hall, 1987). Walby (1991) suggests this is exaggerated, and though capitalism brought about a new mode of patriarchy in the work place, patriarchal relations in the home pre-dated capitalism. Patriarchy is not static, it is a dynamic system, where men surrender activities to women they no longer wish to assume, only to regain control, and hence power in other areas (Walby, 1991). For example, the argument regarding whether women should work or stay at home shifts over time, from a desire to get women out to work, the economic argument, to a desire to keep women in family caring roles, the patriarchal social argument (Scott and Clery, 2013).

Sociological explanations of the disproportionate number of women in care sectors also allude to the horizontal, and vertical stratification of the labour workforce. Horizontal divisions refer to the number of men, and women who work in different sectors of the economy, men are outnumbered in care sectors such as nursing, and teaching, and women are outnumbered in sectors such as manufacturing, and engineering. Vertically women tend to be in the lower positions within an organisation,



while men continue to have a monopoly on the higher positions (Wilson, 1997). This gender segregation remains apparent in most developed countries despite sectors where there are high numbers of female participation (Hatt, 1997). To compound this disparity, women in part-time positions are further gender-segregated, and are inclined to be at the lower end of the organisational hierarchy (Blackwell, 2001). Given the above, there remains a rather pessimistic picture despite changes to women's paid employment, and the recognition of equal rights between sexes. Having explored the concept of care I will now move on to discuss the concept of time.

The notion of 'time' has a range of connotations for women, including: time is running out; I don't have enough time; part-time; full-time; there's not enough minutes in the day; juggling; too old; too young; I must manage time better (Hughes, 2002). From analysis of time in empirical studies, Nowotny (1992) identifies a range of patterns including: time as an issue, and limited resource; alterations in work, and leisure time; the management of time; and time in relation to gender. Further, from a feminist perspective women live in time but also give time, and this has made a significant difference to the act of being (Forman, 1989). Thus time impacts on women's lives in numerous ways, for example taking time out for child care (Nicolson, 1996), the shifting balance of time between paid, and unpaid work (Hewitt, 1993). Other time pressures for women focus on motherhood in terms of the right time to have a child (McMahon, 1995) and 'being there' for her children (Ribbens, 1994, p. 170). Traditionally these concepts of time have focused on notions of male time expressed as linear, clock time (Davies, 1990), and female time expressed as reproductive, and cyclical (Knights and Odih, 1995). However, the analysis of the complexities of time have been largely ignored, and do not capture the impact the erosion of tradition, and globalisation has

had on women's lives (McNay, 2000). In addition, women's economic status in society, and in the home are formally correlated to the value of time. The supposition women are responsible for child care, and housework can be negated by improvements to their financial status, and human capital, this would directly impact on the value of their time (Sirianni and Negrey, 2000). Nonetheless, these patriarchal notions of time continue to reinforce the subordination of women (Davies, 1990). Women's time is relational, and cannot be characterised as linear, it has to be viewed in relation to the time exigencies of others (Knights and Odih, 1995).

Complex conceptions of time have been incorporated into works on selfhood (Knights and Odih, 1995). According to Griffiths (1995) the authentic self is dynamic, and changes with time and experiences, and is in a continual process of construction (Griffiths, 1995). McNay (2000) argues identity construction is a dynamic formation over time. Individuals configure and reconfigure aspects of time to bring coherence to their story.

I turn now to the concept of difference which is also relevant in gendering authentic leadership, however, its definition is problematic. Hughes (2002) argues there is a propensity for feminist theorists to cite the term, nonetheless, it remains ill defined. Some scholars have made various attempts to define difference, for example, Moore (1994) has endeavoured to explain difference in relation to its oppositional pairing with sameness. Evans (1995) proposes three schools of thought: 1. Valuing woman's difference from man (the weak verses the strong); 2. Differences between groups of women (identity politics) such as class, race, age, and religion; and 3. The difference within (the deconstruction of dualism – equality and difference). However, historically there exists an over simplification of the term, and feminist scholars have sought both

to support and challenge this position. If there is no difference then issues of equality become obsolete, however, this standpoint has been criticised for its prejudices and omissions. In addition, it is argued these views are from a white, middle class western perspective (Hughes, 2002).

Another aspect of difference is 'othering', casting an individual or group as different, either by ethnicity, class, or culture. We all tend to 'other', and are ethnocentric to some degree, holding our own values and beliefs superior to others, this may result in a lack of sensitivity to the perspective of others, and an intolerance of other cultures (Northouse, 2010). Leaders need to be conscious of their own ethnocentricity as well as others, assured in their own way of doing while understanding the diverse perspectives of colleagues (Northouse, 2010). Moreover, women are 'othered' through the operation of the male as the norm (de Beauvoir, 1949 cited in Haynes, 2015). Devine et al. (2011) maintain women leaders manage their 'otherness' by preserving their feminine identity in the way they dress, so as to avoid derision for appearing too masculine. Similarly, it is argued women are careful about their appearance, they dress modestly with coiffed hair and little make-up to emanate a degree of self-regulation (Fitzgerald, 2014).

Turning now to the significance of 'Power' in gender relations (Connell, 1998). Power can be achieved through such means as 'conversational colonisation' where a man co-opts a woman's viewpoints or 'Identity invisibility' where a woman is ignored or spoken over (Blackmore, 1999, p. 133). Foucault (1982) argues conventions within particular relationships dictate how we should behave and think, and particular discourses within a relationship helps us to comprehend our position. These conventions within discourses can be inclusive or exclusive depending on the context

(Craib, 1992). Research by Deem (2003) found gender power relations impacted on career progression and the division of labour within HEIs, and over half of women participants in the study perceived gender to have had a negative effect on their career. Moreover, individuals through appointment are considered to have the ability to perform or enter a given field such as leadership, therefore have legitimate power, and authority thus formalising and structuring power relations (Gunter, 2002). Bourdieu's (1986) work provides the 'thinking tools' to enable investigation and explanation (Gunter, 2016), these include habitus, field, and capital. The fields are competitive settings, in this context HEIs, and is about gaining the advantage in terms of capital, authority, and hierarchical position. In this instance capital extends beyond material resources to social, cultural, and symbolic capital. Bourdieu (1986) argues social order is progressively inscribed in people's minds through cultural practices including systems of education, language, judgements, values, and activities of everyday life. This socialisation predicates an 'unconscious acceptance of social differences and hierarchies, to a sense of one's place and to behaviours of self-exclusion' (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 141). Further, authority is linked to traditional notions of masculinity (Connell, 1998). Nevertheless, authority is dispersed disproportionately amongst men, and in some instances women have the authority (Connell, 1998). Conversely, there is another side to organisational life, Hoyle (1986, p. 43) terms as 'the domain of micro politics' where manipulation operates, micro politics is a neglected area of study (Gunter, 2002).

Alternatively, Quinn (2004) argues the enactment of leadership is not solely the domain of the person in a hierarchical position within the organisation, any individual could display leadership through vocalising a change or innovation. Either enactment

invokes the use of persuasion, and hence power, one to inspire performance from followers, the other to gain approval with ideas (Boyatzis et al., 2006). This enactment of power differentiates leaders from followers, not the hierarchical positioning within an organisation (Quinn, 2004). However, Connell (1998) argues men dominate leadership positions in both the corporate and public sectors, and in so doing maintain structures hindering women's advancement to senior positions.

Last I will discuss experience which has been conceptualised 'in relation to both social-material practices, and to the formation and processes of subjectivity' (de Lauretis, 1994, p.8). The significance of experience is highlighted in the motto 'the personal is the political' meaning a woman's unique experience as a woman happens within the realm of the personal, emotional, and interiorised, meaning to incorporate within oneself, as socially lived, so to know the politics of a woman's situation is to know her personal life. The gender division of power is confirmed through a woman's experience of sexual objectification corresponding with a woman's life as gender female (Mackinnon, 1997).

Research by Frye (1996) highlighted women's individual experiences were not unique but indeed common amongst women, and followed consistent patterns. By raising the consciousness of women's personal experience this enabled sense to be made of women's lived experience in a world constructed by men. This awareness of women's experience contributed to the development of feminist epistemologies with the emergence of standpoint theory (Hughes, 2002), consciousness raising of women's lived experience from their own privileged perspective on patriarchy. Thus what we realise from experience is a subjective reality demanding the researcher is critically

reflexive of their own values and beliefs (Hughes, 2002), and this is reflected in my position statement on page 74.

Having explored gender theory in the next section I discuss the impact of leadership on the health and wellbeing of women leaders.

## **2.6 Impact of Leadership on Health and Wellbeing**

The literature review reveals the impact of leadership on health and wellbeing in a HEI context is a neglected area of study. In an environment where masculine practices prevail (Burkinshaw, 2015) understanding the impact of leadership on women's health and wellbeing is paramount to developing policies and strategies cultivating an environment devoid of unreasonable negative psychological and physiological impact, and enabling equality of opportunity.

Kotter (1979) acknowledges there is a degree of accountability to the organisation, and the higher the leader is within the hierarchical structure the more power, and influence they are required to exert. Hence if leaders need to inspire or exert power over their followers (Kotter, 1982; Yukl and Van Fleet, 1990), and exercising power and authority is linked to traditional masculine practices, women seeking power can experience a backlash from male and female colleagues (Parks-Stamm et al., 2008; Connell, 1998), even though this power is legitimised through their organisational position. This backlash can potentially have a negative impact on an individual's health and wellbeing. A perceived lack of power while still being expected to bring about change, could potentially add to feelings of tension, and stress amongst leaders. This tension and stress can arise when there is conflict, and varying roles do not align, such as the dichotomous demands of job, and motherhood (Kelly and Wolf, 2004). In addition, aspects such as 'conversation colonisation' and 'identity invisibility' can undermine

women (Blackmore, 1999), hence, potentially having a detrimental effect on the individual's physical and psychological wellbeing.

A meta-analysis of research findings focusing on the physiological impact of stress on leaders discovered certain situations invoke stress more than others (Boyatzis et al., 2006). These include circumstances where there is a perceived lack of control, or where there is an analysis of one's performance, or a requirement to achieve important outcomes (Dickerson and Kemeny, 2004; Sapolsky, 2004). Leaders are regularly exposed to stress as they are continually required to persuade, influence, and exert power over followers to achieve desired outcomes (Boyatzis et al., 2006). This continuous exposure to stress is termed 'chronic stress', and is interspersed with bouts of acute stress when an unexpected crisis occurs (Boyatzis et al., 2006). Research analysing the physiological impact of this type of stress determined it can have detrimental effects on the individual (Dickerson and Kemeny, 2004; Ray, 2004; Segerstrom and Miller, 2004). Stress experienced by leaders is described as 'power stresses' to distinguish it from other forms of stress resulting from loneliness, failure, or fatigue, and is a direct consequence of a leader enacting influence within their role (McClelland, 1985).

Further, leaders exercise a degree of self-control in their role, putting the performance of the organisation before their own needs (McClelland and Boyatzis, 1982). This imposed self-control further increases the stress levels already experienced (Sapolsky, 1994). Thus leaders have a propensity to moderate their emotional responses as they are expected to be reasonable (Ladkin and Taylor, 2010). Any display of emotional response may be recollected by followers who associate such behaviour with less

competent leaders thus reinforcing behaviour modification by leaders (Dasborough, 2006; Lewis, 2000).

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is central to leaders being able to enact self-control, and limit stress. Studies have demonstrated emotionally intelligent leaders have a better tolerance of stress levels in challenging situations (Wong and Law, 2002). EI is defined as a:

Set of abilities (verbal and non-verbal) that enables a person to generate, recognise, express, understand and evaluate their own and others emotions in order to guide thinking and action that successfully cope with environmental demands and pressures (Van Rooy and Viswesvaran, 2004, p. 72).

EI is considered significant as it highlights the cognitive processes involved in emotional regulation (Harms and Crede, 2010), and is indicative of leadership effectiveness (Sy et al., 2006). Leaders who are able to express their emotions without being over emotional are judged to be more charismatic, and more capable (Groves, 2006). This type of leader can exert a degree of self-control, and is more responsive to the feelings, and needs of followers (Cherulnik et al., 2001). Exercising self-discipline has a positive impact on interactions between leaders and followers, and overall job satisfaction (Glaso and Einarson, 2008; Glaso et al., 2006). Cliffe (2016) argues EI leaders when faced with emotional turning points encounter fewer negative experiences, and can effectively adapt to negative events.

On the other hand from the perspective of followers, the emotional response of leaders can influence whether they are viewed as authentic (Rajah et al., 2011). Leaders who are optimistic are viewed as being authentic (Dasborough and Ashkanasy, 2002). Emotions displayed by leaders have a direct correlation to a follower's judgement of



authenticity, further underlining the need for leaders to be aware of their emotional responses (Newcombe and Ashkanasy, 2002; Ashkanasy and Tse, 2000).

Hence leaders who express emotion augment the perception of authenticity (Avolio and Gardner, 2005), conversely, Newcombe and Ashkanasy, (2002) argue self-control when witnessed by followers can diminish that perception. Followers who are consciously aware of leaders moderating their emotions may perceive them to be disingenuous, and therefore challenge the perception of the authentic leader (Rajah et al., 2011). Given the above authenticity needs to be aligned with EI competences because self-control when perceived as disingenuous can be negatively related to previously determined positive leadership practices. Moreover, studies indicate this combination of 'power stress', and the need for self-control leads to the development of chronic power stress (Dasborough, 2006; Lewis, 2000).

Next I will discuss the physiological impact of stress on the body which is well documented, not least in the stimulation of the sympathetic nervous system (SNS), characteristically demonstrated by the 'fight or flight' phenomenon. This results in an increase in blood pressure, coinciding with an increase in blood flow to major muscle groups (Sapolsky, 2004). Other effects include neural changes associated with 'fight or flight', increase in circulating cortisol impairs the immune system reducing the body's ability to fight infection (Davidson et al., 2003). These physiological responses are linked to an emotional response such as fear or disgust (Davidson et al., 1990), depression, and anxiety have also been linked (Tomarken et al., 1992).

Further studies have demonstrated chronic stress can also lead to an over production of immunoglobulin, giving rise to the potential for the development of a range of autoimmune disorders including diabetes (Dickerson and Kemeny, 2004; Segerstrom

and Miller, 2004). These physiological responses can lead to a variety of cardiovascular diseases, and autoimmune disorders, including a propensity for cancer (Davidson et al., 2003; Sapolsky, 2004). Another negative aspect associated with stress, and coupled with the arousal of the SNS is the depression of the parasympathetic nervous system (PNS). The PNS enables the body to recover from episodes of stimulation of the SNS (Sapolsky, 2004). Interruption of the PNS, and failure of the body to recover adequately can also contribute to the development of cardiovascular, gastric, and autoimmune disorders plus disturbed sleep (Sapolsky, 1999). The impact of chronic stress coupled with the physiological responses can over time lead to fatigue, and an inability to perform (McEwen, 1998). If this chronic stress state is endured it may lead to 'burnout' as well as chronic illnesses as described above. This chronic state will ultimately affect the leaders' ability to function in their role, becoming over time less effective as a leader (Boyatzis et al., 2006). The emotional response of a leader influences not only their leadership practice but also the efficacy of their decision-making (George and Brief, 1992). Interestingly in an earlier study by Tiedens (2001), followers attributed more importance to a leader who expressed anger, and less importance to a leader who expressed sadness. Hence leaders need to attain a certain balance with their emotions to have a positive effect on the workforce, and still maintain a level of status (Rajah et al., 2011).

Next I will discuss gendered literature since additional factors become apparent. Some authors suggest women experience additional pressure and perceive a need to change their preferred leadership practice, to 'act' male being authoritative and assertive, impacting on their stress levels (Gardiner and Tiggeman, 1999). Moreover, women are subjected to additional stress-inducing situations further impacting on their wellbeing

(Bogg and Cooper, 1998), and these states are compounded by working in a male dominated environment (Davidson and Cooper, 1983). Gardiner and Tiggeman (1999, p.303) outline the impact on women when they are in the minority, these include, 'increased visibility, exaggeration of differences, and stereotyping'. They argue women will be under greater scrutiny, perceive they need to perform better than their male counterparts (Bellamy and Ramsay, 1994), and be segregated from their male peers, thereby excluded from social and professional networks (Teelken and Deem, 2013). Fiske et al. (1991) maintain stereotyping also has a harmful effect on women in the work place. All these factors contribute to an increase in work-related stress for women in leadership roles.

The type of leadership practice women adopt can also have a harmful effect (Gardiner and Tiggeman, 1999). If a woman adopts an approach characterised as feminine such as caring and nurturing, they may be perceived as being less proficient and capable (Amicus Curiae Brief, 1991). This feminised approach may also highlight the variances between women and men increasing the likelihood of a negative impact (Gardiner and Tiggeman, 1999). In contrast, women leaders opting for a masculine approach by acting authoritative, assertive, and competitive, can also invoke a negative response, and open themselves up to censure and disapproval because they are not performing in traditionally gendered ways (Fitzgerald, 2014). Correspondingly, a study by Eagly et al. (1992) observed women leaders adopting a masculine approach were deemed less proficient, and less able than their male counterparts, these perceptions were more exaggerated when the women were in traditional male roles. They argue this negative judgement has a significant bearing on work-related stress for women in leadership roles. Crucially the study found over time these negative perceptions of women leaders

did lessen (Eagly et al., 1991). However, it would appear regardless of the practice of leadership women were likely to be exposed to increased levels of stress, rendering women in a double bind position, by adopting stereotypical masculine practice of leadership they may be considered aggressive. On the other hand adopting stereotypical feminine practice they may be considered ineffective (Amicus Curiae Brief, 1991).

Having critically reviewed the relevant literature I will now summarise the key outcomes and develop the thematic framework for the study.

## **2.7 Thematic Framework**

From a critical review of the literature, I have summarised the key outcomes which will form the thematic framework for the study. The key outcomes have been grouped into the personal world, the professional world, and the interplay between the professional and the personal worlds.

### **The Personal World**

The literature reveals the construction of one's identity is influenced overtime by several factors including culture, education, and socialisation (Scott, 1986). Thus a woman's lived experience (Burkinshaw, 2015) as the personal, the private, the emotional, and the interiorised shape their gender identity (De Lauretis, 1994). There is no universal woman's experience, however, commonality, and patterns emerge enabling women to become cognisant of their lived experiences and life events in a world constructed by men (Frye, 1996). Some gender theories, such as poststructural gender theory dissociates gender performance from the body as it is biologically sexed

(Butler, 1999), and are in danger of invalidating notions of inequality, and failing to identify the marginalisation of women (Scott, 1986).

The concept of care is gendered, and within feminist theory care is paradoxical, as care of the family can be seen as repressive, whereas other forms of care can be perceived as liberating (Tronto, 1993). Care offers an alternative to hegemonic capitalist leadership practices, and should be encouraged. Women however, remain the primary care givers, and care of the family falls disproportionately to women (Press and Townsley, 1998). It is argued if men were more exposed to care there would be a shift to a more equalising status (Noddings, 1992; Beck, 1994).

Further, the literature reveals how women's experience of time is not linear, and is dependent upon the demands of others (Knights and Odih, 1995). The traditional patriarchal view of time conceals women's lives, and does not consider the impact of globalisation, and the erosion of tradition on women (McNay, 2000). Griffiths (1995) suggests authenticity is grounded in time, but is not static and is constantly in the process of construction, influenced by both previous social interactions and expectations of future experiences, Griffith (1995) argues it is related to agency and being 'true to oneself'.

Next I discuss the key outcomes themed within the professional world.

### **The Professional World**

From an ontological and epistemological perspective the literature on leadership identity construction demonstrates a strong correlation between life story, and personal experiences (Parker, 2002; Keltchermans, 1993; Butt et al., 1988), including childhood experiences (Northouse, 2010), and significant people (Johnson, 2002). These factors

shape professional identity, and self-actualisation (Busher, 2003). Critical life events, and significant people also influence a leader's development. Northouse (2010) argues being aware, and responsive to these factors can propel growth as a leader.

The literature suggests that enacting leadership in HE has become emotionally labour intensive (Fitzgerald, 2014; Fanghanel and Trowler, 2008; Lynch, 2006; Morley, 2003), this has arguably affected women, especially ethnically minoritised women, more so than men, as women are hyper-visible, and under greater scrutiny by peers (Gardiner and Tiggeman, 1999). Performing to preconceived notions of gender roles (Fitzgerald, 2014). Anderson and Jack (1991) suggest women leaders tend to stifle thoughts, and feelings if they do not conform to what is publically acceptable. Women in a male-dominated culture can feel disempowered, and to achieve have to internalise masculine practices (Blackmore, 1999). Despite efforts women remain underrepresented in leadership positions in HE (David, 2014).

It can be seen the leadership value paradigm (Hodgkinson, 1991) supports the resolution of value conflicts experienced by leaders. The higher values (transrational and rational) are favoured when resolving value conflicts in the decision-making process (Hodgkinson, 1991). Operating in a complex marketised environment the potential for maintaining ethical, considerate decision-making has been problematised.

Hitherto traditional leadership theories have been based on male experiences, and comprehension (Northouse, 2010). These masculine hegemonic practices had become the norm while women's experiences, perceptions, and values were largely overlooked (Bell and Chase, 1993). Hence newer discourses such as critical leadership that challenge traditional hegemony have come to the fore (Collinson,

2011). These new discourses on leadership challenge traditional leadership theories and foster equal opportunity.

Further, the debate within dominant leadership discourse reveals conflict, some of the literature is gender blind (Berg et al., 2012), while other authors subscribe to notions of masculine/masculinist, and feminine/feminist leadership practices (Court, 2005). However, these practices are seen by some as dynamic, and variable irrespective of biological sex. It is reductionist to assert women lead in the same way, and problematic for women leaders (Blackmore, 1999).

The literature reveals alternative discourses on leadership which reveal strong correlations between the discourse on authentic leadership and critical leadership, each outlining the concept of an ethical leader, and a shift from masculinist notions of leadership to a more feminist approach. The leader is placed more centrally with the followers, rather than in a hierarchical position to them, garnering a position of mutual respect (George, 2003). Further, the five dimensions of authentic leadership George (2003) argues leaders develop over time, and are informed, and shaped by a person's experiences, and life story.

In synthesising my reading aspects of gender theory can be framed within George's (2003) five dimensions of authentic leadership. Care is integral to George's (2003) framework, and, as is evident, invokes a range of practices that are related to women's personal values, formation of meaningful relationships, and the demonstration of compassion towards others. The socio cultural role of women has developed in such a way women have far greater responsibility for care of the family, in addition, there is an expectation women will care for, and about others (Hughes, 2002). Arguably this

fosters the development of strong relationships, and compassion for others. Authenticity develops over time, as our values form and reform. An individual's lived experience configures and reconfigures their identity and values affording authentic leaders 'a clear idea of who they are, where they are going and what the right thing to do is' (Northouse, 2010, p. 213), developing the leader's sense of purpose. Similarly, these themes are located in the practices of critical leadership.

Next I discuss the key outcomes which are located at the interplay between the professional world and the personal world.

### **The Interplay between the Professional and the Personal World**

The literature suggests differences between men and women can obstruct equality and opportunities for women (Hughes, 2002), within this context a recognition of intersectionality is critical. By acknowledging the differences between individuals, we can better understand how these might manifest in the workplace.

Since women are in a unique position to understand their experiences evolving from a hegemonic masculine environment (Hartsock, 1983), I argue for a feminist standpoint. With the majority of senior leadership positions occupied by men, patriarchal practices are maintained, and the balance of power, and authority remains biased. Hence women's lived experience gives insights into how concepts, and theories are actualised in their social constructs (Smith, 1997).

Further, the implications of stress in a leadership role reveals a detrimental effect on an individual's mental and physical wellbeing (Dickerson and Kemeny, 2004; Ray, 2004; Segerstrom and Miller, 2004). Women leaders seem to be exposed to additional stress factors particularly in a male dominated environment (Gardiner and Tiggeman,



1999). Moreover, personal values may conflict with the organisation's expectations of the leader's role exposing the leader to further stress.

In addition, women leaders seem to invoke a negative response irrespective of the preferred leadership practice. However, it is recognised self-discipline, and emotional intelligence can help leaders to moderate their emotions, having a positive effect on their health, and on the perceptions of followers (Groves, 2006). Conversely, moderating one's persona can be interpreted as disingenuous (Newcombe and Ashkanasy, 2002; Ashkanasy and Tse, 2000).

In table 1 on page 55 I present a summary of the a priori key outputs from the critical reading and evidence base in the literature review, this formed the basis of the thematic framework for the study. The themes were categorised under three main headings: 1. The Personal World including: values (Hodgkinson, 1991); upbringing (Northouse, 2010); being a woman (Hughes, 2002); lived experience (Burkinshaw, 2015); critical life events (Northouse, 2010); culture, education and socialisation (Scott, 1986); and caring responsibilities (Hughes, 2002). 2. The Professional World including: identity (Busher, 2003); enacting leadership (Fitzgerald, 2014; Fanghanel and Trowler, 2008; Lynch, 2006; Morley, 2003); performativity (Butler, 1999); peer construct of leadership practice (Newcombe and Ashkanasy, 2002; Ashkanasy and Tse, 2000); role models (Johnson, 2002); power relations (Connell, 1998); ethics and values (Hodgkinson, 1991); labour intensive (Fitzgerald, 2014; Fanghanel and Trowler, 2008; Lynch, 2006; Morley, 2003); value conflicts (Hodgkinson, 1991); masculine hegemonic practices (Burkinshaw, 2015). Finally, 3. The Interplay between the personal and the professional Worlds including: values (Hodgkinson, 1991); health and wellbeing

(Gardiner and Tiggeman, 1999); and personal and professional personae (Groves, 2006).

**Table 1 Summary of Thematic Framework Developed from the Literature Review**

<b>The Personal World</b>	<b>The Professional World</b>	<b>The Interplay between the Personal and the Professional Worlds</b>
Values (Hodgkinson, 1991) Upbringing (Northouse, 2010) Being a woman (Hughes, 2002) Lived Experience (Burkinshaw, 2015)) Critical Life Events (Northouse, 2010) Culture, Education and Socialisation (Scott, 1986) Caring responsibilities (Hughes, 2002)	Identity (Busher, 2003) Enacting Leadership (Fitzgerald, 2014; Fanghanel and Trowler, 2008; Lynch, 2006; Morley, 2003) Performativity (Butler, 1999) Peer construct of leadership practice (Newcombe and Ashkanasy, 2002; Ashkanasy and Tse, 2000) Role models (Johnson, 2002) Power relations (Connell, 1998) Ethics and values (Hodgkinson, 1991) Labour intensive (Fitzgerald, 2014; Fanghanel and Trowler, 2008; Lynch, 2006; Morley, 2003) Value conflicts (Hodgkinson, 1991) Masculine hegemonic practices (Burkinshaw, 2015)	Values (Hodgkinson, 1991) Health and wellbeing (Gardiner and Tiggeman, 1999) Personal and Professional Personae (Groves, 2006)

Source: Personal collection

In the next chapter, I will set out the research design for the study, and position the study within a wider framework. The purpose is to develop knowledge for a practical application to inform policy and practice. I will approach my research from an interpretative ontological perspective.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter seeks to justify narrative inquiry as my chosen research methodology underpinning my research. It is imperative as a researcher I understand how my research is positioned in relation to the knowledge produced (Morrison, 2007). To do this I will introduce, and explain Ribbins and Gunter's (2002) typology of knowledge domains in the field of educational leadership. This is pertinent as different kinds of research questions require the use of varying forms of enquiry and knowledge. Understanding where my research is in relation to these wider frameworks will inform the type of knowledge sought. Positioning my research within the appropriate mode of enquiry is key to the success and relevance of the study.

I will also clarify my philosophical approach to knowledge before outlining my preferred research strategy, chosen methodology, and method, concluding with the management aspects of the research project such as accessibility, reliability and validity, and ethics.

#### **3.1 Contribution to Knowledge**

To position my research I shall first place it within a wider framework. It is recognised the mode of enquiry and knowledge utilised within a research project to develop theoretical, and research knowledge is dependent upon the type of research method and theory. Feminist theory is dynamic:

Never a stable body of thought with a grounding axiom or system, feminism has addressed theory not merely in terms of what a philosopher might offer but, also in terms of what feminism might become (Colebrook, 2000, p.5).

Considering the shifting axiom within feminist theory, the mode of enquiry for this research is located in Ribbins and Gunter's (2002) third of five domains summarised in Table 2 below. Conceptualised as the humanistic domain as the research will draw upon the experiences, and stories of individual leaders seeking to 'gather and theorise' with a view to develop policy and practice.

<b>Knowledge domain</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
Conceptual	Concerned with issues of ontology and epistemology, conceptual clarification.
Critical	Concerned to reveal and emancipate leaders and followers from social injustice.
Humanistic	Gathers and theorises from the experiences and biographies of those who are leaders and managers.
Evaluative	Abstracts and measures the impact of leadership effectiveness on organisational outcomes.
Instrumental	Provides leaders with effective leadership strategies to deliver organisational outcomes.

**Table 2.** The Five Knowledge Domains Adapted from Ribbins and Gunter (2002, p. 378)

The research is aimed towards developing "knowledge-for-understanding" (Wallace and Poulson 2003, p.18), and could be used as a basis to enable "knowledge-for-action" (Wallace and Poulson, 2003, p. 18). This thesis makes an important contribution to knowledge by providing a deeper understanding of the construction of leadership practices amongst women leaders, with a particular emphasis on authentic leadership, and the impact of leadership on health and wellbeing. With a view to informing the development of policies and practices seeking to ensure equality of opportunity, and support for future women leaders, and those already in leadership positions.

Moreover, in discussing my philosophical position, it is necessary for me to develop my understanding of the philosophical debates regarding the 'meaning and nature of educational enquiry and whether enquiry is influenced by individual ontologies' (Scott and Morrison, 2006, p.130). I seek to do this by clarifying my philosophical position with regards to epistemology and ontology, namely 'what is the relation between what we see and understand (epistemology) and reality (ontology)' (McKenzie, 1997, p. 9).

First, my epistemological position to knowledge can be described as subjective/interpretive, holding knowledge is subjective, and influenced by a person's experiences and social construct (Scott and Usher, 1999). Second, as an interpretivist, I subscribe to a realist ontology immersing myself in the constant practice of understanding the world and constructing meaning from it (Scott and Morrison, 2006). However, a criticism of interpretivism is whether reality is ever elicited from a person's description of events as they are subject to various perspectives. Individuals create meaning by relaying descriptions of experiences, and this in turn is influenced by respective context (Scott and Morrison, 2006). Since all human experiences, and subsequent meanings are the result of a subjective perspective, as an interpretivist I do not hold to an objective reality existing in isolation from the influence of an individual's interpretation. An objectivist approach favours a scientific strategy characterised by procedures and methods designed to produce universal laws to explain the reality being researched (Cohen et al., 2000). However, as an interpretivist I favour methods designed to produce descriptive data, qualitative rather than quantitative in nature (Morrison, 2007).

A concern highlighted within social science narratives is different meanings are attributed to key concepts including feminist concepts, this lack of consensus poses

specific issues in feminist research particularly with regard to warranting comparability, and validity of the research findings (Hughes, 2002). However, accepting these manifold and incongruous meanings can enable dominant discourses to be challenged, and contest the truth of various ways of knowing as there is no single universal 'truth' (Davies, 1997a). These varying conceptualisations of feminist discourse raise issues for research design and analysis, when applying multiple meaning during the management of the research the production of an open text is preferable (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000). This stimulates active interpretation on the part of the reader, and allows for multiple meanings to be derived from the reader's own subjective perspective. Thus, the researcher should evade 'closing' their texts by placing themselves too resolutely between the reader, and the voices researched (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000).

### **3.2 Research Strategy**

In this section, I will discuss the justification of the use of narrative inquiry as my chosen research methodology. Considering my philosophical position, and the purpose of the study I ascribe to an interview study using a narrative inquiry approach as broadly defined by Chase (2005, p.651):

Contemporary narrative inquiry can be characterised as an amalgam of interdisciplinary analytic lenses, diverse disciplinary approaches, and both traditional and innovative methods – all revolving around an interest in biographical particulars as narrated by the ones who live them.

Narrative inquiry is a developing approach that Floyd (2012) argues is well suited to research questions investigating the perceived, and subjective experiences, and life events of individuals. It encapsulates an individual's personal perspective of their experience over time, and is sensitive to the interplay between personal experience and cultural context (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). There are epistemological

considerations when applying narrative inquiry to a research project. By ascribing to the use of narrative inquiry I endorse my epistemological view 'the social world is an interpreted world' (Altheide and Johnson, 1994, p. 489). Narrative inquiry emphasises subjectivity in direct contrast to a positivist approach. A positivist approach emphasises 'objectivity, measurable, value free, generalisable, and replicable' it also maintains there is a logical set of rules and explanations for events being researched. In respect of educational research, positivism does not allow for the understanding of the complexity of the social, political, and professional world of individuals (Scott and Usher, 1999). Further, Wellington (2000) argues whether cause-effect relationships are totally objective as researchers are individuals who possess their own set of values and beliefs, and choose what and how to research.

Generally, research is about the acquisition of knowledge resulting in comprehension about the subject under investigation. This standpoint presents dilemmas for those using narrative inquiry since the fundamental goal is to examine specific experiences of individuals, and to decipher and explain those occurrences (Goodson and Sikes, 2001). Conceding it is unrealistic to faithfully encapsulate an individual's experiences problematises representation, and legitimisation of the data collected (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994b). However, the disparity between reality and representation may not be pertinent, it has been suggested researchers should charter new paths rather than repeatedly tread well-worn roads (Tierney, 1998).

I acknowledge as a researcher my own life experiences can result in different interpretations, and hence reflect different realities in the description and analysis of the data (Goodson and Sikes, 2001). From a personal perspective, I am also interested in the minutiae of people's lives, and how they make sense of their experiences and

their environment. I also believe I am an attentive listener, and can see beyond the superficial discussion and pose pertinent questions soliciting rich data (Goodson and Sikes, 2001).

Having set out my research strategy next I discuss my chosen research methodology.

### **3.2.1 Research Methodology**

The methodology being used for this study is narrative inquiry, a partial narrative on the individual's lived experience (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). I consider a qualitative approach appropriate for this type of research project since this will provide a rich detailed description, and an in-depth insight (Wellington, 2000). It is ideally suited to managing the complexities of a situation as it provides a holistic representation of the research topic (Denscombe, 2010). Further, the researcher can only understand and interpret the data if it is placed within the broader social, educational, and historical context (Morrison, 2007). The data collected during this study is highly subjective and individualistic. In choosing this approach I was mindful of Shakeshaft (1987) six stages of research on women and gender in educational leadership as highlighted earlier (see p. 20 of this study):

At stage four, women are finally examined on their own terms and the female world is documented (Shakeshaft, 1987, p. 6).

The question proposed for stage four of the typology was 'How do women describe their experiences and lives?' Taking into consideration Shakeshaft (1987) typology, and time constraints, I chose semi-structured interviews to present a view of educational leadership from a female perspective, expressed in women's own words as they described their educational leadership stories. This method encourages the participant to tell their story, and reflect on events (Briggs et al., 2012) regarding their



leadership journey, and what has influenced their journey. The study seeks to explore and describe the influences, barriers, and constraints of senior women's construction of their leadership identity through their life experiences, and whether this is authentic. It also seeks to explore the impact of leadership enactment on health and wellbeing. Having discussed my chosen research methodology I will now discuss the research method for the study.

### **3.2.2 Semi-Structured Interviews**

The chosen research method for this study was one-to-one semi-structured interviews, as I believed this to be the most appropriate tool to yield relevant data to address the research questions, and fulfil the aims of the study (Goodson and Sikes, 2001). The research questions to be addressed are:

1. What influences the construct of leadership identity and how does this impact on the practice of leadership?
2. How does gender impact on leadership identity?
3. What authentic leadership practices do women leaders describe?
4. How does the enactment of leadership affect health and wellbeing?

This method was chosen in preference to unstructured interviews as it enabled me to elaborate elements of interest to the study, and due to resources and time constraints, allowed effective time management for both parties. Moreover, there are significant advantages to selecting this interview method, a précis of some of the advantages and disadvantages is given in the table over the page:

**Table 3** Advantages and Disadvantages of Semi Structured Interviews (adapted from Denscombe, 2010)

<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
Provides rich and detailed information	Transcription and analysis is time consuming
Significant insights can be garnered from the depth of information elicited	Non-standard responses can challenge data analysis
Scant resources required in terms of equipment	Negative impact on reliability, as consistency and objectivity are unachievable
Participants can give precedence to their main issues	Interviewer effect - responses based on what people say they do which may be different from what they actually do
The most flexible method for data gathering	The artificial situation may inhibit the interviewee
High response rate guaranteed	Insensitive interviewing technique can have an adverse effect
Data can be validated with the participant	Time and travel can be resource intensive
The experience can be rewarding for the interviewee	The interview may be unrewarding for the interviewee
	The interviewee may recount stressful experiences

Semi-structured interviews facilitated a degree of flexibility in the interviews, and allowed participants to develop and expand on their own ideas and thoughts, enabling greater detail to be ascertained of pertinent points (Denscombe, 2010). In addition, it was important to develop, and maintain a trusting relationship with the interviewees to elicit the relevant data, the dynamics of the interview are important in this context as personal data is being explored (Goodson and Sikes, 2001). One-to-one interviews had the additional advantage of being easier to schedule between myself, the interviewer, and the interviewee; the data gathered is from one source and therefore easier to locate and understand; easier to guide the participant through the interview

schedule; and the interview tape is easier to transcribe when only two voices are present (Denscombe, 2010).

The interview schedule (See Appendix 1) consisted of six open-ended questions linked to the research questions, and based on the key themes such as what influences a leader's construction of their leadership practice, and how does leadership impact on their health and wellbeing. Due to the nature of the data required to address the research questions, aspects of the participant's life history were essential. Segments of their lives the participant perceived had influenced their construction of their leadership practice were captured (Denscombe, 2010). These aspects of life story will enable me to view experiences through the participant's eyes, and gain some appreciation of how the women made sense of their lives (Denscombe, 2010) in relation to gender, and leadership.

Next I link the interview questions to the research aims, research questions and key themes from the literature. I also reflect on the design of the interview schedule, and the relevance of the interview questions.

1. What life experiences/ life roles/ personal values have impacted on your leadership style?

For the purpose of this study, style (a leader's unique way) relates to a leader's practice of leading denoted by their behaviour, their actions and interrelations with colleagues (Northouse, 2010), which is pertinent to George's (2003) five dimensions of authentic leadership practice. I acknowledge this first interview question is a broad question, and links to research aims one to three: 1. To broaden knowledge and understanding of the construct of leadership by senior women leaders in HE; 2. To determine whether their leadership practice is authentic; and 3. What influences the adoption of authentic

leadership practices. This interview question also links to research questions one to three: 1. What influences the construct of leadership identity and how does this impact on the practice of leadership? 2. How does gender impact on leadership identity? 3. What authentic leadership practices do women leaders describe? In reviewing the literature, it is evident several aspects of an individual's life story (Busher, 2003) impact on their construct of leadership including: life experiences, life roles (Busher, 2003), and personal values (Hodgkinson, 1991).

Themes to emerge from the literature are: values (Hodgkinson, 1991); culture, education and socialisation (Scott, 1986); upbringing (Northouse, 2010); critical life events (Northouse, 2010); role models (Johnson, 2002); and caring responsibilities (Hughes, 2002).

2. How does your personal/ private persona differ from your professional persona as a leader?

This interview question is also directly related to the first research aim and question as above, as it was evident from the literature women may adopt different practices as a leader in order to fit in with a masculine hegemonic environment (Blackmore, 1999). I wanted to broaden the knowledge and understanding relating to whether the women acted differently in their social environment compared to their professional environment. I also wanted to identify if they played a role or changed/ modified their personae, and practices when stepping from the personal to the professional. Theme to emerge from the literature are: upbringing (Northouse, 2010); time as a resource (Hughes, 2002); and enacting their leadership role (Fitzgerald, 2014; Fanghanel and Trowler, 2008; Lynch, 2006; Morley, 2003).

3. What does it mean to you:

a. Being a woman

This question carries on from the first research aim and relates directly to research question two: How does gender impact on leadership identity? Here I wanted to investigate if the women identified with feminist discourse in their experiences as a woman leader, how they made sense of their world (Blackmore, 1999). Themes to emerge from the literature are: being a woman (Hughes, 2002); gendered power relations (Deem, 2003); caring responsibilities (Hughes, 2002); lived experience (Burkinshaw, 2015).

b. Being a leader

This question relates directly to research aim two: To determine whether their leadership practice is authentic, and three: To determine what influences the adoption of authentic leadership practices? And research question three: What authentic leadership practices do women leaders describe? The literature revealed five basic practices of an authentic leader: 1. Have a clear sense of direction and know their purpose; 2. Care passionately about what they do; they are cognisant of their personal values and relate to conflict situations and individuals based on their values; 3. Develop close relationships with others establishing trust and mutual respect; 4. Self-disciplined and remain focused on their goals by controlling their emotions and remaining consistent; and finally, 5. Exhibit compassion towards others and are considerate of individual's cultures and backgrounds (George, 2003). This question sought to elicit the women's thoughts about being a leader, and identify if they were passionate about their role. Authentic leaders have a propensity to be passionate and highly motivated, striving to do what is right (George, 2003). Themes to emerge from the literature are:

identity (Busher, 2003); time as a resource (Hughes, 2002); value conflicts (Hodgkinson, 1991); labour intensive (Fitzgerald, 2014; Fanghanel and Trowler, 2008; Lynch, 2006; Morley, 2003); power (Connell, 1998); masculine hegemonic practices (Burkinshaw, 2015); and personal and professional personae (Groves, 2006).

#### 4. How do you think people around you construct your leadership practice?

This question carries on from research aim two and is directly linked to research aim three and research question three as above. It was evident from the literature an authentic leader's relationship with followers is a significant characteristic (George, 2003). This question sought to identify from the leader's perspective how their peers viewed their leadership practice, whether they thought it was viewed positively or negatively, as authentic leaders value their peers', and develop a relationship based on mutual respect (George, 2003). Themes to emerge from the literature are: peer construct of leadership practice (Newcombe and Ashkanasy, 2002; Ashkanasy and Tse, 2000), performativity (Butler, 1999); and the enactment of leadership (Fitzgerald, 2014; Fanghanel and Trowler, 2008; Lynch, 2006; Morley, 2003).

#### 5. How do you maintain your health and wellbeing?

This question relates directly to research aim four: To broaden the knowledge and understanding of the impact of the enactment of leadership on health and wellbeing. It is also linked directly to research question four: How does the enactment of leadership effect health and wellbeing? This final question sought to elicit data about their health and wellbeing, how they maintained a work life balance and any self-reported issues with their health. A theme to emerge from the literature is the effect of the enactment of leadership on the health and wellbeing of women leaders (Gardiner and Tiggeman, 1999).

6. Is there anything else you would like to add?

This question seeks to allow the women to articulate their subjective view of their world and is deliberately unstructured, as highlighted earlier an open text does not place the researcher too firmly between the reader and the voices researched is a guiding principle when managing multiple meanings (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000). Hence giving each participant the opportunity to elaborate on any of their answers or add more insights.

Next I will discuss the sample for the study.

### **3.2.3 The Sample**

I chose purposive sampling for this research project as the research relates to particular practices, and the participants chosen need to meet specific criteria (Goodson and Sikes, 2001). Purposive sampling is frequently used in life story research requiring participants to have specific knowledge and experience (Erben, 1998b). The sample was 'hand-picked', and based on attributes affording the most appropriate information for the study (Denscombe, 2010), located within a range of vocational, and non-vocational disciplines including health, education, and business (see Table 4, p. 70) in universities in the West and East Midlands. This ensured both relevance and knowledge of the research topic. This type of sampling is suited to small scale studies, and resources required are low in terms of cost and time. The main advantage is it allowed me, the researcher, to focus in on people and events critical to the research topic (Denscombe, 2010).

The leader roles in the HEIs were identified through looking at the administrative structure in the respective HEIs with the aid of the gatekeeper (an Associate Dean). The composition of the roles were identified through the gatekeeper, and through

individual HEIs staff profile pages. Only eighteen Associate Deans were identified in the West and East Midland area, with the aid of the gatekeeper. A further two participants were recruited from the Russell Group, with the help of the gatekeeper. A Head of School was considered an appropriate equivalent administrative role to Associate Dean. The sample size comprised of twenty participants of which nineteen were white British women, and one from a BAME background, and they were drawn from six universities in the West and East Midland area. The reason for selecting these institutions was accessibility as I live within the West Midland region, and the HEIs are contained within a relatively small geographical area. The universities have been assigned a number one to six to limit the possibility of identification.

Sample sizes for this type of research are invariably quite small (Goodson and Sikes, 2001), the reasons are two-fold: first, economic reasons and time constraints of the researcher; and second, as my epistemological position is subjective it is arguable large samples are not required as I do not seek to generalise my findings (Goodson and Sikes, 2001). My aim was to gain a deeper understanding of gendered authentic leadership practices, and its impact on health and wellbeing.

The participants profile is given in table 4 on page 70, they had all been in post between one and four years. Amal's discipline is given as a non-medical science subject, the specific subject title is removed to reduce the possibility of identification, as she is the only participant from ethnic minority background, and her narrative is analysed in detail in chapter five. The rationale for the inclusion of a vignette is given later in the thesis.



**Table 4** Participant Profile

No	Participant	Role Type	Marital and Parental Status	Organisational Unit	University
1	Amal	Associate Dean	Married Four children	Non-Medical Science subject	University 1
2	Andrea	Associate Dean	Married One child	Health	University 1
3	April	Associate Dean	Married Two children	Education	University 2
4	Bea	Associate Dean	Married One child	Business School	University 1
5	Elise	Associate Dean	Married Two step children	Health	University 3
6	Emma	Associate Dean	Married Two children	Education	University 4
7	Jodie	Associate Dean	Married Three children	Health	University 1
8	Judy	Associate Dean	Separated Two children	Health	University 4
9	June	Associate Dean	Married Four children	Health	University 2
10	Kathy	Associate Dean	Married No children	Women's Studies	University 2
11	Katie	Associate Dean	Separated Two children	Social Work	University 2
12	Meryl	Associate Dean	Married One child	Health	University 3
13	Polly	Associate Dean	Married No children	Health	University 1
14	Rose	Associate Dean	Married Two children	Education	University 3
15	Sharon	Associate Dean	Married One child	Computer Science	University 3
16	Sheila	Associate Dean	Divorced Two Children	Education	University 1
17	Tilly	Associate Dean	Married One child	Health	University 4
18	Ivy	Associate Dean	Divorced One child	Health	University 4
19	Marie	Head of School	Married Two children	Film & Television (TV)	University 5
20	Sue	Head of School	Married Two children	Media/ Cultural Studies	University 6

See appendix two for a descriptor for each of the disciplines.

Next I discuss the ethical considerations for the study.

### **3.3 Ethical Considerations**

A consideration of the ethical issues is fundamental to all research design. The University of Birmingham ethics processes were adhered to including an application for ethical approval for the study. Following review by the Humanities and Social Sciences Ethical Review Committee a favourable ethical opinion for my study was confirmed, subject to the following conditions:

1. Amend the participant documentation to include a specific date as the deadline for participant withdrawal of data.
2. In addition to the contact details of the research student, add the supervisor's contact details to the participant information sheet.
3. Consider advising participants (perhaps verbally) given the low sample size and distinctive roles of participants, it may be possible to identify them in the research outputs despite the best efforts of the researcher.

I complied with all the conditions as outlined above. Voluntary informed consent (See Appendix 3) was obtained by sending by email a description of the interview, its purpose, and duration to each interviewee prior to participation. Informed consent is an individual's 'fundamental democratic right to freedom and self-determination' (ESRC, 2005, p. 7). The interviewees were guaranteed anonymity in the presentation of data, and data would be treated as confidential (Bailey, 1996). They were also informed of their right to withdraw without any recourse (BERA, 2011). The identities of the participants will not be publicly disclosed, demographic details were also kept to a minimum to protect the participants' identity, and maintain the required level of confidentiality. In a small study of this nature maintaining confidentiality can be a

challenge therefore the university location of the participants will also remain anonymous.

Moreover, it is important to clarify with participants how the research findings will benefit them and others, and to keep them informed during the research project (Robson and Robson, 2002). An explanation of the benefits of participation included: To learn from their experiences and support them to become the best leaders they can be. Enabling them to learn, adapt, and move to authentic leadership practices may have benefits for not only their health but also their effectiveness as a leader. I also informed participants of how I planned to keep them informed as the project progressed in the invitation to participate. This would be in the form of an executive summary of the findings following submission of the thesis.

The research design did not pose any potential ethical risk other than minimal or low, or rendered participants vulnerable. Reassurances around privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality were crucial to gain the participants' trust. This was imperative as during the interviews both sensitive information, and stressful experiences were recounted, and subsequent use of information is available for public consumption. The data was recorded via digital voice recorder, and stored securely and anonymously both during, and at the end of the research project. Recordings and copies of transcriptions were stored electronically in a password protected folder. The interviews were held in private to take reasonable steps not to be interrupted or overheard (Busher and James, 2012). The data will be presented in a clear and accurate manner, and only used for the purpose it was intended. It is unethical to use extracts of data for teaching purposes or share data with other people, unless express permission from the participant is gained (Elgesem, 2002). On ethical grounds, and to emulate good practice participants were

offered the opportunity to endorse their transcripts prior to analysis (Coleman, 2012), no amendments were put forward.

Practitioners or insider researchers can add another ethical dimension to the project, Busher and James (2010) argue this category of researcher may be perceived as having a hidden agenda inhibiting participants' responses, and as a consequence can threaten the credibility of the study. In addition, one-to-one semi-structured interviews are traditionally viewed as paternalistic, as the interviewer maintains control over the interview schedule, hence my open question posed at the end of the interview. Moreover, Coleman (2012) argues ethical dilemma is raised by this apparent inequity of power as feminist researchers' value equality between the researcher and the interviewee. Thus it was imperative I remained cognisant of the potential threats to the study as outlined above, consequently it was essential to take a critical, and reflexive approach to the interview process. This involved a personal reflection post interview (See appendix 4), critically reflecting on the relationship with the participant, and how it might be improved with subsequent interviews. For Coleman (2012) this is of importance when interviewing leaders. Given the above, maintaining an ethical framework throughout the study achieved several objectives including: participants are kept safe from harm; trust is formed between the researcher and the participant; and the findings are dependable and aim to make a difference (Busher and James, 2012). Having discussed the ethical considerations of the study I will now examine my position in the research.

### **3.4 My Position in the Research**

I need to consider my position in the research, as being a former female academic I bring my own experiences, and insights into the research topic as a practitioner, and it is necessary to acknowledge these to mitigate bias (Coleman, 2012). It follows that the interviewee could assume prior knowledge, and this may affect responses and avoid divulging sensitive information critical to the research. I am a white, British, heterosexual, fifty-year-old, working class university educated female undertaking cross-group feminist research with individuals who may differ from me in several identity markers such as race, religion, age, culture, and class, it is important I do not rewrite their world or impose my reality on them (Young, 2003). Arguably it is impossible to separate oneself from the historical, and cultural context because the 'subject' and 'object' of research are located in pre-understood worlds (Godamer, 1973). Nevertheless contest over meaning within feminist theory needs to be positioned within a historical and cultural context, and the realisation dominant meanings are subject to challenge (Moi, 1994). Thus looking at the social world from the perspectives of women and how they construct their world is situated within feminist standpoint theory, and the resultant feminist epistemologies (Hughes, 2002).

However, critiques of standpoint theory argue there is no tangible women's experience to construct knowledge, and the lives of women are so diverse generalisability becomes problematic. In acknowledging there is no universal women's experience, and the need to examine women's experience in relation to issues of intersectionality, standpoint feminists have sought to absorb this criticism. Subsequently, two prominent accounts of standpoint theory have emerged: first, arguing a woman's experience of her daily life affords superior knowledge particularly in relation to hegemonic

masculinity; and second, how social meanings are constructed through the experiences of women (Hughes, 2002).

Further, being the same gender as the interviewees may encourage rapport, and improve the quality of the information elicited. However, I must acknowledge intersections such as race, age, sexual orientation, and power relations, all have the potential to create bias within the study. Therefore, it is necessary to acknowledge the potential threat of the researcher and interviewee relationship on the analysis of the data, and reporting of the findings (Creswell, 1998).

Next I will discuss how the interviews were organised and conducted.

### **3.5 Conducting the Interviews**

Access was negotiated in collaboration with a former colleague who is an Associate Dean and acted as gatekeeper to the participants identified. The gatekeeper sent an introductory email to potential participants. Upon receipt of acceptance a formal invitation, and participant information document (See Appendix 5) was issued to prospective participants. The document outlined the purpose of the study, expectations, rules, and rights of the participants (Goodson and Sikes, 2001). Then a mutually agreed date, and time for the interview was arranged by email. Participants were informed the interview would take a maximum of one hour to ensure sufficient time was scheduled, and minimise the risk of disruption. The venue was their place of work as I sought to ensure the participant was comfortable in their surroundings. One-to-one interviews were appropriate as scheduling diaries with one individual is easiest to organise, and the interviewee is also less likely to feel inhibited in a one-to-one situation. The benefits to the researcher are they can focus on one individual at a time making it easier to control the interview, and assimilate the information elicited. It also

makes the transcription phase less challenging as there is only one person talking (Denscombe, 2010).

Some authors suggest several rounds of interviews are necessary (Seidman, 2006; Goodson and Sikes, 2001), however, Floyd (2012) recommends one long single interview, and follow-up with any queries or additional questions by email or phone, as this approach is more conducive to respondent participation and compliance. Therefore, I undertook one single interview with each participant, and followed-up by email with their respective interview transcript for comments. See Appendix 6 for a transcript example.

Prior to commencement of the interview the participant signed a consent form. The interviews were conducted in private, and once underway proceeded without interruption. Dependent upon the participant, the duration of the interview ranged between forty and sixty minutes. The interviews were audio-recorded as memory alone is unreliable and prone to partial recall, bias, and error (Denscombe, 2010). The audio-recording is a permanent record, however this only captures speech, and therefore relevant non-verbal cues for contextual purposes were noted. Moreover, feedback from participants indicated they had enjoyed the interview, and reflected on issues not previously considered. Most of the narratives yielded rich data, and insightful reflections with only two considered to be less reflective and repetitive. These were also the shortest interviews, and occurred early in the data collection phase. On reflection I considered my interview technique improved with the ability to elicit more detail as time progressed.

Now I turn to aspects of validity and reliability in the research study.

### **3.6 Validity and Reliability**

Rigour within a research context is ensuring the study is valid and reliable. It is important as it helps to determine the quality of the research as well as influencing the choice of research approach and methodology. Defending the choices made during the research process such as the sample size and selection, and choice of research method is critical to satisfy readers the research is meaningful, and worthwhile. Rigour is assessed by reliability, validity, and triangulation (Bush, 2012), and these are discussed further below.

First I discuss aspects of internal and external validity. Internal validity looks at the extent data is precise and apt, as the researcher I took necessary precautions to ensure this as far as was practicable, this included validating responses with participants to check for factual accuracy; a greater understanding of experiences and opinions as detailed by the participant; constructing the questions carefully and ensuring questions were asked in an objective way; the use of a pilot to review my interview technique and ensure the schedule was appropriate; participant validation to affirm or amend transcriptions to reduce bias; comparing data from participants drawn from different organisational cultures and contrasting cultural and ethnic backgrounds, all the above add to the validity of the findings (Scott and Morrison, 2006).

External validity is concerned with the extent to which the results of this study can be generalised. However, this study is relatively small and consisted of only twenty participants. In addition, I have also acknowledged there is incongruity in the key concepts, and there is no universal woman's experience, hence the issue of generalisability is problematic. Lincoln and Guba (1985) maintain there is a need to



adopt a different approach to this type of qualitative research, they assert transferability as opposed to generalisability is more apt.

Second, I discuss reliability of the study. Reliability in a standard instrument is required, and one of the main ways to test the reliability of an instrument is to undertake a pilot study. Bell (2007) emphasises the need for a pilot study when using questionnaires to gain assurance the instrument is fit for purpose. Therefore, prior to commencement of the main study I undertook a pilot study to test the data-collection instrument. This consisted of two interviews with female Associate Deans outside of the designated geographical area of the main study to minimise cross contamination. Feedback from the pilot was used to inform the main study in terms of the relevance of the questions, and whether they elicited the required information. The pilot also enabled me to practice my interview technique, and the collation and analysis of the responses; this ultimately enabled the refinement of the data-collection instrument prior to the main study. The changes made to elicit relevant data included naming factors such as life roles, life experiences, and values that have impacted on their leadership practices; asking how they think others view their leadership practice.

Further, in determining the reliability of interviews it is important to ask whether the interview schedule would elicit similar results from two different interviewers, and whether the interviewer would gain similar insights if the schedule was used at varying times, or whether respondents might answer differently if interviewed at different points in time (Wragg, 2002). These options act to strengthen reliability, and takes into account the fluidity of gendered leadership knowledge construction. To ensure reliability the interviewer needs to ask the questions in the same way each time, this can only be achieved if the schedule is stringently structured as in a structured

interview (Fowler, 1993). Reliability is compromised when a semi-structured approach is utilised (Bush, 2012). However, this view is counteracted as it is argued the use of structured interviews conversely has a detrimental effect on validity, as validity requires a humanistic approach (Cohen et al., 2000). As I hold an interpretivist approach my research will contain greater detail, and it is important to recognise this may enhance validity at the expense of reliability. However, a triangulated approach may enhance the reliability of the study. Floyd (2012) however, is critical in his response to authors who urge triangulation in narrative research, arguing it conflicts with the key ontological and epistemological assumptions of the methodology. He recommends supplementing as opposed to triangulating data. This can be achieved by gleaning information about respondents prior to the interview via web based profiles, I undertook this approach for each of the participants improving my knowledge of the individual in respect of their academic profile but this did not impact on the findings. He suggests this will enable the researcher to gain a better understanding of the participants' past, and facilitate a trusting relationship resulting in a successful interview (Floyd, 2012). In summary, Validity and reliability are of equal importance for both qualitative and quantitative research (Brock-Utne, 1996).

Having discussed aspects of validity and reliability I will now deliberate the limitations of the research.

### **3.7 Limitations of the Research**

Some of the potential limitations to the research design outlined above include 'the interviewer effect'. This highlights the quality of the information elicited during an interview can be influenced by how the interviewer, is perceived by the interviewee (Denscombe, 2010). In addition, factors such as age, gender, and ethnic origin can

impact not only on how much information the interviewee is willing to impart but also on the integrity of the information. This can have a significant impact on the quality of the research. Further, the preferences and prejudices of both the interviewer, and the interviewee are likely to have an impact on the relationship. Being able to establish rapport and trust is fundamental to an effective interview. Moreover, the interviewee may not behave normally if they feel under the spotlight. Imparting sensitive or personal information can be influenced by the identity of the interviewer, some respondents may feel uncomfortable or embarrassed, there is the danger participants may supply the answers they feel are expected or correspond to the interviewer's stance on the topic, consequently impacting on the quality of the data (Denscombe, 2010). The researcher can do little to counteract this effect other than being prompt, courteous, approachable, and impartial to foster a secure trusting environment.

Further limitations of the study from my perspective were, first, the women's self-perception of how peers construct their leadership practice as there is no evidence to confirm or deny whether the women were accurate in their assessments. Second, reality and truth are subjective and fluid, and dependent on experiences.

I will now turn to the analysis of the research data.

### **3.8 Analysing the Data**

Once the interview data had been collected they were then transcribed. This process enabled me to become closer acquainted with the data. Included in the transcriptions were informal notes taken in the field, as four of the participants continued to raise relevant points after the end of the interview.

Following transcription of each of the interviews, existing themes drawn from the literature, and emergent themes from the data analysis have been summarised enhancing the thematic framework produced on page 55 of this study. The following table illustrates an amalgamation of two strategies: 1. A priori themes stemming from the literature review; and 2. Emergent themes based on the new empirical data. The themes were categorised under five main headings: 1. Compartmentalised world, and the interplay of the personae; 2. The impact of the personal world on the professional; 3. The impact of the professional world on the personal; 4. How the professional world impacts on leadership, highlighting the emerging themes of patronage and the professional environment; and 5. The interplay of the personal and professional worlds, highlighting emerging themes of coping with the interplay of the personae, the effects of managing the interplay of the personae, and additional professional roles.

**Table 5 Summary of the Thematic Framework Developed from the Literature and the Data**

<b>Compartmentalised World</b>	<b>Exploration of the Intersection of the Personal with the Professional World</b>			
	<b>The Impact of the Personal World on the Professional</b>	<b>The Impact of the Professional World on the Personal</b>	<b>How the Professional World Impacts on Leadership</b>	<b>The Interplay of the Personal and Professional Worlds</b>
<b>A</b> The Personal World <b>A</b> The Professional World	<b>A</b> Values (Hodgkinson, 1991) <b>A</b> Upbringing (Northouse, 2010) <b>A</b> Being a woman (Hughes, 2002) <b>A</b> Lived experience (Burkinshaw, 2015) <b>A</b> Critical Life Events (Northouse, 2010) <b>A</b> Culture, Education & Socialisation (Scott, 1986) <b>A</b> Caring responsibilities (Hughes, 2002)	<b>A</b> Ethics & values (Hodgkinson, 1991) <b>A</b> Being a woman (Hughes, 2002) <b>A</b> Health and Wellbeing (Gardiner and Tiggeman, 1999) <b>A</b> Labour intensive (Fitzgerald, 2014; Fanghanel and Trowler, 2008; Lynch, 2006, Morley, 2003) <b>A</b> Value conflicts (Hodgkinson, 1991)	<b>A</b> Identity (Busher, 2003) <b>A</b> Enacting leadership (Fitzgerald, 2014; Fanghanel and Trowler, 2008; Lynch, 2006, Morley, 2003) <b>A</b> Performativity (Butler, 1999) <b>A</b> Peer construct of Leadership practice (Newcombe and Ashkanasy, 2002; Ashkanasy and Tse, 2000) <b>A</b> Role Models (Johnson, 2002) <b>A</b> Power relations (Connell, 1998) <b>A</b> Masculine hegemonic practices (Burkinshaw, 2015)	<b>A</b> Personal and Professional Personae – the same or different? (Groves, 2006)
<b>E</b> The interplay of the personae			<b>E</b> Patronage (Johnson, 2002) <b>E</b> Professional Environment (Currie et al., 2002)	<b>E</b> Coping with the interplay of the personae <b>E</b> The effects of managing the interplay of the personae <b>E</b> Additional roles (Ward and Wolf, 2004)

Source: Personal collection (Key: A = A priori, E = Emerging themes from the data)

Categorical analysis served as a manageable tool for analysing, and describing the plethora of interview data (Strauss, 1987; Conastas, 1992).

### **3.9 Summary**

In summary, this chapter has set out the research design for this work. I have highlighted the strengths and limitations of the study, and how these were mitigated during the research process. I have considered the issues pertinent to a research project including ethical considerations. I have also illustrated the thematic strategies adopted for the analysis of the findings, and identified the key themes. The design and its efficacy will be further evaluated in the concluding chapter.

In the next chapter I present pen portraits of nineteen of the participants. The rationale for this is to give the reader a sense of the women's biographies, and context before moving onto the thematic analysis.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **PEN PORTRAITS**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

These pen portraits present a brief overview of the life stories of nineteen women leaders as I want to give a voice to each of these women, therefore, it is important the reader has an appreciation of the women's biographies, and their experience of leadership before moving on to the analysis. The use of portraiture places the individual in social and cultural context, and captures the nuances of the lived experience, it gives voice to the subjects. Consistency across each portrayal is sought through the narrative structure, and emergent themes are organised according to their individual and collective experience, these themes create the thematic framework of the portraits (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997). The framework for each portrait narrates life story aspects relating to the study aims and research questions: aspects that influence the construct of leadership identity; the impact of gender on leadership identity; authentic leadership practices described by the women; and the effect the enactment of leadership has on health and wellbeing, the study aims and research questions guided elements of the narrative which were omitted from the portraits. The pen portraits are presented in alphabetical order as per the participant profile table on page 70.

Amal's story is covered by a vignette in chapter five. My justification for its inclusion here is Amal was the only woman interviewed from an ethnic minority background, issues of intersectionality were articulated, and also, Amal successfully assimilated her personal and professional worlds, and this is further discussed in chapter five. A vignette is an expose of someone's life to present an individual's beliefs, attitudes, values, and perceptions about particular stimuli (Hughes and Huby, 2004). In this case enactment of leadership, gender, and the impact on health and wellbeing are the foci.

Further, the vignette has been used to explore the cultural influences derived from the life story, and give a more reflexive account of Amal's narrative (Humphreys, 2005). Thomson (2017) likens the vignette to a 'slice of life', it is descriptive and informative by nature, and often used, as in chapter five, to report research data. Hence in contrast with the pen portraits employed in this chapter, which capture the social and cultural context of the individual, and their experience of leaders, leading and leadership (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997).

## **4.1 Pen Portraits**

### **1. Andrea – Associate Dean, Health**

**Aspects that influence the construct of leadership identity.** Andrea's construct of leadership identity comprised both parents who were healthcare professionals. Their values and the enactment of them impacted on Andrea's value system. In addition, the experience of role models during training as a nurse and midwife. Andrea reflected on a ward sister as a role model. This person encouraged everyone to be open, reflecting the ward was a good place to work, and peers were happy and supported. However, the organisation was very hierarchical and their treatment of students was poor. Consequently, this reinforced Andrea's belief that everyone should be treated with respect, and as equals.

**The impact of gender on leadership identity.** Andrea identified challenges to being a woman, and has had to correct peers who have assumed male colleagues were more senior, particularly when on overseas business.



**Authentic leadership practices described by the women.** Andrea perceived her own leadership practices to be open, honest, and consistent. These can be considered as consistent with authentic leadership practices.

**The effect the enactment of leadership has on health and wellbeing.** Andrea did not feel stressed and believed she had a good work life balance, although she did admit to responding to emails late in the evening. However, for Andrea, this was part of managing her workload to prevent stress.

## **2. April – Associate Dean, Education**

**Aspects that influence the construct of leadership identity.** April's construct of leadership identity comprised of upbringing, April was raised in a working class family and was the first in her family to go to university. April's grandmother was very influential, a Baptist, very religious and old-fashioned, who wanted April to do well. The grandmother, while supporting her choice to be a teacher, also thought doing well was about getting married, and having a family. April's mother had mental health issues, hence her grandparents played an important part in her upbringing. In addition, being a mother had given April a real understanding of what it was like to juggle home and work, in turn making her empathetic towards others in the same situation.

**The impact of gender on leadership identity.** April reflected that being a woman in a male environment can be quite 'alienating'. She believed her peers, herself included all presented a very professional image, and is very conscious of her persona at work.

**Authentic leadership practices described by the women.** Integrity and having a moral purpose were important to April, consistent with authentic leadership. She perceived her own leadership practices to be supportive and nurturing.

**The effect the enactment of leadership has on health and wellbeing.** April developed stress-related rosacea, and admitted to drinking too much alcohol. With the help and support of family she believed she was getting more balance, but recognised she suffered from stress, although did not like to admit it.

### **3. Bea – Associate Dean, Business School**

**Aspects that influence the construct of leadership identity.** Bea's construct of leadership identity comprised of upbringing, reflecting on always being driven at school, she had ambition and commitment to do what was expected of her, and consequently expected others to do likewise. From a marketing and sales background, Bea was target and impact driven. She reflected on her business experience, and believed she brought a commercial sense to academia. Other aspects that influenced Bea's construct of leadership identity was motherhood. She reflected on becoming 'softer' following the birth of her child, and having empathy for other mothers in the workplace.

**The impact of gender on leadership identity.** Bea reflected being a woman resulted in the need to multitask, and bring structure. She believed in equality between men and women.

**Authentic leadership practices described by the women.** Bea recognised she needed to be very resilient and hard, reflecting she had a strong moral compass, and believed in fairness and equity. These practices are consistent with authentic leadership.

**The effect the enactment of leadership has on health and wellbeing.** Bea recognised she needed to do more exercise. She used her partner as a sounding board, and regularly met with female peers for support.

#### **4. Elise – Associate Dean, Health**

**Aspects that influence the construct of leadership identity.** Elise's construct of leadership identity comprised of upbringing. Elise was an only child, her father died when she was young, and raised by her mother who at the time was completing a degree at university. She believed her upbringing had made her less tolerant of others. She has had a lot of support from her mother, extended family, school teachers and line managers. Elise trained as a Podiatrist before entering academia. Other aspects which influenced her construct of leadership included two role models. These role models were both male, and were very supportive.

**The impact of gender on leadership identity.** Elise believed she was equal to men, and had never reflected on her being a woman. She perceived this to be a result of a number of strong professional women in her family.

**Authentic leadership practices described by the women.** Elise enjoyed leading, and believed she had good leadership skills. She perceived her peers thought she was approachable, supportive, listens and is open. Reflecting to be a good leader you must be 'true to yourself', and believing her leadership was 'genuine', consistent with authentic leadership practices.

**The effect the enactment of leadership has on health and wellbeing.** Elise has had to manage a long-term health condition, which is exacerbated by stress. She is socially active, and believed she had a good work life balance.

## **5. Emma – Associate Dean, Education**

**Aspects that influence the construct of leadership identity.** Emma's construct of leadership identity comprised of upbringing, Emma attended an all-girls school, and she was the first in her family to go to university. Other aspects which influenced her construct of leadership included was motherhood, which brought lots of demands on her time with competing issues, and sleep deprivation, this had made her empathetic towards others.

**The impact of gender on leadership identity.** Emma reflected that as a woman in academia she believed she was positioned differently. Reflecting on the divisions of labour in the home as she is the main carer as her husband works away. Also perceiving male colleagues had their shirts ironed for them.

**Authentic leadership practices described by the women.** Emma reflected she was driven by social justice and equality. She reflected on her strong vision of how things should move forward, and perceived herself to be focused on the vision to the detriment of other issues. A pragmatic leader, she assumed roles to achieve a particular end state.

**The effect the enactment of leadership has on health and wellbeing.** Emma recognised she struggled to maintain her health and wellbeing, working quite late into the evening. She acknowledges her reluctance to see a general practitioner, and will delay making an appointment.

## **6. Jodie – Associate Dean, Health**

**Aspects that influence the construct of leadership identity.** Jodie's construct of leadership identity comprised of motherhood, she reflected on her success of

managing a family and having a career. Other aspects which influenced her construct of leadership included role models. Jodie's deputy head (female) at school was progressive and supportive, and her own mother who was a business woman.

**The impact of gender on leadership identity.** Jodie reflected being a woman does not make any difference, and the expectations were the same.

**Authentic leadership practices described by the women.** Jodie perceived her leadership practice to be enabling. She supported staff, and was flexible, as long as they were moving towards specific goals. Jodie focused on what was required, and hoped it incorporated different approaches to reach the goal.

Being a leader was very important to Jodie. She realised she could achieve more when leading a large team, rather than working on her own. She valued the opportunity to make a difference, and reflected without power you were not able to make a difference.

**The effect the enactment of leadership has on health and wellbeing.** Jodie believed she had a good work life balance and did not experience stress, although she admitted to working long hours when the workload required it. She believed this was manageable and did not cause health issues.

## **7. Judy – Associate Dean, Health**

**Aspects that influence the construct of leadership identity.** Judy's construct of leadership identity comprised of upbringing. Judy was an army child, she was uprooted every two years, and believed this gave her the ability to adapt to different environments. A critical event had a profound effect on Judy, and she reflected this made her the type of leader she wanted to be. Other aspects which influenced Judy's construct of leadership include her professional training as a nurse, and credited her

professional identity as equipping her with practices contributing towards her enactment of leadership.

**The impact of gender on leadership identity.** Judy reflected there was no difference being a woman, and it was about being the best person you can be. However, Judy also reflected on being a single parent and carrying a lot of guilt with regards to the children.

**Authentic leadership practices described by the women.** Being a leader Judy wanted to develop staff, and bring out the best in people. She reflects on ethics and morals in her leadership construct.

**The effect the enactment of leadership has on health and wellbeing.** Judy reflected she is well disciplined, and has a good balance, although she admitted her daughter would not agree. Judy reflected she is concerned with falling short of her daughter's expectations.

## **8. June – Associate Dean, Health**

**Aspects that influence the construct of leadership identity.** June's construct of leadership identity comprised of motherhood. Having children impacted on her leadership practice. If she is not prepared to do a task she will not ask anyone else, and believes in servant – leadership relationship. Other aspects which influence June's construct of leadership included June's upbringing. She reflected on a poor family life, however, this had taught her to be a survivor, and very tenacious. On becoming a mother, June has become more tolerant of others.

**The impact of gender on leadership identity.** June reflected on the lack of difference between men and women. However, she recognised her feelings of guilt for taking maternity leave, and believed she needed to compensate by being 'wonder woman'.

**Authentic leadership practices described by the women.** Being a leader for June was about having something to achieve, and getting there with everyone. She perceived herself as democratic, although admits sometimes decisions must be made, and democracy is compromised. For June, a leader should be neutral, and develop everyone. She perceived others to view her as collegiate.

**The effect the enactment of leadership has on health and wellbeing.** June reflected she leads an active lifestyle. However she did admit she struggled to 'switch off', especially on annual leave, and this could potentially impact on her wellbeing.

## **9. Kathy – Associate Dean, Women's Studies**

**Aspects that influence the construct of leadership identity.** Kathy's construct of leadership identity comprised of upbringing. Kathy was a career academic. Raised in a large family, she was the first to go to university. Her parents, while supportive did not seem to understand her aspirations, especially her Dad. Other aspects which influenced Kathy's construct of leadership included both positive, and negative role models.

**The impact of gender on leadership identity.** Kathy acknowledged the challenges women face as she had experienced discrimination when previously applying for promotion. She felt she had to prove herself while male colleagues were promoted according to length of service.

**Authentic leadership practices described by the women.** As a leader Kathy liked to be influential, and make decisions, she enjoyed supporting colleagues to develop. She believed it was important as a leader to take followers with you while being empathetic towards their concerns.

**The effect the enactment of leadership has on health and wellbeing.** Kathy reflected on her busy lifestyle. She did not enjoy formal exercise, just keeping active. She acknowledged working long hours, but accepted this was expected as part of her role.

#### **10. Katie – Associate Dean, Health**

**Aspects that influence the construct of leadership identity.** Katie's construct of leadership identity comprised of upbringing. She was the first in her family to go to university. Moving from a comprehensive school in a deprived area to university, Katie found the change in culture troubling. Other aspects which influenced Katie's construct of leadership included her career as a social worker. This aspect taught her about equality, and giving everyone a fair chance. Part of her role in child protection required attendance at court, hearing viewpoints from different perspectives was a learning curve. Katie adopted a legalistic approach to her practice.

**The impact of gender on leadership identity.** Katie believed women were more conscientious than men, and as a woman manager she believed she had to engage male colleagues, and manage them to get the best out of them.

**Authentic leadership practices described by the women.** Katie had learned emotional intelligence was important, and perceived she took a considered approach to her leadership. She perceived herself to be supportive, and collegiate.



**The effect the enactment of leadership has on health and wellbeing,** Katie admitted she worked long hours. She has experienced work-related stress previously, however now she tries to manage her work life balance, and relieved stress by swimming, and maintaining a social life with friends, and family.

#### **11. Meryl – Associate Dean, Health**

**Aspects that influence the construct of leadership identity.** Meryl's construct of leadership identity comprised of professional identity, Meryl trained as a nurse. Reflecting on her experience as a nurse, and manager had impacted on her leadership practice. She viewed leadership as a continuum, and the roles had impacted on how she approached, and managed people. Meryl reflected on the positive impact of motherhood on her development. She was more empathetic towards colleagues who were also mothers. She positively encouraged her female peers, through flexibility, as she recognised the caring role falls to the woman.

**The impact of gender on leadership identity.** Meryl did not think being a woman was significant, however, recognised she was working in a faculty where women were positively discriminated. There were many women in senior roles.

**Authentic leadership practices described by the women.** As a leader Meryl reflected on how to get people to where they needed to be, to achieve strategic goals, and also add value to the tasks. She perceived herself to be an inspirational leader, promoting a happy, worthwhile environment.

**The effect the enactment of leadership has on health and wellbeing.** Meryl actively compartmentalised her personal and professional worlds to maintain a work life balance. She did not undertake any formal exercise.

## **12. Polly – Associate Dean, Health**

**Aspects that influence the construct of leadership identity.** Polly's construct of leadership identity comprised of positive male and female role models. She credits some of them with being inspirational.

**The impact of gender on leadership identity.** Polly described her work environment as male dominated, and she is often the only woman at meetings. However, Polly does not perceive this to be a problem.

**Authentic leadership practices described by the women.** Polly reflected on her integrity, reliability, and transparency. Being a leader was very important to Polly, she believed in getting 'buy-in' from peers, and having an impact. Someone who is driven but patient, and had the ability to make things happen, and make a difference.

**The effect the enactment of leadership has on health and wellbeing.** Polly undertook 'therapeutic' activities such as cooking and gardening to maintain a work life balance. Polly did not admit to suffering from stress although, she does have episodes of sleep deprivation.

## **13. Rose – Associate Dean, Education**

**Aspects that influence the construct of leadership identity.** Rose's construct of leadership identity comprised of professional identity, Rose trained as a teacher in secondary education before coming into HE. She perceived having children had changed her outlook, having to balance commitments at home with work had been challenging. Rose believed her values were driven by her educational background. She was driven by the student experience, and no matter a person's background everyone should have the same chances in life.

**The impact of gender on leadership identity.** Rose perceived there was no difference to being a woman, and it was about being the best person she could be. She reflected she treated everyone as equal in the workplace.

**Authentic leadership practices described by the women.** Rose perceived her leadership practice to be consultative, and she would listen to colleagues before making a decision, believing this was a skill and a strategy. She hoped peers viewed her as supportive, and consultative, although she realised ultimately she had responsibility for decisions.

**The effect the enactment of leadership has on health and wellbeing.** Rose admitted to drinking too much alcohol, and now has to limit her alcohol intake. She acknowledged this could have a detrimental effect on her health.

#### **14. Sharon – Associate Dean, Computer Engineering**

**Aspects that influence the construct of leadership identity.** Sharon's construct of leadership identity comprised upbringing. Sharon was from a working class background and did not have many advantages or opportunities. She viewed herself as ground breaking within her family unit. In her social circle women did not aspire to more than a wife or mother. She reflected her upbringing had impacted on her values, and perceived her leadership practice to be open, honest, and transparent. Other aspects which influenced Sharon's construct of leadership were her exposure to external environments. She has had exposure to different cultures, and different approaches to women, and leadership. This exposure to multicultural societies had impacted on her values.

**The impact of gender on leadership identity.** Sharon reflected on a lack of difference, and whether she was a man or woman was of no consequence. She stated gender was irrelevant.

**Authentic leadership practices described by the women.** Sharon enjoyed having authority and that her voice was heard. She reflected peers perceived her as strategic, and identified her weakness as not listening enough as a leader.

**The effect the enactment of leadership has on health and wellbeing.** Sharon perceived herself to have a good work life balance, however she admitted to working long hours but denied feeling stressed. She struggles to find time to do any formal exercise.

#### **15. Sheila – Associate Dean, Education**

**Aspects that influence the construct of leadership identity.** Sheila's construct of leadership identity comprised of upbringing. Sheila's educational background impacted on her values, she believed everyone deserved equal opportunities. Her parents were supportive and encouraged her to fulfil her aspirations. In addition, her experiences of motherhood made her more empathetic towards other colleagues who were mothers.

**The impact of gender on leadership identity.** Sheila believed women experienced different pressures to men, and acknowledged they took on the caring role in the home. She also perceived there to be an element of competitiveness for women regarding looks, parenting, and exercise.

**Authentic leadership practices described by the women.** Sheila was very committed to the student experience, and believed it was important to lead with a moral compass. However, she recognised some business decisions challenged this

approach. Sheila hoped she was perceived as supportive, and collaborative, able to make difficult decisions for the right reasons.

**The effect the enactment of leadership has on health and wellbeing.** Sheila ensured she created time for activities such as gardening and walking, this helped to maintain her work life balance. She denied feeling stressed, and believed she had the balance right.

#### **16. Tilly – Associate Dean, Health**

**Aspects that influence the construct of leadership identity.** Tilly's construct of leadership identity comprised of upbringing, she reflected on her upbringing working class upbringing. However, her mother was the matriarch, and her father was a rather quiet man. She was one of three children all of whom have been to university, and had professional careers. Other aspects which influenced Tilly's construct of leadership was her professional identity, and training as an Occupational Therapist. These had formed her values, and how she wished to be perceived by peers.

**The impact of gender on leadership identity.** Tilly perceived there to be no difference between men and women, however she recognised the divisions of labour in the home. In addition, she recognised she had been fortunate and had not had to compromise her career progression.

**Authentic leadership practices described by the women.** Tilly believed in transparency as a leader, and wanted to support, and nurture people to reach their potential. She believed honesty, and integrity were important leadership practices. Tilly liked to make a difference, and felt very privileged to be a leader, and enjoyed her current role.

**The effect the enactment of leadership has on health and wellbeing.** Tilly believed prioritising her work effectively enabled her to maintain a good work life balance. She denied feeling stressed, and was pragmatic about maintaining her health and wellbeing.

#### **17. Ivy – Associate Dean, Health**

**Aspects that influence the construct of leadership identity.** Ivy's construct of leadership identity comprised professional identity, Ivy trained as a nurse, and was a manager in the NHS before moving into academia. Motherhood had a positive effect on Ivy's construct of leadership, enhancing her organisational skills, and increasing her empathy towards other mothers. Other aspects which influenced Ivy's construct of leadership was her professional identity which instilled values of fairness, and integrity.

**The impact of gender on leadership identity.** Ivy reflected that everyone should be treated as equal regardless of gender. She perceived gender to be irrelevant, and believed everyone should have the same opportunities.

**Authentic leadership practices described by the women.** Ivy reflected on her obsession with fairness, and being transparent. Ivy always tried to deal with issues fairly, however, she believed someone with more confidence would have a different approach, and would be more ruthless.

**The effect the enactment of leadership has on health and wellbeing.** Ivy compartmentalised her personal and professional worlds to maintain a work life balance. She worked long hours during the week to keep her weekends focused on home.

## **18. Marie – Head of School, Film and Television**

**Aspects that influence the construct of leadership identity.** Marie's construct of leadership identity comprised of upbringing. Marie was a career academic. Her parents were both professionals, and there was an expectation she would go to university. Motherhood also had a positive effect, developing organisational skills, and learning to prioritise more effectively. Other aspects which influenced Marie's construct of leadership were role models, reflecting on good and bad role models, and learning from each respectively. These role models had a positive impact on Marie's construct of leadership.

**The impact of gender on leadership identity.** Marie believed everyone should be treated the same, and gender should be irrelevant. However, she was conscious of the divisions of labour in the home, and the impact this could have on women's career progression.

**Authentic leadership practices described by the women.** Marie acquired satisfaction from being supportive, and freeing up capacity for colleagues to achieve their goals. Marie perceived herself as nurturing, genuine, and transparent.

**The effect the enactment of leadership has on health and wellbeing.** Marie did not identify with feeling stressed, and believed she had a good work life balance. However, she admitted to working long hours during the week to ensure the weekends were free.

## **19. Sue – Head of School, Media and Cultural Studies**

**Aspects that influence the construct of leadership identity.** Sue's construct of leadership identity comprised upbringing. Sue was a career academic going straight from first degree to doctorate into academia. Coming from a working-class

background, Sue perceived her attitude to leadership to be quite irreverent. Other aspects which influenced her construct of leadership were role models. Sue reflected on women role models only, and stated she had not experienced any positive male role models.

**The impact of gender on leadership identity.** Sue called herself a feminist, and recognised the divisions between men and women in terms of opportunity, and the disproportionate balance of care in the home. Sue believed there was a competitiveness around being a good mother, which she contended with in both her private, and professional life.

**Authentic leadership practices described by the women.** Sue considered herself to be supportive, and tried to guide colleagues, especially female peers. She also reflected on being fair and transparent, both in her personal and professional worlds.

**The effect the enactment of leadership has on health and wellbeing.** Sue recognised exercise helped to manage her stress levels. She admitted to drinking too much alcohol as a coping mechanism, and knew she needed to moderate her intake.

## **4.2 Summary**

In summary, these pen portraits provide background context, and enrich the women's voices. In the next chapter, I present the findings of sixteen women interviewed for whom the interplay of their personal, and professional lives was complex, and messy. The next chapter also includes one woman's narrative, Amal's, presented as a vignette. Amal's story is presented in detail as she articulates the pros and cons of the interplay between the personal and professional worlds, and has assimilated her various roles with minimal conflict.



## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the findings of the interviews conducted with sixteen of the twenty women senior leaders in HE, with one woman's narrative, Amal, presented as a vignette. During the analysis of the data the interplay between their personal and professional worlds and the impact this had on their leadership and health and wellbeing became apparent. The analysis also revealed four of the twenty women compartmentalised their lives and these will be discussed in chapter six. The data has been analysed against the themes identified in chapter two and chapter three and set out in Table 5 (page 82).

The presentation of the data has been organised using the thematic framework as described in chapter three Table 5. Themes in this section on the exploration of the interplay between the personal and professional worlds from the narratives of sixteen women includes: (a) The impact of the personal world on the professional world with respect to: values (Hodgkinson, 1991), upbringing (Northouse, 2010), being a woman (Hughes, 2002), lived experience (Burkinshaw, 2015), critical life events (Northouse, 2010), culture, education and socialisation (Scott, 1986); (b) The impact of the professional world on the personal world: ethics and values (Hodgkinson, 1991); being a women (Butler, 1999); health and wellbeing (Gardiner and Tiggeman, 1999); labour intensive (Fitzgerald, 2014; Fanghanel and Trowler, 2008; Lynch, 2006; Morley, 2003); value conflicts (Hodgkinson, 1991); (c) The impact of the professional world on leadership: identity (Busher, 2003), enacting leadership (Fitzgerald, 2014; Fanghanel and Trowler, 2008; Lynch, 2006; Morley, 2003); performativity (Butler, 1999); peer

construct of leadership practice (Newcombe and Ashkanasy, 2002; Ashkanasy and Tse, 2000); role models (Johnson, 2002); power relations (Connell, 1998); masculine hegemonic practices (Burkinshaw, 2015); with the emergent themes: patronage (Johnson, 2002); professional environment (Currie et al., 2002); and finally (d) The interplay of the personal and professional worlds picks up an earlier thread in discussing: personal and professional personae – the same or different (Groves, 2006); with the emergent themes: coping with the interplay of the personae; the effects of managing the interplay of the personae; and additional roles (Ward and Wolf, 2004), this refers to additional responsibilities the women assume either through their personal or professional world for example as a trustee or governor. I then present a summary of the key findings.

Section 5.3 page 143 is an exploration of the interplay of the personal and professional worlds in detail employing a vignette of one woman's narrative, Amal.

## **5.1 Exploration of the Interplay between the Personal and Professional Worlds**

This section includes the narratives of sixteen women leaders, and explores the interplay between their personal and professional worlds. I discuss the four other women who articulate compartmentalising their worlds in chapter six.

### **5.1.1 The Impact of the Personal World on the Professional World**

The personal value system (Hodgkinson, 1991) of all the women in this study played a vital role in the construction of their leadership practice. I am focusing on the women's internal conception of what is good, beneficial, and important and what they care about most in their lives. Leaders draw on their value system in their enactment of leadership including their decision-making processes. However, values are at the root of leadership, managing value conflicts is what leaders do and this puts them at the centre

of conflict as according Hodgkinson (1991) there is no requirement for leadership if value conflicts are non-existent.

The values the women exercised in the workplace were all derived from their personal lives. The values all had an ethical or moral element (Hodgkinson, 1991), and included values relating to oneself: 'true to oneself', 'integrity', 'having a moral compass' and 'purpose'; values relating to people in general: 'duty' and 'fairness'; and values relating to how they work with others: 'respect', 'openness', 'honesty', and 'transparency'. For some of the women the values had expected consequences in their enactment of leadership, such as 'ensuring equality', 'giving everyone a fair chance', 'doing what is right', 'promoting a good student experience', 'benefiting society', and 'supporting others to be successful'. They were people who focused on securing development opportunities for peers, enabling peers to be autonomous and enabling everyone to contribute. To support the analysis of the values expressed by the women I am utilising the value paradigm defined by Hodgkinson (1991) as discussed in chapter Two. Ten of the women articulated values located in both rational or transrational paradigms as conceptualised by Hodgkinson (1991). A profound interiority was expressed by all sixteen women. None of the values expressed were self-serving. First, I will discuss the values positioned in the transrational paradigm followed by those located in the rational paradigm.

The values expressed are in the transrational paradigm and have a moral or ethical element. Sharon highlighted several values located in the transrational paradigm and drew on her value system to determine what the right thing to do is. For example:

Open, honest, transparent, communication, I think it's about having been in their position having the empathy to understand. Sometimes it's just a gut feel and

you know that whether it's a moral compass or whether it's just the right thing to do (Sharon, Computer Engineering).

For four women, the values expressed were people focused, recognising the contribution people make, ensuring equality, and being supportive. For example, Polly reflected:

My predominant value in working in an HEI is that everybody has something to contribute whether its Associate Dean level or whether they've just walked in through the door as a lecturer or even as a student (Polly, Health).

These women expressed person centred values based in the transrational paradigm. Two of the women, Emma and Sue, reflected doing 'the right thing' had not always had a good outcome for them, for example, Emma reflected on trying to do what is right:

Getting people involved in things was what I thought was the right thing to do it hasn't always been helpful to me [pause] people take what you do and then go elsewhere with it [inaudible] it's their view, their idea (Emma, Education).

Bea articulated a deep sense of right, and wrong, striving for fairness, and equity in her decision making:

a strong sense of what is right, and what is wrong, and wanting to ensure that there is equity, and fairness, and things are done in the right way (Bea, Business School).

It is evident doing the right thing has not always had a positive outcome for these women. Sue alluded to the fact her approach had impacted negatively on her performance in terms of attaining her own goals; whereas, Emma reflected on feeling manipulated by peers whom she has supported. For Sue, and Emma, nurturing colleagues had been detrimental to their own career interests.

According to Hodgkinson (1991), when faced with an ethical dilemma, decision-making should be based on a higher order of ethical values, such as a transrational perspective of what is right, followed by a rational perspective, rather than from a subrational

perspective rooted in self-interest. Leading from a moral standpoint is important to these leaders. None of the values expressed by the women were self-serving.

Fifteen women expressed values located in the rational paradigm, they had a moral purpose, and in addition there was an anticipated outcome. Of the fifteen, twelve women expressed a desire to develop colleagues, and recognised the contribution peers make to organisational success. For example, Judy reflected:

Fundamental values [sic] is to develop staff, to develop myself, provide them with opportunities to be autonomous to do what they need to do in order to get way beyond where I am hopefully (Judy, Health).

An essential characteristic of authentic leadership is compassion towards others, and being solicitous of their culture and background (George, 2003). Supporting, and nurturing people, will build trust, and respect (George, 2003).

In addition, Jodie reflected on the student's education:

I'm very much committed to achieving that good student experience (Jodie, Health).

The women who described a consequence or purpose to their values located their values in the rational paradigm (Hodgkinson, 1991).

Bea acted out of a strong moral duty, and reflected as a tax funded public service they (HE) should deliver a high-quality education. For example:

I have a strong moral compass I think in terms of it is a public sector and we have a duty to provide the best public sector service that we can and we are being paid by the tax payer (Bea, Business School).

Sue reflected on being fair, however she recognised this did not always have a positive outcome:

I'm obsessed with things being fair and even so even work that isn't necessarily getting the best out of people [inaudible] [laugh] really annoys me if things aren't fair even if they look it [inaudible] it doesn't necessarily develop the department in the best way (Sue, Media and Cultural Studies).

Sue does not compromise in her endeavours to be fair despite the potential for a negative outcome. Being genuine, and true to themselves seems important for the women. Elise saw this as a sign of a good leader. For example:

I think to be a good leader or you're not true to yourself and if you do something that's against your values, how do you maintain and sustain that over a long period of time? Because then you're just acting a role you're not genuine about it and maybe that's the difference, one of the things I would say about my leadership style is it's genuine (Elise, Health).

If you are not true to your values your leadership can be viewed as inauthentic.

According to George (2003), authentic leaders are cognisant of their personal values, and interrelate with situations, and individuals according to those values.

Four women, including Amal (see vignette, p. 143), reflected on their childhood experiences, these were seen as playing a significant role in shaping their character, and how they lead. For Elise, being an only child impacted on her learning to lead. For example:

I'm an only child so I'm used to being independent, and getting on with things for myself. My father died when I was quite young so there was just me and my 'mom', and I guess I was used to taking on responsibility quite young (Elise, Health).

For Polly, being placed with older students at school had developed her communication skills with all age groups. For example:

I was put into the year above where I should have been, and so I always felt that I was kind of one year ahead really from where I was in terms of interacting because, you know, [sic] I was 8 when I went to that school I was kind of working with, and talking to 9 year olds. And I've always felt kind of very at ease with people that are slightly older than me (Polly, Health).

Jodie reflected on the supportive nature of a deputy head, adding the role model also demonstrated a reformist trait:

The deputy head (female) (at school) particularly that was very progressive and supportive (Jodie, Health).

These participants viewed their childhood experiences (Northouse, 2010) as positively impacting on their leadership. Authentic leadership development occurs overtime, and is dependent on the individual's life story, and how they make sense of their experiences (Shamir and Eilam, 2005).

Three women, Judy, Jodie, and Elise, identified a parent role model (Johnson, 2002). For example, Jodie reflected on the importance of her mother, who owned her own business, whereas, Elise reflected on being an only child, and seeing how her mother coped impacted on Elise:

My 'mom' was a student at university when my 'dad' died. So again that probably influenced me in terms of my mom being a student, working in a university (Elise, Health).

There are several elements at play here; an only child in a single parent household; a mother as a role model; the death of a parent; and as discussed later, long-term illness. These circumstances afforded Elise resilience, and determination to succeed. Individuals start to construct their leadership practice from parents (Northouse 2010); parents are usually the first role models influencing leadership construction.

For some, the formative years create deeply held beliefs, and values about leadership. Childhood experiences are reflected in an individual's response to familial notions of leadership, resulting in an individual either respecting a figure of authority or rebelling. Northouse (2010) argues an individual's practice of leadership is triggered by their childhood experiences.

Fourteen women reflected on the social context of their environment having a positive impact, even when circumstances were negative or challenging. For example, Judy was raised in a military environment, and moved homes several times. She reflected

her parents considered gender to be irrelevant, and encouraged her to take every opportunity:

I'm an army child so I grew up in an environment where I was uprooted every two years and flung into a new environment with people so I guess that too [...] I had the most fantastic parents who just believed in you taking whatever opportunity was available no matter what sex you were (Judy, Health).

Judy has constantly adapted to differing environments to find her own space, potentially this has benefited her as her career has progressed. In a traditional male environment, women leaders find themselves on the outside, frequently having to negotiate systems and processes required for success (Bryson, 2004; Gibson, 2006). Having appropriate support is also necessary to traverse the pervading institutional culture (Fitzgerald, 2014).

Two interviewees reflected on their working-class background. The first was Katie in terms of educational attainment, and how she was the first in her family to attend University. While this was a culture shock, both parents were supportive. For example:

I was the first generation in my family to go into higher education and they were quite unsure about those decisions because they had never experienced it but supported those decisions (Katie, Social Work).

A pattern emerges, five women find themselves on the outside, working to negotiate a space for themselves. Thus preparing them to navigate a male dominated culture, and contributing to a successful career.

Sharon reflected on the positive impact her working-class childhood had on her character, and people management skills:

My parents weren't in a particularly advantageous position, in the sense that they've had very much a working life, and my mother a wife, and I suppose all of those things made me into a sort of rounded character in terms of the way that I manage, and lead my staff (Sharon, Computer Engineering).



Sharon reflected on the influence of her mother on her leadership development. However, Emma perceived her working-class background as undermining her confidence in a leadership role, and admitted to feeling a fraud. For example:

I think my goodness how does someone like me end up, when I got my professorship I was like I feel a bit of a fraud here but that is the kind of working class person the academy that [inaudible] writes about you always feel slightly like how have I got away with this (Emma, Education).

While Sue reflected differently on the impact of her working-class roots, acknowledging her leadership practice was derisive, and flippant:

I suppose coming from a very ordinary working class background and being a woman my leadership style is always to be slightly irreverent (Sue, Media and Cultural Studies).

These three women reflected differently on their working-class backgrounds, and its impact on their journey to leadership. This ranged from finding an escape route, and rebelling, to feeling out of place, and to being disparaging of hierarchical structures. An individual's social construct influences their attitudes, practices, and perceptions of learning to lead (Busher, 2003).

The participants reflected on what it means to them being a woman, and a leader. This elicited a variety of answers, while most did not perceive being a woman made a difference to them as a leader, others identified with challenges to being a woman, in their professional and private lives. Three different positions emerged through their responses: 1. Being the best person they can be, and gender being irrelevant; 2. The positive aspects of being a woman; 3. The negative aspects of being a woman.

Seven women reflected on being a woman, and gender being irrelevant. For example:

It makes very little difference I think, the way I look at it, I am what I am it makes no difference whether I'm a man or a woman, I mean for me that's more important and gender is irrelevant [sic] (Sharon, Computer Engineering).

These women expressed a liberal feminist view of being a woman, and saw themselves as equal to men, with the same expectations.

Of this group, only Polly reflected on a positive aspect, and found being a woman helped working in a female dominated environment. For example:

Me being a woman, it helps where the faculty is dominated by female staff and female students I really don't perceive any issues or any problems (Polly, Health).

This contradicted with the experiences of other women in the study who were in male dominated environments, and this is demonstrated below. Polly implied she is confident in the space she occupies as a woman, and a leader this is endorsed by the female dominated environment.

Four women reflected on some of the perceived negative aspects of being a woman.

June reflected as a woman, and leader she felt the need to over perform:

Prove yourself, over and above being a woman (June, Health).

Women in the work place are hypervisible, and under scrutiny this creates pressure to outperform male colleagues (Gardiner and Tiggeman, 1999).

Andrea reflected on a workplace experience where men were favoured over women, and this occurred in a professional capacity while travelling internationally:

There are challenges being a woman in respect of one area that I worked there was somebody in a position of authority, who usually clearly favoured men to women. If you're overseas and you're with someone who's not the boss, in fact you're the boss and there's an automatic assumption sometimes that because the person you are with is a man, then he has to be the superior but I soon put him right (Andrea, Health).

Andrea has clearly faced sexism in the workplace, and continues to face discrimination when travelling internationally in a professional capacity. Women are continually required to remind colleagues that women as well as men occupy positions of power

(Wajcman 1998; Whitehead 1998). These experiences in a male dominated culture can disempower the individual, and success can be dependent on tolerating male values, and to some degree 'act male'.

The attitude of one female peer who is perceived to respect male colleagues raised conflict in the relationship with Sue. For example:

She really respects men, and I'm her line manager and I've told her something needs to happen and she'll push back against it, and bring the head of department (male) into the conversations, and its only when he says it has to happen will she then [sic] (Sue, Media and Cultural Studies).

This example of leadership being challenged by another woman seeks to undermine the leader, with the colleague in question deferring to an authoritative male figure. This is reminiscent of the concepts of invisibility, and conversation colonisation identified in the power relations between men and women (Blackmore, 1999). Sue goes on to talk about professional jealousy, and the fact the individual has openly expressed her wish for Sue's job.

It was important to Sharon her voice was heard. For example:

I suppose I've said this before that my voice can be heard (Sharon, Computer Engineering).

However, Sue (Media and Cultural Studies) reflected her voice had not always been heard in meetings, and points she had made were picked up later by male colleagues were given attention, and reflected this happened numerous times to women. Sue elaborated by adding she had learned how to make an impact at meetings:

In the past I've sort of said something in a meeting and gone unheard, the same point will have got picked up by a man like 10 minutes later minuted and there'll be an action from it and I said that ages ago and nobody listened but I think now I know how to make an impact (Sue, Media and Cultural Studies).

Power is exerted over Sue in two ways: first, 'identity invisibility' where she is ignored; and secondly, 'conversation colonisation' where her point is co-opted, and verbalised

by a man (Blackmore, 1999). To be heard women may be required to adopt a traditional masculine approach such as aggression, this potentially can be problematic, and may receive criticism as they are not functioning in stereotypical ways (Fitzgerald 2014).

Fourteen participants were mothers, one of the fourteen, Elise had recently married, and was now a step mother to two children. Reflections on motherhood elicited a variety of responses operating at the intersection of the women's personal and professional identities, and these responses are discussed later.

Thirteen women (except Elise) who were mothers reflected how this had exerted a positive influence on their leadership. This manifested in several ways including: improving organisational capabilities; planning and juggling commitments; and reasoning. For example, Judy reflected:

Having and managing, and juggling children, without doubt I think that takes the most extraordinary set of organisational capabilities (Judy, Health)

Interestingly, as highlighted earlier, Judy was raised in an environment where gender was thought to be irrelevant. The evidence in the study suggests there are sexual divisions of labour in the home that is consistent with the literature (Press and Townsley, 1998; Pilcher, 1999), and this may have a detrimental effect, reinforcing the subordination of women. However, these thirteen women suggested motherhood had enhanced their leadership skills.

Some of the women indicated motherhood made them more empathetic as a leader towards colleagues, and fostered a sisterhood approach to their leadership practice, this is consistent with the literature (Sikes, 1997). Being supportive of other women raising children potentially has a positive impact on how they are perceived by their

female colleagues, both as a role model, and a leader. It is important for women leaders to lay the foundation for the progression of other women into leadership positions.

Four women reflected on the negative aspects of motherhood, the added pressures such as maintaining a home, and caring for others. They also considered how their male counterparts were excluded from such roles. Emma and Marie reflected on the expectations of performing well personally, and professionally, for example:

You are often in meetings with people who clearly have their shirts ironed for them before they leave in the morning, whereas I have already got the kids up, done the lunches, done the school run, my husband works away half the week so he is often not here and so often I also have to be the one who says 'no sorry I can't stay until that time' (Emma, Education).

This was echoed by Sue, who explicitly defined herself as a feminist reflecting on the divisions between men and women:

I'm a feminist and I know very clearly what divisions are between men and women regarding opportunity the way you're treated the pressures you have in terms of performing at home and performing at work men don't have so you don't hear pressures [pause] men are good fathers constant discussion about being good mothers and I think that when I come home men come home and relax I think have I put my washing in [laugh] (Sue, Media and Cultural Studies).

Judy reflected it was "about being a good person", however she also acknowledged the traditional roles expected of her, such as motherhood and housework. For example:

I've adopted a number of traditional roles doing the cooking, used to do the housework until I brought somebody in to do it, but I don't know is that learnt behaviour or just about being a woman (Judy, Health).

Judy's latter question is about the difference between socio-cultural roles and biology.

Women disproportionately take on traditional roles within the family. Managing these dual roles, and feeling the pressure to perform was problematic for these women. Competing demands on their time can impact negatively on the women as I will discuss

later. These experiences support the premise care is gendered and women are the primary care givers. The uneven distribution of domestic responsibilities can pose barriers to career progression for women. However, newer discourses on leadership have favoured 'softer' management skills, and a feminine practice of leadership yielding opportunities for women.

Sue construed the discourses of her peers as 'whining', and compared this with her children, influencing her response:

Becoming a mum maybe that changes you a little bit. I think you can see through things or hear things like that's the kind of whining of my child (Sue, Media and Cultural Studies)

Infantilising (Briskin, 1998) followers in this way has the potential to cause dissonance between the follower and the leader.

Care invokes a range of ethically based moral values such as responsibility, obligation, duty, and trust (Hughes, 2002). These can impact on an individual's reputation as a 'good' person, and hence their construction as a moral being. Care when associated with motherhood is perceived as less power and low value, whereas caring for the state associated with the gendered term statesmen invokes perceptions of great power and high value (Tronto, 1993). However, the women articulated motherhood as having a positive impact on their enactment of leadership, and while they acknowledged the unequal divisions of labour (Walby, 1991), they did not ascribe to notions of diminished power, or low value.

Four women reflected on sisterhood, for Bea this resulted from her own experiences of being a mother, and balancing priorities:

I had a son he is now nearly twelve, but I think it's a defining moment in your life as suddenly you do you become a lot softer, and you do become a bit more

considerate I think particularly, probably to women in your work place (Bea, Business School).

These women reflected on the impact of their own experiences causing them to support other women in the workplace. One woman recognised the importance of female role models at the top who are seen to support other women in their career development. In a masculine culture where women remain underrepresented sisterhood is an important component in removing patriarchal oppression (Evans, 1995). It is important for women in privileged positions to pave the way for others. However, this cannot be taken for granted as some women expect their female peers to negotiate the same institutional labyrinth they have navigated (Mavin, 2006). Women in the academy are mistaken in their erroneous assumption women leaders will support the interests of all women (Fitzgerald, 2014), in this study only four reflected on feelings of sisterhood.

For two women critical life events, although traumatic were cited as having a positive impact on their leadership practice. These experiences forced the participants to re-evaluate their approach, and reassess their personal attitude. For example, Judy reflected on a close bereavement:

I think the other one was the death of a daughter and hmm that I think made me the kind of leader I wanted to be because makes you stop and reflect on the kind of person you are and the kind of person you'd like to be (Judy, Health).

As discussed earlier, critical life events inform the forming, and reforming of leadership enactment, and are important enablers for an individual's capacity to be an authentic leader. Critical life events are a medium for change. Whether negative or positive, such events shape people's lives. By gaining insights into their life experiences, and a greater knowledge of 'self' leaders become more authentic (Northouse 2010).

Three of the sixteen women reflected on the influence of close family members. Polly moderated her natural behaviour as a direct consequence of an observation articulated by her mother:

My mother always said to me things like 'one day you're really down-to-earth approach is going to upset people', I suppose I have actually yes. I have been wary of that and tried not to be [inaudible] very straight up tight approach (Polly, Health).

By modifying her behaviour Polly could be perceived as inauthentic.

Finally, Emma believed her father did not consider her job was as important as her male partner's:

My dad is a really good example of somebody who quite often says things to my partner, he thinks of my partner's job to be really important and he will say to me 'what have you got on tomorrow then', I am at work Dad it's a Thursday, 'you are in work tomorrow', he hasn't really kind of grasped that I have a more senior job than my partner (Emma, Education).

Emma might feel devalued in light of this parental perception of her job. As previously highlighted there is a constant need for women to remind peers, and in Emma's case her father, that women as well as men occupy senior positions. Role conflict can be problematic for women, and impact on their enactment of leadership.

Family attitudes for these three women played a significant part in how they perceived themselves. In each case the impact had negative connotations for the women in terms of meeting family expectations; modifying behaviour following parental criticism, and potentially feeling devalued. Negative social perceptions may further impact on stress levels for these women.

Sue described issues connected with performing a role, and clearly recognised she performed differently depending on the context. She perceived her behaviour at times to be 'girlie', and inappropriate, for example:



I'm constantly reading what people think of me, perhaps get nervous about how I perform, try and be funny when I shouldn't be funny [laughs] you know what I mean the girly thing to offset nervousness (Sue, Media and Cultural Studies).

This was problematic for Sue, and caused a degree of stress. Women leaders find themselves navigating a dichotomy, on the one hand if they 'act male' they can receive a backlash from female peers for not operating in an authentically gendered way. In contrast if they 'act feminine' they conflict with their male colleagues as they are not operating in the worldview constructed by men (Fitzgerald, 2014). Challenging the status quo has the potential to open up leadership spaces where relational abilities are more valued (Probert, 2005).

### **5.1.2 The Impact of the Professional World on the Personal World**

The women's professional worlds impacted on their health and wellbeing in several ways. Aspects which impacted on their physical and psychological wellbeing included: conflict between their values (Hodgkinson, 1991) and organisational expectations; being a woman in a male dominated environment; the labour intensive nature of the workplace (Fitzgerald, 2014; Fanghanel and Trowler, 2008; Lynch, 2006; Morley 2003); their lived experience (Burkinshaw, 2015); long working hours was a major contributor to a lack of time (Hughes, 2002) to care for themselves. The responses were categorised as follows: 1. Exercise; 2. Nutrition; 3. Family expectations; 4. Unhealthy coping mechanisms; 5. Support mechanisms; 6. Managing stress. Three of these categories reflected those for the four women who compartmentalised their worlds.

The women's reflections on their physical health varied, and can be categorised into groups as those who did no exercise, to those keeping active with gardening or walking, and those undertaking more formal aerobic exercise, such as running or

swimming. All the participants recognised they should do more physical activity, and recognised the benefits to their health.

Only three of the sixteen women talked about deliberately managing their exercise. Ensuring they undertook formal exercise such as running, and attending the gym. For example, Katie reflected:

I swim all the time and its part of my social life. It's you know, I do make sure that if I [didn't] go, it helps settle, calms me sort of, keeps your balance (Katie, Social Work).

Others such as June stayed physically active either by gardening, walking or taking the stairs. For example:

I'm pretty active, never sit down for long periods, I always take the stairs (June, Health).

Sue recognised exercise had a positive impact on her health she did not maintain a regular exercise regime:

I think the best is exercising I haven't done any exercise for ages and when I was exercising I manage my stress a lot better (Sue, Media and Cultural Studies).

Sue had lapsed in her efforts to maintain a regular exercise regime, and recognised the detrimental effect this had on stress management.

The women's level of activity varies from very little to regular exercise, with some actively managing their exercise level, and others struggling to find time. The three women who exercised recognised the benefits to stress management.

Changes in the HE environment have resulted in the leaders' roles becoming more complex, and demanding (Currie et al., 2002). Potentially this can result in higher levels of stress, and can have a negative physical and psychological impact on the individual. The physiological response of stress can contribute towards the development of

cardiovascular, gastric, and autoimmune disorders. Exercise can improve an individual's sense of wellbeing by increasing endorphin levels this can mitigate the risks associated with stress. Research has demonstrated regular aerobic exercise as well as light physical activities such as walking can bring significant benefits to cardiovascular health (Wannamethee, et al., 1998).

Research also indicates people struggling to include any physical activity in their daily routine are at increased risk of ill health. The combination of stress and physiological responses over time result in fatigue, and an inability to perform (McEwen, 1998). This can be further compounded by working in a male dominated environment, affording additional stress-inducing conditions, such as: exclusion from social, and professional networks; being under greater scrutiny; and feeling the need to outperform their male counterparts. Ultimately these factors influence a woman's ability to function in their role, and become less effective as a leader (McEwen, 1998).

Three women recognised their eating habits were poor mostly due to their hectic work schedule. For example:

Eating is bad I work away a lot and I don't eat healthily (Sue, Media and Cultural Studies).

Not maintaining a healthy diet can lead to overeating or undereating with respective effects on weight. Weight issues have the potential to cause both physical, and psychological health problems. Obesity can cause hypertension, and diabetes (Wood et al., 1998). Underweight can lead to tiredness, lethargy, and a lowered immune system (Sarafino, 2008).

Judy thought she had the work life boundaries right, but admitted her daughter and line manager would not agree:

I've got the boundaries okay I don't know whether my daughter would say that [laugh] I think that's the bit I struggle with, it is probably not her expectations it is what I believe her expectations to be and how I might fall short of those. She (line manager) keeps telling me to slow down (Judy, Health).

Judy's perceptions of her work life balance differed from those of her daughter and line manager. Family expectation regarding maintaining boundaries are blurred causing conflict, and added stress to the leader as she tries to manage those expectations.

Rose and Sue had developed unhealthy coping mechanisms, and admitted to drinking too much alcohol. For example:

I drink too much, I try to limit myself now (Rose, Education).

Unhealthy coping mechanisms when sustained can lead to health problems later in life. Increased alcohol intake can lead to problems such as liver disease, and hypertension (Sarafino, 2008).

Some of the women tended to become stressed, and Emma acknowledged she was not looking after her psychological wellbeing, reflecting:

I am not looking after my mental wellbeing at all if I am really honest with you. Something can be wrong for a long time before I go to the doctor and get it sorted out (Emma, Education).

Due to long hours Emma implies she is struggling to maintain a healthy work life balance, while recognising the pressure she is unable to find the capacity to manage the issue appropriately.

Three of the women including April, who compartmentalised her worlds, had developed long-term stress related conditions, including rosacea, migraines, and a bowel condition (Sarafino, 2008).

Regarding their psychological wellbeing very few of the women identified with feeling stressed believing they had the balance right, although they talked about working long

hours to meet deadlines, and continuing to answer emails outside of office hours. Their roles were very labour intensive (Fitzgerald, 2014; Fanghanel and Trowler, 2008; Lynch, 2006; Morley, 2003)

Conversely, five women had healthy coping mechanisms, using partners as sounding boards. For example:

I don't think I get stressed, whether I do and that goes home in the form of a rant possibly (Bea, Business School).

Bea uses her husband as a sounding board. Partners were a real source of support for these women, and enabled them to cope with stress.

Only Bea had developed a peer network with other female leaders affording the support required:

I have a couple of friends who are heads of department and a Dean, so we have regular conversations, which does help (Bea, Business School).

This mutual support, and the sharing of problems was advantageous and alleviated stress.

Stress recognition was an issue for four women, even though they suffered intermittently from sleep deprivation. For example, Polly reflected:

I do go through phases where I'm waking up at night thinking 'Oh my gosh I haven't done da da da' rather than just worrying per se whether it is (stress), and I do I think I haven't slept for five nights running now but most of the time I don't think I suffer from (stress) (Polly, Health).

In denying stress these leaders may be storing up future problems with their health, sleep deprivation can have an impact on someone's ability to perform (McEwen, 1998).

June reflected on her inability to switch off, especially when she is on annual leave:

The job is so big now [inaudible] not very good at switching off at all [laughs] it takes a week to unwind (June, Health).

June found “switching off” and “relaxing” problematic. This has the potential to impact on her health and wellbeing.

Tilly believed being able to prioritise effectively was the key to managing her stress:

I don't tend to say 'Oh God I'm so stressed I can't cope with this anymore' so you just prioritise (Tilly, Health).

Tilly indicated a fairly pragmatic view, and thought it was just a case of prioritising her workload.

Very few of women identified with feeling stressed, and believed they had the balance right this conflicted with long workhours, and answering emails outside of office hours. April did acknowledge to feelings of stress but felt she could not openly admit to it in the workplace.

In the next section, I focus on the impact of the professional world on doing leadership.

### **5.1.3 The Impact of the Professional World on Leadership**

Eleven of the sixteen women had moved into higher education from professional careers in the public sector as nurse, educator, or social worker; and three from the private sector such as Technology Company and marketing and sales. This was in common with the four women who compartmentalised their lives. They reflected on the impact their professional identity (Busher, 2003) had on their leadership. For example:

I think probably training as a nurse in the first place which again probably given me a lot of those skills (Judy, Health).

Three women, including Amal who will be discussed further in the vignette, had been in private sector industry, and reflected on how their leadership skills had been developed. For example:

I came from a business environment into bringing more of professional approach to academia, a more of the commercial sense to the business (Bea, Business School).

In addition to skill acquisition, two women recognised the impact on their value system.

For example, Andrea reflected:

I suppose once I'd qualified as a nurse and being in charge of the ward, and being responsible for patients and staff (Andrea, Health).

We can see the women's construction of their earlier professional identities has framed some of their key practices as a leader. The construction of an individual's professional identity is not fixed; it is multidimensional, idiosyncratic, and is influenced by contextual considerations (Rhoades, 2007). In this way, identity formation gives people a sense of right and wrong.

The women's self-perceptions of enacting leadership included recognising the importance of being a leader, and acknowledged the privileged status. They sought to effect change, bring out the best in people, make a difference, and influence decisions and strategy. For example, Andrea described being:

In a position to influence things and to try and make things happen through others (Andrea, Health).

Being in a privileged position is important to these women, Judy reflected on the sense of satisfaction as a leader:

It's the most satisfying job I have ever done. Bring out the best in other people and I think I can make a difference (Judy, Health).

Judy looked to bring out the best in people as an outcome to her enactment of leadership. These women enjoyed their role potentially having a positive impact on self-actualisation, and health.

Polly talked about her leadership role as being a silent one, nurturing people, and her efforts needing to have an impact:

I would think I'd failed as a leader if things that I had done hadn't had an impact (Polly, Health).

While Elise did not fully elaborate on the skills she perceived as important as a leader, however, she believed she had those skills:

the skills I think you need to be a leader or are in a manager are the skills I think I'm quite good at (Elise, Health).

Emma revealed she was an active trade union member implying conflict with her role as a leader. She was also the only woman to talk about a 'learning community' and a mutual benefit:

I am still an active member of the trade union, which is kind of odd having a management role as well [...] My main commitment is to building a learning community because that is how I see, that is what I think the whole purpose of university is (Emma, Education).

All of the women described their privileged position in terms of transrational and rational values, focusing on what was good for the institution, and their peers. Fifteen women reflected they were content in the role, and did not desire further career advancement. Only three of the women had female line managers.

Only Jodie had undergone a 360° appraisal, a feedback process where an individual's line manager, peers and sometimes customers evaluate the person this culminates in an analysis of how the individual perceives themselves, and how others perceive them (Oz and Seren, 2012), but did not reflect further on the report. Hence the responses were the participants' own perceptions of their peers' construct of their leadership practice.

Fourteen women hoped their peers would perceive them as supportive. Elise hoped her peers would see her as supportive, approachable, and accessible. For example:

I think people would say that I'm approachable and supportive and I'll listen if anyone's got anything to say (Elise, Health).



Perceiving herself to be supportive, and approachable, Katie also reflected on perceived negative practices:

On a more negative level, and this probably comes from my background, I have not been born into this role, and therefore I talk around things and I'll ramble on more than somebody else might (Katie, Social Work).

Judy reflected on her peers' appreciation of the level of autonomy afforded to them as well as being supportive:

My peers generally speaking I would say appreciate the fact that they get given autonomy freedom and that I'm enthused to enthuse them and develop them (Judy, Health).

One woman, Andrea, anticipated her peers would think she was good at her job but doubted they knew how she fulfilled her role:

I would like to think [pause] they would think what I do was good, but I'm not sure that they would know what I do and how I influence things (Andrea, Health).

Two women, June and Emma perceived colleagues would view them as collegiate, and working in partnership, for example:

I think I'm viewed as collegiate. I'm not seen as very commanding and control [laughs] I think collaborative, collegiate, collegiate and working in partnership (June, Health).

Rose described acting in a consultative way, and the importance of being decisive in decision-making, and the process being a skill and a strategy:

Weighing up what they've said and then saying well I think we should do this and making it sound decisive I think that's a skill and a strategy (Rose, Education).

Only one of the women, Tilly, described herself as a transformational leader, implying she hoped her peers would concur:

I think from some people's point of view would be that in terms of what makes a good leader, I suppose a kind of transformational leader (Tilly, Health).

Kathy felt it was important to give her colleagues the 'bigger picture' in an effort to galvanise her peers, if you have no followers you are not a leader:

Try and give everybody the bigger picture as much as I can (Kathy, Women's Studies).

Fourteen women perceive their followers to view them as supportive, and collegiate. These are traditionally ascribed as feminine leadership practices (Court, 2005).

In contrast, four of the sixteen women have a masculine approach to leadership. Bea reflected on gender being irrelevant, however she used stereotypical masculine words such as 'authoritative', 'assertive' and 'driven' to describe her leadership practice. This approach is not always received positively, as Bea reflected her peers are wary of her:

I think they think I'm very authoritative but I think that is because of the way the business school. I think people are wary of me because I'm new and my style has been a lot firmer and assertive and questioning (Bea, Business School).

Jodie claimed gender was irrelevant, however reflected her approach can be troublesome for peers when there are issues, this could be interpreted as a masculine approach, for example:

I think, at the most, they think find it absolutely fine when it's all going well and a little bit troublesome when they are not doing so well (Jodie, Health).

Polly perceived being a woman in a female dominated Faculty a benefit, she had not encountered any difficulties with male colleagues. She perceived herself to be driven and there is no indication this is problematic, however she also describes herself as being patient, and hardworking indicating a level of tolerance:

Somebody that is driven by that but also is driven by a very high quality team (Polly, Health).

Sharon also reflected gender was irrelevant, however she does not suffer fools gladly. Intolerance could be perceived as a masculine practice, as it does not fit with feminine practices such as nurturing and supportive (Court, 2005). She is not at ease with her practice of leadership, intimating she would prefer a more feminine approach, and criticises herself for not listening enough to her peers:

I think they find me as a leader quite challenging, in that I don't suffer fools gladly. I expect of them what I would expect of myself, in terms of delivering on things and so on. As a consequence of that I think they're not at ease necessarily with my leadership style [...] I don't listen enough in terms of being a leader, and I know that's one of my weaknesses (Sharon, Computer Engineering).

This masculine approach might be problematic for women, and raise feelings of unease amongst their peers.

All sixteen women hoped their peers would perceive their leadership practice as feminine. In contrast to their perception gender is irrelevant. For the few who 'act male' this was problematic for them, and their peers. This reflects the challenge for women leaders, to survive some participants may have acquired a masculinist approach to leadership (Collinson and Hearn, 1996; Connell, 1995), causing conflict with female peers who expect them to operate in stereotypical gendered ways (Fitzgerald, 2014).

Two women reflected on their behaviour, and how this might be negatively interpreted by peers. Rose thought by delaying decisions or actions she might be perceived as not being dynamic:

Just sometimes it's better not to deal with it straightaway, cos sometimes the problem goes away and sometimes it changes or people's feelings about it changes [...] Maybe I'm not a dynamic leader I don't know (Rose, Education).

This measured response Rose perceives could be construed as lacking in dynamism.

Kathy reflected on her supportive nature resulting in an inability to be decisive, and being perceived as not strategic by colleagues:

I'm energetic and I think I'm supportive I think if that's a weakness I may struggle to be decisive my instinct is to support everyone so in that sense I'm not as strategic as some people or as some men would say they are (Kathy, Women's Studies).

Kathy perceives herself as lacking in some way by not taking on men's ways, and being supportive.

These leaders perceived some of their behaviour as negative, this negative self-reflection could cause anxiety or result in leaders modifying their behaviour for fear of appearing to underperform, and this could be perceived as inauthentic. Within each relationship there is an expectation of how we should behave, and what we should think. The discourse within a particular relationship helps us to understand how we are positioned (Foucault, 1982). This is fundamentally dependent on our relative power within relationships.

Sue (Media and Cultural Studies) is unsure about the acceptability of her comments within this context, and this manifests in feelings of anxiety. This can be translated into a perceived lack of power within the discourse.

Two women were self-deprecating in their responses. For example, Marie had a sense of feeling good when she enabled someone else to do well:

You don't think of yourself as a leader it comes to you when you see someone how you have supported them get somewhere, I recently did both of our REF [Research Excellence Framework] submission and we did really well and it's a brilliant feeling when you do something well yourself and you've generated capacity around you for someone else to do well (Marie, Film and TV).

It is evident some leaders lacked self confidence in the workplace, and are concerned with underperforming. The data demonstrates the fluidity of leadership construction, and its relational quality.

Feelings of self-worth appear generated when colleagues have been enabled to perform well. Women are constantly trying to establish a comfortable space where they are valued for who they are, they realise their enactment of leadership is invariably perceived inversely by men (Blackmore, 1997).

Polly admitted colleagues had reflected on her capacity to perform. For example:

Colleagues in the past have said to me I will play so much that I don't know what's me anymore (Polly, Health).

Performing the role was deliberate for Polly. It can be argued Polly is not being true to herself or genuine impacting on her enactment of authentic leadership.

Seven women commented on role models having an impact on their leadership practice. The majority of these were in a professional context, and were a combination of males and females. Four women identified only female role models.

The role models (Johnson, 2002) were identified for value based reasons, located in transrational and rational paradigms. Andrea highlighted the organisational practices, and the supportive nature of a ward sister resulting in an environment conducive to good care, and a contented workforce. Adding further the role model shaped her:

A Ward sister in particular on a medical ward and she was just brilliant in terms of it was very well run very well organised area, really supported the students (Andrea, Health).

Sue reflected on two very different role models both from academia:

She is very measured and very controlled in the workplace I always think I learned from her kinda (sic) 'less is more' which is good (Sue, Media and Cultural Studies).

This first role model advised Sue on being true to herself, her authenticity. She is trying to balance this with workplace constraints, and people expectations. The second role model was quite different in her approach. For example:

The other mentor is someone I met later, and she's very loud and very brash all the time, and it's not what people expect. Yet she's very successful so they're the exact opposites. But somehow I want to be the perfect combination of the two of them (Sue, Media and Cultural Studies).

Sue identified key aspects from each of the role models she tries to emulate in her enactment of leadership.

Two women had male and female role models during their career. Katie valued a senior female colleague's (Professional Social Worker) ability to offer more than one solution to a problem, and to look at issues from varying perspectives; the male, a Dean, she valued his ability to nurture individuals:

The woman that was best was when I was a trainee social worker and she was the team leader and what I like about her style was that whatever the problem or the case that you might have, it could be children or a child or whatever, she would always make you think that there was more than one option of how you manage it. She would look at other people's perspectives rather than just going down one line (Katie, Social Work).

Katie reflected on a male Dean who would feedback areas for development, for example:

Give advice on how you could improve and that I have taken with me, and I think a lot of managers don't tell me how to improve. If you're operating at a level that they're happy with and they say nothing more, whereas my view is that you should always offer something that takes that person to the next level (Katie, Social Work).

The women reflected on the practices they admired in role models, and tried to emulate those practices in the enactment of their own leadership.

Two women experienced patronage (Johnson, 2002) during their professional lives propelling their careers. Emma had experienced this type of support from two sources.

For example:

A male prof [sic] in my faculty who very quickly kind of took me under his wing (Emma, Education).

These were more than just role models, and constitute patronage, they mentored Emma, and aided her career progression.

Elise talked about only having male role models (professional podiatrists). Here again the main trait valued is someone who is supportive, and Elise tries to emulate this trait:

I was supported massively by my manager (male) my immediate line manager, his manager and the team I worked with and I think that again that helped me from the style of leadership that I have which I think is (Elise, Health).

The practices of these role models, include caring and nurturing are more closely associated with women. The role models were also respected for their value system rooted in transrational and rational paradigms, and were not rooted in self-interest.

Three women reflected on the power relations (Connell, 1998) they have encountered in the workplace. Judy reflected on her relationship with a male colleague who displayed intimidating behaviour. To negate their behaviour Judy neutralised her male colleague's position:

A professor (male) who constantly told me they were my critical friend and in the end I took them to lunch and said I just want to get something clear you may well be critical but you are not my friend [laughs] (Judy, Health).

Judy acted decisively to maintain the integrity of her department, and for the greater good. It was unclear to Judy why this individual acted in such a way with the incumbents of the post, however she implied as a professor he may have thought himself superior. We cannot be sure whether he would have criticised a male leader but by seeking to make women leaders feel inadequate he gained a degree of power.

Sue reflected on a meeting with two senior male colleagues, one male colleague could not look her directly in the eye, and spoke to her through the other male:

He couldn't look at me through the whole of the conversation he looked at the head of department who would then look at me and I would answer the question and we'd go round in sort of a triangle he just could not address himself to me (Sue, Media and Cultural Studies).

Women leaders can be perceived as a threat by their male counterparts, and are 'othered' (Fitzgerald, 2014). It would appear Sue was not viewed as 'one of the boys', and the colleague's subtle operation of power rendered the female leader invisible.

These gendered power relations (Deem, 2003) persist and women are kept at the fringes of the organisation.

Sue also recounted while talking to a male VC about an influential academic, the VC assumed it was a male when in fact it was a woman:

I was in a meeting with our VC and we were talking about this very well-known academic in our field and they were talking about this person by surname and he just assumed that would be a man and told 'oh we must get him in', and I well, first off, I said 'well it's a woman actually' 'oh right ok'. And it was just that automatic assumption that someone brilliant is a man (Sue, Media and Cultural Studies).

Women constantly find themselves reminding colleagues women too can occupy positions of power (Wajcmen, 1998; Whitehead, 1998). Masculine hegemonic practices (Burkinshaw, 2015) remain embedded in the processes and practices of organisations.

Kathy had experienced discrimination when applying for promotion in HE. There was one route for her, and an expedited route for a male colleague who had a much weaker academic profile:

Going for promotion I was told to get a chair I had to be a reader. Go through that round of promotion before I could apply for a chair. A colleague of mine, who admittedly was a bit older, had far slimmer CV, publication record, grants no grant capture just went straight to professor and got made a professor the same time as me (Kathy, Women's Studies).

Discrimination in the workplace still exists despite legislation, women still need to prove themselves, and equality of opportunity can still elude them. This is supported by Teelken and Deem (2013) who argue discrimination is less obvious, and embedded in the organisations' culture, and hence difficult to refute.



#### **5.1.4 The Interplay of the Personal and Professional Worlds**

This section about the interplay of the personal and professional worlds is significant as it conveys how I have interpreted the interaction between the private and the public, the individual and the collective. It also gives a sense of the whole person, and the positive and negative aspects of the personal, for example motherhood had a positive impact on leadership, whereas 'superwoman' syndrome had a negative impact and these are presented here.

Thirteen women believed their personal and professional personas were the same. For example:

I think I'm the same all the time, I don't think it makes any difference, with friends with family I'm the same as I am at work (Andrea, Health).

Sue reflected she was unable to separate her professional and personal personae, and thought this might have a detrimental effect while enacting her role:

I can't separate who I am at home and who I am at work very easily if that makes sense and that sometimes [is] not what people expect in senior management (Sue, Media and Cultural Studies).

Sue reflected her personae were the same she implied her personal persona would not necessarily be considered appropriate for her as a leader. Female leaders, as indicated earlier, may adopt masculinist practices to survive (Collinson and Hearn, 1996; Connell, 1995). Consistency could potentially augment these leaders' authenticity (Northouse, 2010) from the perspective of their followers. It might be argued women whose personae are the same, and who demonstrate consistency will have their leadership interpreted as authentic.

Three women recognised their personae were different. Sharon recognised her persona changes in a professional capacity when she is in uncomfortable situations,

and networking with strangers. This is inconsistent with her perception she is extrovert, and implies she is less confident in her professional life than in her private life:

I'm different when I'm in uncomfortable situations, when I go into a room and I don't necessarily know anybody and you sort of have to start weaving your way into the room and start networking with people you actually don't know. I'm very aware as well, and whether this is partly my insecurities my [sic] gravitate will always be to someone who maybe a bit looks like me, whether it be a male or female, do you know what I mean? But very often, as well thinking about it I suppose when I am in situations where I know people I will always gravitate towards those. But generally speaking I don't think I'm that different in the workplace, professionally than I am personally. But I'm very aware that I don't let my guard down 100% because you never know what's around the corner (says she's quite extrovert) (Sharon, Computer Engineering).

This contrast stemmed from an apprehension to let her guard down and a lack of confidence. Modifying one's behaviour might be perceived as inauthentic (Hopkins and O'Neil, 2015).

Emma also reflected her personae were different; highlighting her personal persona tended towards being less supportive, describing it as "compassion fatigue". For example:

I probably am much less kind, and supportive, and generous at home than I am here. I suppose you get a bit of compassion fatigue at home (Emma, Education).

Emma put all her emotional effort and toil into her leadership role leaving her spent. This was also echoed by Bea who recognised her persona at home was negatively affected by balancing responsibilities:

Such a full on act here, keeping check of everything, and all the rest of it, and trying to keep some order and semblance here that at home it all goes a bit AWOL [...] The enactment of that persona might be different because I'm worn out (Bea, Business School).

This excessive emotional labour and expected self-discipline (Northouse, 2010) potentially could cause conflict between the women's various roles, and responsibilities.

In coping with the interplay of the personal and professional worlds, three women displayed what Robinson (2015) would describe as 'superwoman' tendencies, requiring super powers to be an effective working mother. Judy reflected she wanted to be the best mother and the best person, and believed men did not have the same pressures:

I want to be the best mother I can and so being a woman I think you take on responsibilities men don't take on but there's no need to I think that's something that you could choose to discard if you wish to I think I carry more guilt well I'm separated but I carried more guilt than my partner carried for the children (Judy, Health).

Sue identified with an element of competitiveness in both her professional and personal life:

Same kind of competitiveness I deal with at work I feel I deal with in my private life (Sue, Media and Cultural Studies).

June reflected after being the only person in her department to have taken multiple maternity leave entitlements there was a requirement for her to be superwoman:

I'd got to be superwoman after four lots of maternity leave (June, Health).

Women feel they have to perform well in all aspects of their lives both personally and professionally, if they are perceived to be lacking in some aspect this translated into feelings of guilt, and failure.

Conversely, Elise felt women could not have it all and had to focus on one or the other, either work or children:

If I had chosen to have children because I wanted children then I would have given up my career willingly to do that because I believe that you focus on one or the other and I don't think you can do both roles (Elise, Health).

Elise had made a conscious decision not to have children, and focussed on her career, believing women could not perform well at both.

Superwoman syndrome (Robinson, 2015) was not prevalent across the group, however for those who expressed these tendencies they felt additional pressure to perform in their private, and professional lives. Potentially this could be problematic for their health, and increase their stress levels making them more susceptible to physical and psychological health issues.

Three women were conscious about how peers perceived them and deliberately altered their appearance to make themselves feel good, confident or look serious. For example, Rose said her clothes made her feel she was doing a good job:

I don't wear suits in the traditional style, I kind a (sic) wear I would never wear a suit to work but I wear a lot of dresses used to think I was trendy but I'm not anymore [laugh] but I do and that's because of the way it makes me feel like I'm at work and I'm doing a good job so I stopped going to work in jeans a long time ago (Rose, Education).

Judy reflected she dressed differently for her role at work she believed she treated everyone the same:

I do dress to come to work because I think there's a particular role but actually I wear quite a lot of [inaudible] do things outside but I think that's because I have the money to have nice clothes yeah that does impact on me but I pretty similar to wherever I am to be honest in terms of values, in terms of my behaviour I don't treat people any differently (Judy, Health).

For these women, their appearance can be an enabling factor, women are cognisant their leadership is viewed as dissimilar to men's (Avis 2002; Blackmore 1997; Deem 2003). These views are based on gendered stereotypes of how female leaders should behave (Fitzgerald 2014). These women are body aware, and consciously alter their appearance to conform to a hegemonic view of women. Women are traditionally 'seen' or 'viewed' by men.

The majority recognised they adopted a dress code for work reflecting this made them feel confident. Many gave a lot of thought to the way others perceived them particularly if they were blonde or dressed in a 'feminine' way, for example Sue reflected:

I'm very conscious that I have bleached blonde hair, quite often wear heels, and look feminine (Sue, Media and Cultural Studies).

Sue perceived herself as acting 'girlie', this translated into a fear of not being taken seriously by peers again highlighting a positional discourse determining ways of being (Foucault, 1982). Gender stereotyping came through the narratives of these women. For those acting out a role they are at risk of being perceived as disingenuous and in this way, inauthentic in their enactment of leadership.

In describing their management of the interplay of their personal and professional worlds, many of the women expressed lack of time as a resource. This caused conflict expressed in terms of caring for self, caring for others and time management. Tensions emerged between a lack of time, and the disproportionate division of labour within the home. For example, a lack of time to exercise due to work and family commitments impacted on Bea's self-care and led to weight gain:

Yes, weight, without a doubt, because of the dinners, because of the events we have to attend, particularly now because I'm driving backwards and forwards, because of the fact that is spending life sitting down all day. So yes in a weight perspective, personally I've noticed that, and that does concern me because I don't have the time to exercise (Bea, Business School).

Three other women leaders made the same point. Emma reflected due to long hours she was struggling to maintain a healthy work life balance, while recognising this tension she was unable to find the capacity to manage the issue appropriately. Bea also reflected on a lack of time to participate in the male hegemonic environment at work as her priority was taking care of her children.

The leadership space Bea had created with other female colleagues isolated them from their male colleagues, and the discourse and networks necessary for them to succeed further, this reflects findings from other studies (Bryson, 2004; Gibson, 2006).

Sharon described her time management as poor resulting in long work hours, blaming herself not the workplace:

I do on occasions work on the evening if something is very urgent but very often it's because of my own bad time keeping or bad management (Sharon, Computer Engineering).

Time is also a factor in Katie's narrative, recognising she sets her standards high, and is her own worst critic. There is nonetheless some contradiction in her narrative, and she alludes to keeping a work life balance but also having to work long hours:

My standards are really high for myself, not from others, I'm my own worst critic, honestly I don't need to be appraised because if you would ask me all the things that are wrong with the way I am I would just list them off and I think what happened as a result when I started here, my dad died at the same time suddenly and I was doing this job for the first time, also the first time as a manager, I thought I was going to fail at everything it just all culminated in this most difficult situation I've had in my life, working life (Katie, Social Work).

Katie was very self-critical, and self-reflective to establish a contented space for herself. Working long hours to get the job done is a pattern in all the women's lives, this has the potential to be problematic in attaining a work-life balance.

For three women, several wider roles in a professional capacity had impacted on their leadership practice. Three of these women operating in blurred work boundaries reflected their personae were less separate.

Two of the women, Andrea and Judy, had taken on more than one external role, for example:

I'm involved in the charity, I'm involved being the governor of a trust (Andrea, Health).

Judy reflected it gave her a sense of legitimacy to challenge in other environments and instilled a sense of confidence:

I'm a governor of [name] hospice and a trustee of an education centre, I'm a governor of the health and care trust but there as a result of this rather than, I would say my leadership style would impact on those rather than the other way around I guess they give you confidence to [pause] they give you legitimacy to challenge things in other environments (Judy, Health).

External roles seem to bring additional benefits to leaders in terms of their kudos and self-confidence, affording them greater power as leaders. Hence may be beneficial to their overall wellbeing. However, conversely the additional effort these external roles may incur could lead to further stress, and an inability to maintain a work-life balance.

The quest for professional identity and ratification of 'self' is a constant process of framing and reframing life experiences. Hence, as is evident, many factors effect a leader's sense of self (Busher, 2003).

## **5.2 Summary and Key Findings**

The summary of the key findings below has been grouped under three main headings:

1. The impact of the personal world on the professional world; 2. The impact of the professional world on the personal world; and 3. The impact of the professional world on leadership.

### **The Impact of the Personal World on the Professional World**

The study has shown:

All twenty women leaders in this study claim to perform leadership from an ethical/moral standpoint. Their personal values were rooted in either the transrational or rational paradigm and were not self-serving. This is consistent with Hodgkinson's (1991) value paradigm, the women operate in the higher value paradigms, and lead from an ethical standpoint, and often centred on the computation of consequence.

The women generally displayed a caring ethic in the enactment of their leadership. This offers an alternative to the traditional hegemonic capitalist practices, and according to Hughes (2002) should be encouraged and nurtured, supporting a shift from stereotypical masculine leadership practices to 'softer' skills demonstrating mutual respect in the workplace.

The women's moral integrity might be challenged by some of the business decisions required of them while at work. This problematises the enactment of leadership for these women, and may lead to feelings of stress.

The women who were mothers saw motherhood as having a positive impact on their enactment of leadership. Enhancing their time management and prioritising skills. However, an element of infantilising the workforce was also evident and this could be problematic for followers. Also evident was the divisions of labour within the household with care remaining predominantly within the woman's realm.

### **The Impact of the Professional World on the Personal World**

The study demonstrated:

The physical and mental wellbeing of all twenty women in this study is put at risk by the expected requirements of their leadership role such as long hours and placing work before family. Some women adopted healthy coping strategies, however others admitted to consuming too much alcohol.

Time as a resource was a constraint for most of the women. This usually impacted on their private lives and meant they worked long hours, and were unable to find time to exercise.



## **The Impact of the Professional World on Leadership**

The study demonstrated:

Three women experienced workplace discrimination, with male colleagues exerting power and authority or seeking to undermine the women's own power and authority. This can be either deliberate or a subconscious act. Two forms of power were identified 'conversation colonisation' and 'invisible identity' (Blackmore, 1999). These practices continue to marginalise women leaders, and reinforce the status quo.

Women were afforded a lack of agency for fear of appearing troublesome. Some women are concerned with their appearance, and behaviour, and act to modify and conform to preconceived notions. Elements of conscious gender performativity were expressed with some women acting a role they perceived was expected of them. Being perceived as too feminine generated apprehension amongst some of the women. Women leaders are hyper-visible and under scrutiny (Fitzgerald, 2014), and may act in ways alien to them.

The women's professional identity impacted on their self-concept. Some of their values and beliefs were attributed to their professional background such as nursing, education, and social work.

It was evident one woman excluded herself from male dominated professional networks, and declared she did not have the time to 'play politics'. These practices work to marginalise women leaders, and arguably affiliation to these networks is necessary for success.

### **5.3 A Brief Life Vignette of a Woman Leader**

#### **5.3.1 Introduction and Rationale**

The vignette is the narrative of Amal, a woman of Pakistani origin. Women of ethnic minority heritage are often marginalised in research as many scholars, including feminist scholars, have based their research on samples of white women (Young, 2003). By reflecting on the narrative of a woman leader of ethnic minority heritage, my purpose is to enable this voice to be heard amongst her white contemporaries. Focusing on white women reinforces traditional discourses influencing the gender debate (Fitzgerald, 2014). The vignette is placed in this chapter as it provides an example of the positive and negative effects of the interplay between the personal and professional worlds of one woman in more detail.

The narrative discloses elements of the woman's personal and professional life and contains personal details revealing her practices, attitudes, and values. Some of the narrative resonates with the values and beliefs of most of the women interviewed, however, there are distinctions to be made, highlighting additional pressures for Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) women leaders in an HE context (Fitzgerald, 2014).

#### **5.3.2 Narrative of a Woman Leader of Pakistani Heritage**

Amal was married with four children. She had a professional background in Information Technology before entering the academy. Amal had an exceptional start to her life, born in Pakistan part of a large family who were extremely poor, the family moved to the UK when she was three years old. The extreme poverty experienced by Amal early in life has moulded her identity, she describes herself as a "survivor". Amal's parents were "completely distracted by the poverty", therefore, she had to be self-sufficient from an early age.

Amal credited her childhood with affording her the ability to disrupt the status quo, and bring about change:

I was always trying to change things around me. I was not happy with the status quo and it was always like 'why does it have to be like this?' Change things and always bring the people along with me.

Recognising she needed to bring people with her to be successful, this early learning experience prepared Amal for leadership roles later in life, though this was only intellectualised, and articulated during the interview.

Amal described feeling an outsider not only as a child but also in her adult life. For example:

It was completely different how you behaved at home, how you dressed, when you stepped out of the door you went across the border into a different country. My dad didn't speak English, the food was different, with different behaviours. I was living in two different worlds and I often had the sense of being an outsider, that has never left me and I think that's why I can change organisations very easily. I was never an insider at home, I was never an insider at school or in that world.

Minority ethnic women have the potential to disrupt the status quo, and bring about change to the very discourses in HE that sustain male hegemonic practices (Dace, 2012; Fee and Russell, 2007). Disruption of the status quo can forge new spaces where ethnic minority women can be viewed as insiders rather than outsiders (Probert, 2005). Conversely, if they challenge the status quo and set their own rules they can receive a backlash from peers. It is argued all women can capitalise on their outsider status as universities attempt to value diversity within the organisation (Blackmore, 2010; Fitzgerald and Wilkinson, 2010). However, institutions are ill-equipped to master a truly inclusive culture (Fitzgerald, 2014). Ahmed (2009) argues diversity is exercised to silence discourse on racism and those who embody diversity are expected to be

grateful and happy. A double bind exists, as there is both oppression, and opportunity in doing diversity.

Amal also described growing up at home and being in a separate room with her sisters when male visitors came. She found this segregation empowering:

When we had male visitors to the house my four sisters and I had to sit in a separate room. That was brilliant we had such a sense of freedom, we didn't have many intrusions into our space.

Even though there were obvious gender disparities at home, Amal perceived this as positive, giving her a sense of 'freedom'. Amal went on to add:

My father would say he didn't want to hear our voices not a sound. In my culture Muslim women shouldn't be heard outside the room they are in.

Being an unheard voice in her social setting could negate the person's feelings of self-worth (Northouse, 2010), but this is not reflected in her narrative. Amal implied a rather privileged position within her social context, for example:

Being a middle child, my sisters were older and my three brothers younger. When I wanted to be girly I would be with my sisters but when I wanted to ride a bike or kick a football I could with my brothers [...] It might have been different if I was the older sister I would have been positioned more.

Being a middle child incurred less restrictions for Amal during her upbringing, her older sisters had their behaviour curtailed in a way she did not experience. In this early social environment, Amal created a space for herself within both masculine and feminine domains. These childhood experiences may have been instrumental in preparing her for the workplace, and developing her leadership practice (Northouse, 2010).

Amal talked about the formative years from eleven – eighteen when she attended a single sex grammar school. She credited this experience with shaping her leadership, and giving her the confidence to succeed:

I loved sport, I played at quite a high level. Cricket, football it wasn't just for the boys, they taught us cricket, taught us football [...] we had a headmistress who thought women could do anything.

Playing traditionally male sports was quite inspiring to Amal's sense that gender was not a constraint. This was reinforced by the headmistress. It built on the experience of interacting with her brothers potentially influencing her expectations of professional life.

For Amal, her value-based system was reinforced by her childhood experiences:

In my childhood it comes back to that big family, one of seven, there was a lot of unfairness and I used to hate it, it used to bring me to tears. I think it's really important to be fair, integrity is really important, being ethical, yes I've got quite strong moral values about what's right and what's wrong.

During this part of the narrative, Amal drew on an example at work where a group of men and women on opposing sides were arguing the ethics of how data should be used. The men commented "there's too much morality in this room". They ascribed morality to the women as something negative. It is argued women leaders who conform to the dominant masculinist discourse are more likely to be accepted by their male peers, and consequently adopt masculinist practices (Miller, 2006). However this can cause conflict with their female peers (Fitzgerald, 2014). Amal and her female colleagues opposed their male colleagues by presenting a counter discourse about the use of data, however, their voices were dismissed.

Motherhood furnished Amal with the ability to understand different types of people, and to recognise people are different:

And in terms of particularly being a mother, that makes you understand I would think, how different people are, all children are different and they all behave different ways. I used to think when I was wet behind the ears that nature nurturing thing, I used to think it's all nurture, but my god it's not and I learned that children, mom and dad are in the same environment but they're very different. They're brought up the same and I'm pretty consistent and they're very

different. I learned that people are different and that you have to have different strategies for handling them.

The strategies Amal has learned in communicating with various family members have benefited her professional life. Understanding and being sensitive to the attitudes, and practices of other colleagues is important in a leader (Northouse, 2010).

Amal reflected on the support she has had from her partner, however, she recognised her role as a woman is different. Being mother, and a leader she recognised her responsibility was to nurture, and develop:

My husband is fantastic, I have always felt equal. I always understood that my role was different. My role as a woman, was a nurturing one, encouraging.

Amal assimilated her two roles as mother and leader, and this mitigated conflict. However, by fulfilling the role of carer, women satisfy stereotypical expectations (Acker, 2012). In some communities, there might be an expectation of role priority for those entering marriage. Women have a caring responsibility towards the family, and men have a responsibility to maintain the family. Shah (2016) argues this premise has been used to render women subordinate.

Amal elaborated further, as well as feeling equal to her husband she reflected on how she can relinquish power to him, and allow her partner to lead without feeling subservient. She also believed this was an important attribute for a leader:

I suppose I have to give credit to my husband, I could be a leader whenever I wanted. And there were times I was quite comfortable saying to him “now I think this is something you need to do”, and I think leaders need to understand that, where does their role extend and at what point should they be looking to be led.

Amal assimilated many roles in her life, as highlighted earlier, this mitigates conflict between the many facets of her life. She took on the traditional roles of motherhood at home, and implied there is an imbalance of responsibilities even though she asserted she was equal to her partner:

At home it's getting on with cooking, doing the washing, their sports kits, making sure all the forms have been filled in, all the homework's done and all those things are lined up.

There is an acceptance of her roles as mother, and partner, and the respective traditional responsibilities. Amal also relates how she cares for her mother, and mother-in-law. Previous research suggests ethnic minoritised women shoulder the expectations of their communities to provide care for the family (Chilisa and Nteane, 2010; Mama, 2003).

Amal reflected she is a product of her experiences:

I think whoever you are you are a product of your childhood and your relationships and the things that have happened to you.

Reflecting how those experiences have taught her to prioritise, and choose what was important to her:

It hasn't been easy bringing up four children and having a career and working. I think that teaches you to prioritise.

Value based judgements are important in the decision-making process, and can determine how leaders are viewed by their peers. Amal reflects on the advice given by a former colleague about 'choosing hills to die on':

He would say now pick the hill you're going to die on carefully, pick the things that you are going to push. He was talking about things at work that you feel strongly about, that you want to argue about and change, pick your battles at work very carefully, so I think of all the things I want to focus on, is this really important, is this the hill I want to die on? And if not then why the hell am I putting resources, all my time into that?

Leading in the current HE environment can be intense emotional labour. Choosing subjects or concerns to place your efforts could potentially reduce feelings of stress. Prioritising effectively and leading from an ethical, value-based belief system can render the leader authentic in the eyes of colleagues (Northouse, 2010).

Amal reflected on how she dresses at home and at work. At home, she conformed to her Pakistani cultural heritage, whereas at work she conformed to smart casual from a white western sense:

I do wear different clothes to work and dress differently at home, that's partly cultural, I will wear Asian clothes when I'm at home, in the workplace I like to be smart casual.

Reflecting on her self-representation in the professional world, Amal adds:

[I would] never use my femininity that would be as a consequence of my culture [...] I'm very straightforward, always dress very seriously, very modestly, consciously think about what I'm wearing [...] this may not have always worked in my favour [...] may be a barrier in so far as I don't want people to get overly familiar with me.

Entering a predominantly white male western world of higher education, Amal dresses to conform. Doing so enables her to feel like an insider. White women leaders are analysed by their peers, however, arguably minority ethnic women are 'hyper-visible' (Fitzgerald, 2014). They are scrutinised based on their ethnicity, and gender by colleagues (Fitzgerald, 2014). Experiences of isolation are common for white women leaders in HE, however ethnic minoritised women encounter additional pressures of integration, and marginalisation (Battiste, 2000; Moreton-Robinson, 2000). Viewing different cultures through a prejudicial lens impedes our ability to acknowledge the practices of diverse groups. This further problematises leadership, and leaders who may be dealing with their own prejudices as well as those of colleagues (Northouse, 2010).

Amal has had many experiences of being the only woman in her professional life:

I was the only woman Associate Dean, only woman in my previous departments [...] when I worked with [corporate organisation] I was the only woman in my team actually that's quite pioneering [...] I did a [sic] degree not many women do it.



For women, negotiating their own leadership space is emotionally demanding, for ethnic minoritised women a 'self-conscious struggle' (Collins, 1998) ensues. Walking a lonely, and uncharted path they shoulder the additional expectations of family, and community (Fitzgerald, 2014). Positioning token ethnic minority women in senior roles appeases organisations in the belief diversity policies have succeeded allowing a traditional masculinist culture to continue (Fitzgerald, 2014).

Leaders need to have an appreciation of diverse cultures, and be sensitive to the legitimacy of a range of values. A certain lack of understanding is implied in an interaction with a former male colleague's approach to Amal, for example:

A (male) Associate Dean used to laugh because in the summer I'd always got my coat on, comes from being a Muslim, a certain amount of modesty is expected.

We are all ethnocentric to some degree, and may believe our own cultural heritage takes precedence. This position can result in a failure to understand the viewpoint of other cultures (Northouse, 2010). Ethnocentrism is problematic in leadership, and can preclude any understanding another culture's viewpoints. A lack of tolerance of other cultures can cause conflict for the leader, and their peers (Northouse, 2010).

A skilled leader needs to be self-assured in their ways of doing things and receptive to the ways of other cultures. This can pose a dilemma for leaders balancing the expectations of a range of cultures while remaining true to their own values (Northouse, 2010).

Amal talked about her leadership role as being a privilege, and its aim being to take the organisation forward:

Is this the right thing for me to do in my role in the organisation? not is it good for me?

She believed her peers perceived her as collegiate and working in partnership:

I'm not seen as command and control, I seek people's advice, I'm collaborative. Several studies (Trompenaars, 1994; Hofstede, 1980; 2001) have identified various dimensions specific to different cultures. One specifically focusing on culture and leadership (House et al., 2004) found South Asian cultures demonstrate high levels of 'humane orientation and in-group collectivism' (Northouse, 2010, p. 347). They also demonstrate 'strong family loyalty and deep concern for their communities' (Northouse, 2010, p. 347). In contrast, Northouse (2010, p. 345) argues, Anglo-centric cultures demonstrate 'high levels of performance orientation and low in-group collectivism', and are 'less attached to their families or similar groups in comparison to other countries'. However, such generalisations and homogenising of cultures can be misleading.

In terms of leadership behaviour there are disparities between cultures. South Asian cultures:

Place importance on self-protective, charismatic/ value based, humane-oriented and team-oriented leadership and find participative leadership ineffective. They characterise effective leadership as especially collaborative, inspirational, sensitive to people's needs, concerned with status and face-saving (Northouse, 2010, p. 354).

This view of South Asian culture does not fit with feminist theory. In contrast, the Anglo-centric leadership profile emphasises leaders are especially charismatic/ value based, participative, and sensitive to people. Anglo-centric countries want leaders to be exceedingly motivating and visionary, and considerate of others. They should be team oriented, and autonomous. The least important characteristic is self-protective leadership. They believe it is ineffective if leaders are status conscious or prone to face saving' (Northouse, 2010, p. 352 adapted from House et al., 2004). This fits with dominant views of leadership, and is one way of looking at the intersection of cultural

differences. Disparities between cultural understandings of leadership are potentially problematic for Amal and her peers. A lack of understanding to varying cultures can cause conflict.

Amal alluded to an ageist culture particularly for women aspiring to more senior roles:

Nothing would stop me going to PVC or VC role, but I don't think that's where I'm heading now because I think it's an age thing. I think you get to a certain age particularly for women, I think it's hard to break into [...] institutionally there are barriers for women.

During Amal's narrative the intersectionality of gender, maternity, culture, and age became evident. This is reiterated later in the narrative, implying she does not have access to the knowledge necessary for success:

It is tough for women [...] for me 'how do I go beyond here?' I hold myself back. I don't know how to go about getting to the next level. What I need to do to develop.

The traditional networks reinforce, and support male advancement. In contrast these networks marginalise women limiting their path to success (Bryson, 2004; Gibson, 2006). Amal reflects:

I don't let anything stop me [...] they say women go for promotion two years after they are ready, men go two years before [...] I have to encourage female colleagues to go for promotion.

Amal's statements are quite contradictory on the one hand she erects barriers for herself, and then later says nothing stops her. She recognises only female peers need to be encouraged to apply for promotion. Women need to be sure they can cope, and do the job before applying (Blackmore, 1999).

## **5.4 Summary and Key Findings**

Amal's childhood had a significant impact on the construction of her identity as a leader. Abject poverty taught Amal how to be tenacious, and a survivor. Being responsible for herself from an early age, and witnessing the unfairness taught Amal

to challenge the status quo. In addition, during childhood, Amal reflected how her privileged position allowed freedoms not normally experienced in her culture. These freedoms were not afforded to her older sisters. She also experienced a western education participating in sport, and influenced by a woman head teacher who believed women could do anything.

Moreover, being a mother to four children demonstrated to Amal personality variances. Learning different strategies to manage a broad range of people was useful during her career. Amal assimilated her multiple roles as partner, mother, daughter, and leader, mitigating any potential conflict. Amal received support from her partner, however, she recognised her family role was different, and accepted the disproportionate caregiving role. Amal reflects she can submit power to her partner without feeling subservient, and believes this is an important trait for a leader.

Being an Asian woman, the expectations of one's community differ from white western women. Caring for parents is expected, and Amal is fulfilling this role. At home, Amal conforms to her culture in terms of dress code; at work she conforms to white a western dress code. Further, Amal reflected on her feelings as an outsider, this perception has pervaded her education, and work life. She viewed this positively as it enabled her to move successfully between environments. Amal challenged the status quo, and found a comfortable space to exist. Amal has experienced being the only woman in a department, an isolating position. Being in the minority Amal was hyper-visible for her gender, and ethnicity. Limited appointments from BAME heritages, as indicated previously, can lead organisations to believe diversity policies, and practices have been successful (Fitzgerald, 2014). Being in environments where various cultures coexist can lead to conflict, as a leader, Amal needed to be sensitive to other cultures

without compromising her own integrity. Amal reflected on her moral values, and always striving to do the right thing.

It is apparent from some of the women's accounts above, the intersection between the personal, and professional worlds can be disordered, and cause conflict. However, it would appear Amal, along with Meryl whose experience is described later, have successfully negotiated these spaces, and their boundaries mitigating any potential risk to health and well-being.

The next chapter will discuss the four women who compartmentalised their worlds, and the key findings of the study in relation to the literature reviewed in chapter two.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

#### **6.0 Introduction**

This chapter will provide an analysis, and discussion of the previous chapter's findings in relation to the literature reviewed in chapter two. I begin this chapter by discussing the narratives of four women, who during the analysis revealed their tendency to compartmentalise their personal, and professional worlds. Then I consider how each research question will be addressed in relation to the thematic framework as demonstrated in Table 3, presented in chapter three. I then present a discussion of the key findings in response to the theoretical, and methodological issues identified within the literature review, and methodology chapters. By doing so, I hope to demonstrate how this study contributes towards new knowledge in the field of educational leadership, and its implications for future research.

#### **6.1 Compartmentalised Worlds**

I have extrapolated data from the narratives of four women leaders for inclusion in this analysis of a compartmentalised approach to managing leadership. The foci in this section are Meryl, Ivy, April and Sheila who appear to compartmentalise their personal, and professional worlds. Meryl explicitly used the term compartmentalise, Ivy compartmentalised her working week to maintain her focus, and create a work life balance. April and Sheila reflected on contrasting personae, with April wishing to be perceived in a particular way by colleagues, and Sheila reflecting she 'performs differently depending on the audience'.

### 6.1.1 The Personal World

Meryl reflected the need to focus on her personal world when at home to manage issues effectively. For example:

To be able to manage home I need to be able to compartmentalise, and pay attention at home to the home things (Meryl, Health).

Compartmentalisation is a defence mechanism used to avoid discomfort or anxiety caused by conflicting values, emotions, or beliefs (Past, 2017). Differing subject spaces caused conflict for Meryl, and maintaining a work life balance had the potential to be problematic:

Home life is pretty hectic and it's incredibly hectic. My husband has (long term condition), so as well as being the bread winner. Things that are going on with my mother, and if I don't phone her at least every other day I get accused of "you're like a stranger to me" (Meryl, Health).

Appearing rather exasperated, Meryl reflected she can do without this sort of pressure.

Due to her hectic home life Meryl used compartmentalisation as a coping strategy.

April's home environment was very male dominated, describing an 'alien world' and, reflecting there's a lack of understanding on either side. This supports the theory of difference between men and women in feminist discourse. For example:

I live in a family of three men, actually my oldest doesn't live with me anymore, I find that quite alienating sometimes because I do believe there are female discourse and male discourse [sic] and I do believe that, old fashioned as it is, and sometimes I feel I occupy an alien world at home. I don't mean that in a nasty way, I just think they don't understand me, and I don't understand them in very simplistic terms (April, Education).

April recognised she uses a female discourse in contrast to her male family members.

Causing feelings of marginalisation, and the potential for a silenced voice in a male dominated social discourse. This experience may be disempowering, leading to a tolerance of male values, and a requirement to 'act male'. April's home life may also be compartmentalised into male and female.

The intersection between class and gender is apparent for two women. Meryl reflected briefly on her upbringing commenting none of her family had impacted on her leadership persona:

None of them have done what I've done (Meryl, Health)

Suggesting she has crossed class, and gender boundaries to enter higher education.

Meryl commented on her negative experiences at school, for example:

You weren't encouraged to aspire to be anything [...] working in a shop, working in a factory and typing were the roles (Meryl, Health).

Meryl reflected being an avid reader she became aware of a wider world, and knew she wanted something more from her life, this influenced her decision to become a nurse.

April reflected on conflicting notions of what 'doing well' means. For her grandmother it was about getting married, but also entering a female dominated profession. April also reflected on the negative attitude of a school teacher and this having an influential impact. She saw admission into a profession as a 'way out'. For example:

I was brought up in very much working class background like many women of my generation first to go to university in fact it wasn't university [it] was teacher training. My paternal grandmother was very, very influential. She was very religious she was a Baptist, very old-fashioned, haven't gone to grammar school herself, having not been allowed to be educated beyond 12 or 13, really, really young. And she really wanted me to do well, but she didn't quite understand that on the one hand doing well was getting married. So she would always say to me you need to learn how to cook because you will never keep a man unless you can cook. Which is ironic, because my husband, I never cook, my husband is a wonderful cook. And she also said never bite your nails because you'll never be a teacher if you bite your nails. So she did this very dual thing, you know, it was very conventional. She said be a career girl and that meant being a teacher and I didn't expect to be a teacher. It was quite funny that happened because I was a working class girl and that was one of the ways out actually, like nursing. So she was very influential I went to a bog standard school and I remember being told by the head teacher that I've got too much to say for myself and that



nobody liked. It's funny how these things resonate, 'nobody likes a girl who doesn't know when to shut up'. Honestly that was an educator telling me that and that was a very powerful thought. I thought 'sod you', so that was influential (April, Education).

These could be described as emotional turning points (Cliffe, 2016) for the women galvanising their resolve to seek change. Crossing the class boundaries may have impacted on the women keeping the two worlds separate.

The personal values expressed by these women were categorised according to Hodgkinson's (1991) value paradigm. For Ivy and April, their values were in the transrational paradigm, highlighting integrity, and fairness as important. For example, April reflected:

Integrity, it's really important to me, I think again because I'm a teacher It essentially for me it's really important the moral purpose (April, Education).

These values are in the higher order, and none of the values were self-serving. The moral dimension of authentic leadership is explicitly characterised by these women leaders. Authenticity requires leaders to do what is 'right' and 'good' for the benefit of their peers, the organisation, and society (Northouse 2010).

For both Ivy and April, there was disconnect between their personal values, and professional life. They recognised conflict between their moral integrity, and the business decisions required of them. For example, Ivy reflected on the university's drive to engage with China to attract more students:

At present I'm engaged in international work with China, which considering their human rights record I find quite difficult to reconcile my values (Ivy, Health).

What they perceived to be value conflicts with their institution raised anxieties for these women. The public sector is becoming increasingly commercialised, and the impact of this threatens the moral integrity of its leaders. Maintaining an ethical stance is

increasingly problematic for HE leaders. The dynamic HE landscape has seen the nature of leaders' responsibilities evolve, and become more complex (Currie et al., 2002). For Ivy and April, compartmentalisation does not appear to equate to keeping their values separate; they are aware of the conflict.

Meryl, however, expressed values in the rational paradigm, reflecting a person-centred approach to leadership, for example:

Need to know, I think, what's going on in people's lives so that you can help them (Meryl, Health).

Meryl asserted she compartmentalised her life, however, she does not expect the same of others. Recognising she needs to know aspects of colleague's lives to support them. Meryl's approach was nurturing, and supportive. Her values can be interpreted as rational.

Reflections on being a woman, and a leader, three different positions emerged: 1. Gender is irrelevant; 2. Positive aspects of being a woman; and 3. Negative aspects of being a woman. Ivy and Sheila reflected on being a woman from a gender neutral position, and felt there were no differences, for example:

There is no difference or there shouldn't be, I think everyone should be treated the same regardless of gender (Ivy, Health).

Meryl reflected on the positive aspects of being a woman. For example:

I think it's very good in these professions where we have a lot of women that they see women at top level too [...] our Dean very actively promoted women (Meryl, Health).

In contrast, April reflected on the negative aspects of being a woman in a male dominated home environment, where there was little understanding on either side. Their environment had a bearing on whether their experiences as a woman were positive or negative.

Motherhood had a positive effect on all the mothers' lives. For Meryl, motherhood had improved her organisational skills:

When you've got children you have to be pretty well good at planning things and work as well (Meryl, Health).

Meryl reflected on her systematic approach to her personal and professional worlds, leading in both environments. In contrast, April reflected on how motherhood instilled a sense of empathy towards other women. For example:

I have a very real understanding of what it's like to juggle home and work and I think I am empathetic and sympathetic to other people who are having to do those things (April, Education).

This reflected April's continuous struggle to maintain the balance between two worlds therefore enabling her to empathise with other colleagues.

Sheila highlighted a critical life event, requiring the need to adapt to a new set of circumstances. For example:

Getting divorced has had an impact not just at home but work as well, I've had to prioritise a lot more to ensure what needs to be done gets done with having no support at home and I've had to be a lot stricter with home and work boundaries so I'm not seen as always working (Sheila, Education).

The emotional turning point was the catalyst for change, leading Sheila to compartmentalise her life and prioritise conflicting demands on her time.

### **6.1.2 The Professional World**

Enacting leadership can have a detrimental effect on health and wellbeing. Three positions emerged from the responses: 1. Compartmentalisation; 2. Exercise; 3. Managing stress.

Ivy, in her efforts to find the right work-life balance, worked long hours in the week to keep weekends free, although she was required to occasionally answer emails:

I spend the mid-week away, so when I'm at work I'm 100 percent at work and then pretty much when I'm at home. At the weekend I try and be 100 percent at home, so I will work I will get up at 5.30 in a morning and work until 10 o'clock 3 days a week. And then the payoff is that Saturday and Sunday I don't open my email, very occasionally I do, but change, I don't know, but I've really perfected my weekends over the last year or two and that's helpful I think (Ivy, Health).

Ivy strived to compartmentalise her life by separating her week into personal, and professional time to achieve a work-life balance. Compartmentalisation was beneficial to achieving a work-life balance, impacting positively on health and wellbeing.

Meryl and Sheila, in compartmentalising their lives, created the time for activities such as gardening, and walking. Meryl, while professing an active lifestyle did not view this as exercise. For example:

I'm pretty active. At home I virtually don't sit down at all, I mean when I do sit down its probably 9.30 at night, I'm dead in the chair [laughs] but I do sleep, as soon as my head touches the pillow I will be asleep until the next day so I always get good sleep. The weekend and I'm out in the garden a lot at home, we are out in the garden a lot, so I don't exercise. Don't go to the gym, I could never see myself going to the gym, that's not me at all but I do a lot of walking (Meryl, Health).

Meryl's active lifestyle may be contributing to the quality of sleep. These aspects are beneficial to Meryl, and Sheila's health and wellbeing.

In contrast, April developed a long-term stress-related condition, and had a prior history of drinking too much alcohol:

I developed rosacea which was stress-related. I was drinking too much to be honest and I was coming home, and the first thing I was doing on Friday was hitting the gin and tonic (April, Education).

April makes contradictory statements, articulating she can switch off, and is not aware of suffering from stress, then later referring to “a tapping thing”, which she suggests was stress-related. She recognised when there was a need to relax, but was reluctant to admit to stress. For example:

I think I can just switch off. I'm not conscious of suffering from stress, but I know that I do suffer from stress, although I don't like to admit it. I don't show it, but I do the tapping thing, and know that when I start that I've got to stop. And I really do try to relax (April, Education).

April struggled to maintain her compartmentalised life at times resulting in feelings of stress. However, she can recognise the symptoms, and alters her habits accordingly.

All four women had been in former professional roles either as nurses or educators in schools. They all believed their experiences in these roles had a positive impact on their leadership. For example:

My experience as a nurse and manager was very useful, in prioritising seeing the bigger picture (Meryl, Health).

The women's previous professional identities have impacted positively on their leadership. Meryl reflects on her career roles as a continuum, drawing on the experiences of each role intimating this has developed her as a leader, suggesting a linear approach to career advancement.

All four women enjoyed their roles as leaders, making a difference was important to these women. April expressed a sense of reverence, she found the role of leader exciting, and intellectually stimulating. For example:

It's a privilege, the sense of influence is fantastic (April, Education).

In enacting leadership, the women expressed an outcome approach. Meryl perceived herself as an effective problem solver, and her peers as a team, inspiring them to go beyond, and achieve strategic goals:

That I manage to get them to do what we have to do. The overall strategic tasks that I set they have to be done, so I need to make sure that on the one hand they are done, they are done in the best possible way. That if you can do some added value stuff to that then that's all very good as well, if we can go beyond what we are supposed to be doing. (Meryl, Health).

Meryl focused on enthusing her team to deliver on outcomes in her enactment of leadership. Striving to add value and achieve organisational goals. Change and innovation is invoked by persuasion, inspiring followers to perform, and gain approval of ideas.

All four women perceived their peers, by peers I mean followers, would view them positively. Sheila talked about being popular with her followers, and perceived they appreciated her honesty, and had confidence in her decision-making. For example:

I think some of my peers really like my honesty got to the stage where they have a lot of confidence in me and I think they think I'm strong enough to make the tough decisions (Sheila, Education).

The perception of leadership construction can vary between the leader, and the follower, this variance has the potential to cause conflict (Sinclair and Wilson 2002). A feminist construction of leadership advocates empowering followers rather than controlling them (Blackmore, 1989).

April perceived she was viewed as a problem solver, who supports her followers. For example:

People seem to come to me when they have a problem, and they want it resolved (April, Education).

These four women wanted to develop supportive relationships with their peers, and expressed a caring attitude.

Meryl reflected on her experience of poor role models in her professional life. However, she considered how her development had benefited:

It was very much making mistakes, and learning from making mistakes, so I think that has helped for future roles because I probably learnt from the things I did wrong (Meryl, Health).

Meryl learned from negative experiences, and this impacted on her development, and how she managed problems.

However, along with Ivy and Sheila, she also reflected on a positive role model, for example:

My first real role model was when I was in intensive care as a staff nurse and the senior sister that we had on the unit, who had a lovely way of managing the unit, was a very skilled clinician, a very skilled nurse managed and ran the unit extremely well, ensuring that it was well staffed and [she] had a good relationship with the staff (Meryl, Health).

Learning from other leaders impacts on doing leadership for these women. The learning can be taken from positive and negative experiences.

Two women, Meryl and April reflected on the impact of patronage. Meryl had received support from a female Dean, and reflected on the need for positive women role models in leadership positions. For example:

I think for this university one thing we have benefited from, as a whole across the university, when [name] was a VC (Vice Chancellor) I don't know whether you know [name] she very actively promoted women (Meryl, Health).

These women received support, and encouragement from patrons who were influential in their leadership development.

Only Sheila articulated infantilising her peers, protecting them from distressing information:

Keeping things back that might frighten them, and I think you try [sic] and you can't have that because the impact of that is that someone else can't have that. And it doesn't work, that's the kind of reasoning I do with my children (Sheila, Education).

The deliberate withholding of knowledge, hence power does not fit with the concept of authentic leadership (Northouse, 2010).

April reflected on the existence of a glass ceiling for women aspiring to a Dean's role, she perceived this has only recently dissipated at Associate Dean level. For example:

I think there is a lack of female role models in HE, more if you're in academic registry than administrative route. At dean level, and until comparatively recently, Associate Dean level as well. So that kind of academic route, I'm sure it has been open but I think there has certainly been a glass ceiling on that (April, Education).

April perceived a glass ceiling, whereas Meryl reflected on how women were actively promoted in her workplace. The four women did not articulate any experiences of gender power relations (Deem, 2003) in the execution of their role as leaders.

Three women reflected on dressing up for their role, for example:

I wear dresses for work, and I'll put my makeup on and do my hair (Ivy, Health).

Dressing in stereotypical gendered ways in the workplace renders women more acceptable. Meryl conforms to this even though she works in a female dominated environment.

April reflected on managing her emotions in the workplace. For example:

I don't want to be perceived as emotions driven at work (April, Education).

April perceived being emotion driven as a sign of weakness. Women leaders struggle with a dichotomy, on the one hand dressing in a stereotypical feminine way makes them less threatening. However, displaying emotion has a negative impact, it expends emotional labour, and they are perceived as less capable (Groves, 2006).



### 6.1.3 The Interplay of the Personal and Professional Worlds

Perhaps surprisingly for women who compartmentalised their lives, three women, Meryl, Ivy, and Sheila reflected on a lack of difference between their personal, and professional personae. Nonetheless, Meryl identified her exercise of power at home.

For example:

I don't think I'm that much different, pretty systematic, pretty organised, I make sure that everybody at home knows what they're supposed to be doing. I will give them orders [laugh]. Tell them what they have to do, make sure my son knows what he has to do "today I want you to do this and this", I'm probably more bossy at home, I think because it's a bit like herding cats at home, you have to be a bit more demanding and make sure that they know exactly what you want really. So I'm probably a bit more rigid in my leadership at home (Meryl, Health).

Compartmentalisation does not equate with starkly contrasting personae for these women.

In contrast, April reflected on two different personae, and wanted to be perceived in a particular way by peers. This emotional regulation can have a positive or negative impact. The positive connotation is colleagues may perceive the leader as being effective, and coping (Sy et al., 2006). The negative aspect is colleagues might perceive the individual as less authentic (Rajah et al., 2011):

I'm very conscious about how I will be perceived in front of other people, so I tend very much to have a big divide between my personal and my public work life. I don't want to be perceived as being emotions driven at work, so I tend to have a works persona and at home I'm completely different (April, Education).

Traditionally, being emotional is perceived as feminine, and potentially reinforces barriers for women. In corporatised universities certain modes of leadership, and management practices are expected (Fitzgerald, 2014). Being seen as emotional could be problematic for women, and interpreted as lacking in 'hard skills'.

This contrast in personae was heightened for April when her son worked at the same university. He had invaded her space, and she did not feel comfortable. For April, compartmentalisation equated to contrasting personae.

In coping with the interplay of the personal, and professional worlds, April felt there was a critical moment when a choice had to be made. She needed a earning threshold to ensure family expectations were met:

I suppose there was a critical point in which you have to make some decisions about whether you are going to carry on working, or whether you are going to give up and look after the children. I was very fortunate because I earned enough to be able to stay at work, and have the children looked after in a way that met all our needs (April, Education).

This was a turning point for April. Being financially secure enabled the care needs of her children to be met, and allowed April to continue with her career.

Sheila articulated the different pressures for women, reflecting on the competitiveness concerning appearance, exercise, and parenting skills:

Men don't have the same pressures [pause], I never cooked or baked with my children so this week I'd be like "come on we're baking cakes" kind of competitiveness around being a woman about the way you look, the way you're parenting, the exercise she's doing (Sheila, Education).

Compartmentalisation enables the women to cope with the disproportionate domestic labour. Sheila also articulates a perceived requirement to be superwoman, which heightens stress.

Two women, Ivy and Sheila, reflected on performing in their leadership roles, indicating they are acting unauthentically; or they have distinct personae. Ivy, for example reflected:

I also slightly over perform the authentic version of me if you get me; so I sometimes over perform being feminine; and sometimes I ham my accent up so that's kind of like using [my] [sic] authenticity to [inaudible] just cos it disarms people (Ivy, Health).

While Ivy compartmentalised her time this does not equate to contrasting personae. This was a double bluff, as most of the time Ivy performed the alternative, and then reminded people who she really was. Sy et al. (2011) suggest this could be problematic for Ivy, as overacting her femininity, and class others may perceive her as ineffectual as a leader. Ivy tries to confuse her colleagues (in unspecified roles) about her leadership identity, and controls their perceptions of her. Putting on a 'performance' has the potential to distort a person's authenticity.

There was no data demonstrating the effects of these four women managing the interplay of the personal, and professional worlds. However, from the narratives compartmentalisation had a positive effect on the women's lives enabling them to focus, and prioritise.

Despite articulating the personal, and professional worlds were distinct, the boundaries were sometimes blurred. Of the four women, April was the only woman to assume wider roles. For example:

I've been doing QAA work, I've been doing semi consultancy work for schools (April, Education).

April perceived these roles as stepping stones to a portfolio career later in life in preference to career advancement in academia. Perceiving herself to be a good deputy rather than Dean. Two women had differing approaches to advancement: Meryl verbalised a continuum almost linear view; April spoke of role diversification. Sheila, and Ivy narratives gave no sense of their aspirations.

In summary, the women's reasons for compartmentalising their lives differs. Three women attempted to isolate time for their personal, and professional worlds to maintain focus. April attempted to manage emotions to avoid being perceived as emotional by

colleagues. In addition, April operated in a separate space in a male dominated home, and described the male discourse as alien, with no understanding on either part.

The four women's values were located in the higher order of the value paradigm. In expressing her values, Meryl indicated she did not expect others to compartmentalise their worlds.

Ivy and April revealed their moral standpoint was compromised by business decisions taken in their enactment of leadership. This has the potential to undermine their authenticity as leaders, and their well-being as women.

Motherhood had a positive impact on the four women. For April, striving to compartmentalise her life elicited feelings of empathy for other colleagues who were parents.

The women came from working class backgrounds where aspirations were not encouraged, this may be grounded in determinism (Connell, 1998). Crossing class boundaries was an emotional turning point for the women, and impelled them to seek more fulfilment in their lives through career.

Meryl, in compartmentalising her life, created adequate space to remain socially, and physically active. In contrast, Ivy, and April struggled to attain a work-life balance, and successfully compartmentalise their lives. This has had a detrimental effect on April, where stress has resulted in a long-term health condition, and an increased consumption of alcohol.

For Meryl and Ivy, compartmentalisation does not equate to constructing different personae. This contrasts with April who explicitly sees the distinction between her personal, and professional personae. Sheila recognises she performs differently

depending on the audience. Ivy also performed a role indicating she adopted a different persona. There is potential for Ivy, Sheila, and April to be perceived as inauthentic as performing is not perceived as genuine.

The next section addresses how each research question is answered in relation to the thematic framework.

## **6.2 Addressing the Research Questions**

The four research questions identified were:

1. What authentic leadership practices do the women describe? (RQ1)
2. What influences the construct of leadership identity which impacts on the practice of leadership? (RQ2)
3. How does gender impact on leadership identity? (RQ3)
4. How does the enactment of leadership affect health and wellbeing? (RQ4)

The following sections relate to these research questions. The first section is concerned with the women's characterisation of authentic leadership – rhetoric or reality (RQ1), emphasising practices such as passion, behaviour, connectedness, consistency, and compassion (George, 2003), including ethical practices associated with critical leadership studies (Grace, 2000), these are broad ranging, and concerned with the women's values (Hodgkinson, 1991), notion of time (Hughes, 2002), management of multiple identities, and roles (Ward and Wolf, 2004). This reflects the fluidity of authentic leadership, and its construction over time (Northouse, 2010).

The next section is concerned with factors influencing the construction of the women's leadership identity (RQ2). Here themes relate to the women's values (Hodgkinson, 1991) discussed in relation to the literature concerned with the changing landscape in

HE and its impact on leaders. A leadership value paradigm underlines the importance of transrational, and rational values in the enactment of educational leadership (Hodgkinson, 1991). The influence of dominant leadership discourse emphasising traditionally gendered leadership practices (Blackmore, 1999). Here themes relate to accounts of their upbringing (Northouse, 2010); relationships with colleagues (George, 2003); their identity (Busher, 2003); enactment of leadership (Coleman, 2000; Shain, 2000; Grove and Montgomery, 2001); role models (Johnson, 2002); and patronage (Johnson, 2002) in relation to the construction of leadership identity.

The third section is concerned with how gender impacts on leadership identity (RQ3). The themes here are concerned with women's accounts of being a woman discussed in relation to the literature concerned with the construction of gender identity. Specifically their accounts of motherhood are explored in relation to feminist discourse on gender, and leadership, including key feminist concepts such as care (Hughes, 2002). There is also a discussion about women's engagement in emotional labour (Gardiner and Tiggeman, 1999; Davidson and Cooper, 1998); management of multiple identities, and roles (Ward and Wolf, 2004); a consideration of gender, and power relations (Connell, 1998); women leaders as outsiders (Fitzgerald, 2014); and the feminised body under scrutiny (Bellamy and Ramsay, 1994).

The final section relates to how leadership enactment impacts on the health, and well-being of women leaders (RQ4). Themes here relate to healthy, and unhealthy coping mechanisms. I will discuss these themes in relation to the thematic framework to critically evaluate the links between the key findings of this study, and existing research.

### **Women's Characterisation of Authentic Leadership – rhetoric or reality (RQ 1)**

In exploring the interplay of the personal, and professional worlds of these women leaders, the five essential practices of authentic leadership (George, 2003) were apparent in their life story narratives to varying degrees. In reality there is a continuum where circumstances affect the degree the practices of authentic leadership are expressed. For example, all the women expressed real passion for the job they do; they constructed their leadership as values-led. However, three articulated they compromised their values to conform to the strategic goals of the organisation.

These women understood their purpose. They articulated an understanding of their objective, and demonstrated passion for what they do. This was often expressed when reflecting on their values. In other words, 'They know what they are about, and where they are going' (Northouse, 2010, p. 212). The values expressed by the women were often outcome oriented.

These women had strong values about the right thing to do. The women's value system guided them to do the right thing when confronted with conflict concurring with Hodgkinson's (1991) value paradigm. The values expressed by the women were in the higher order, and never self-serving. Personal values are a key dimension of authentic leadership (Northouse, 2010), and being guided by a strong moral compass is central to the concept of authentic leadership. The moral dimension of authentic leadership is explicitly characterised by these women leaders.

The women's values reflected a propensity for developing trusting relationships, using nouns such as integrity, fairness, and trust in their narratives. Empathising with colleagues, and developing colleagues to achieve greater success also featured.

These values, and practices have the potential to develop trusting relationships with colleagues, as they consider others based on their values (Northouse, 2010).

These women demonstrated self-discipline, and acted on their values. The women enacted their leadership with a degree of EI, moderating their practices without appearing too inhuman. Emotional moderation can be indicative of leadership effectiveness (Sy et al., 2006). These women also had a proclivity to act on their values in the course of their decision-making, with three revealing the tension when their values are threatened. However, two women articulated their obsession with fairness did not always deliver the desired outcome.

These women are passionate about their mission. They enjoy their role, and want to make a difference. Authentic leaders are concerned with the plight of others, and are willing to support them (George, 2003), this was apparent in the women's narratives.

There are many similarities between authentic leadership, and critical leadership, however, there are also significant differences. Not least is the construction of power. In critical leadership studies, there is concern with power relations. A feminist construction of power as empowering might engender educational reform, and change the hegemonic structures, and processes confining women to the margins of organisations. In addition, the location of difference within critical leadership studies values intersecting identities to promote social equality, and justice. These are stark variations, and for these women leader's authentic leadership lacks capacity to effect change within existing hierarchical structures, and processes.



Nevertheless, through their life stories, and experiences in differing subject roles: mother; partner; and professional, the women have refined, and developed the practices of authentic leadership. This is discussed in the following sections.

### **The Impact of the Changing Landscape of HE on Women Leaders (RQ1)**

My findings are consistent with the literature on the importance of values in educational leadership (Hodgkinson, 1991). The women leaders expressed interiority when reflecting on their leadership practice, and constantly drew on their personal value system. The women articulated the position they hold involved moral responsibility at times in conflict with the strategic business decisions made in an increasingly marketised HE. The ability to act morally was important to these women, however, tensions, and conflict can arise, as it is problematic to define morally appropriate action (Northouse, 2010). Three women articulated a value conflict at work; authentic leaders do not surrender their values when faced with difficult decisions (Northouse, 2010). The women claimed their values underpinned their practice, however, the findings revealed they are not explicitly engaging by challenging the status quo, or augmenting system change. Reality falls short of the rhetoric. One possible reason for this is they are not positioned high enough in the organisation's hierarchical structures to effect change. For the remaining seventeen women who did not articulate value conflict there are two possible explanations: first, they have conformed to HE ways of working; or second, they are consumed with balancing their multiple roles in their everyday life they do not have the time to consider what is ethical in the workplace, and to effect change.

Maintaining an ethical stance is increasingly problematic for today's HE leaders. The HE landscape has seen the nature of leaders' responsibilities evolve, and become

more complex (Currie et al., 2002) as public policy places HEIs central to the global knowledge economy (David, 2014). Amal commented she chose her 'battles', this may apply to other women in the study as their discussion of values did not extend beyond their everyday working practices.

### **Women's Notion of Time (RQ 1)**

My analysis of the findings identified linear notions of time were problematic for women leaders. It was evident masculine linear notions of time were incompatible with women's lives. This is consistent with Hughes (2002) concept of time. The demands of others infiltrated the women's lives impacting in various ways such: as lack of time to exercise; giving of time as a mother/ daughter/ partner; and running out of time for career advancement. For the women at this stage in their lives the demands of the job, and long work hours encroached on their social time, having a negative impact for some. One possible factor could be patriarchal notions of time (Hughes, 2002) continuing to influence women's lives reinforcing their subordination, and oppression.

Authenticity is not a fixed notion but a dynamic formation over time, the women made sense of their lives by configuring, and reconfiguring aspects of time to bring clarity to their experiences (McNay, 2000). These women acted true to themselves at the feeling, and reflective level (Griffiths, 1995). There was little evidence this occurred at a knowledge level (Griffiths, 1995), one possible reason could be this is a snap shot in time (Cliffe, 2016), and a longitudinal study would reveal how authenticity evolves, hence determining someone's authentic leadership from one interview is problematic.

### **Assimilating Multiple Roles (RQ 1)**

Another factor discussed by the women is the multiplicities of self. In contrast to some reports in the literature (Fitzgerald, 2014), twelve of the women had been successful

in assimilating their multiple roles as mother, partner, daughter, and leader. Others expressed conflict, and inner turmoil in balancing the expectations of these roles (Ward and Wolf, 2004), and in some cases expressing the need to compartmentalise their lives. Women learn to make sense of themselves within the hegemonic beliefs, and values articulated in the discourse of educational administration. Over the course of a career, individuals adopt varying subject positions from lecturer to administrator to personal positions such as partner, and mother. Conflict may emerge when concurrent subject positions such as administrator, and mother diverge (Ward and Wolf, 2004). Some women navigate potentially divergent subject positions, whereas others are less efficacious. These subject positions are always navigated in accordance with the social relations of the discourse, and are always relations of power, and powerlessness between different subject positions' (Weedon, 1997, p.91). Several factors influence the extent these positions are accessible, these include race, class, gender, age, and cultural background. Consequently, being denied a position on any of these grounds, the individual must oppose the existing power relations at play.

These twelve women fared better, one possible reason could be they effectively assimilated their multiple identities, and created a space where their multiple roles, and responsibilities could coexist with seemingly minimum conflict. An explicit example of this is Amal, who, while recognising her role as a mother is to nurture, and develop, also identifies these as important leadership practices. With the support of her husband, Amal has been able to make choices to further her career without compromising her role as mother, and partner.

Research evidence suggests women in leadership positions were not encouraged to place family needs first (Ward and Wolf, 2004). To some extent the findings confirmed

this. Potentially this contributes to the under representation of women in leadership positions, and this is reflected in the women's narratives: either put their families first placing their career on hold; or attempt to become 'superwoman' (Cox, 1996). One possible reason could be a fear of failure in both arenas, motherhood, and the workplace.

### **Women's Construction of their Leadership Identity (RQ 2)**

My findings were consistent with the literature (Parker, 2002; Keltchermans, 1993; Butt et al., 1988) indicating aspects of life story impacted on leadership development. This is reflected in some of the women's narratives regarding their upbringing where emotional turning points, such as a death of a parent, triggered change (Cliffe, 2006). Parents' attitudes also impacted on leadership development, consistent with Northouse's (2010) argument the first exposure to leadership is through our parents. Positive and negative experiences impacted on leadership development, for example, Amal's poor upbringing increased her resolve for change, and had a positive impact on her resilience, and resourcefulness. There is no universal account of these women's experience; the factors impacting on their leadership construction vary widely. This demonstrates the fluid nature of both gender, and leadership construction, and its configuration and reconfiguration over time.

The women's professional identity impacted on their leadership development. These findings were consistent with the literature (Ibarra, 1999; Schein, 1978). Fifteen of the women originated from professional vocational backgrounds such as education, health, and social work or the business world. Professional experiences also influenced the women's perception of what is right and wrong. Women in education articulated a sense of social justice in their narratives. One possible reason for this is

their professional self-concept is based on the practices, beliefs, values, and experiences of their professional discipline.

The findings of the study are consistent with the literature, women drew on aspects of life story such as childhood experiences, family, and peers in forming leadership values (Busher, 2003). Accounts of life story are subjective, and influenced by the passage of time (Oleson, 2001). Individuals vocalise varying accounts depending on the audience (Kehily, 1995), culminating in a reality exposed to individual interpretation of meaning (Oleson, 2001). The women demonstrated they were cognisant of 'self', and of how others perceived them (Busher, 2003). The women's achievements as leaders may have something to do with their understanding of people, environment, and context, Busher (2003) argues this is crucial to a leader's success.

A social construction of gender is evident the women's narratives when reflecting on social relations, this concurs with the literature (Blackmore, 1999; Hughes, 2002). Expectations of family, in particular parents, and grandparents, mirrored gendered social constructs, for example, advocating joining 'caring' professions, and the perception a man's job is more important. These social constructs shape women's values, and have evolved out of a sense of 'overprotectiveness or fear of autonomy' (Brown, 1988, p. 190). They tend to keep women subservient. One possible reason is discourses on performativity pervade our social constructs, fixing gender stereotypes, and reinforcing the status quo.

One of the themes to emerge from the findings was the significance of role models in the women's leadership development. This is consistent with the literature (Kelchtermans, 1993; Parker, 2002). The women learned from negative, and positive

examples. Role models from both genders were identified and consisted of professionals as well as family members. The role models were respected for their value systems located in the higher value paradigms, and lacking in self-interest. The findings indicated the actions of some role models could be described as patronage, as they actively nurtured the leader, and presented them with development opportunities. According to the literature (Johnson, 2002), patrons have a significant impact on influencing, and forming leaders, as well as a fundamental impact on their career advancement.

### **Women's Enactment of Leadership (RQ 2)**

The women demonstrate their desire for a collegiate approach to their leadership, wanting to bring people with them, and having a propensity for human relations. Establishing trusting relationships with colleagues to galvanise the direction of travel was important to these women. These findings are broadly consistent with the literature (Coleman, 2000; Shain, 2000; Growe and Montgomery, 2001). Traversing this map requires them to have comprehensive knowledge of the varying stakeholders, and to expend considerable efforts to forge new alliances seeking common goals. One possible reason is currently there is a requirement for educational leaders to serve divergent groups locally, nationally, and internationally, to develop institutions that support global economic recovery (David, 2014).

One of the themes to emerge from the findings was the women's enjoyment of the role. Acknowledging their privileged status, they wanted to effect change, make a difference, and influence strategy. Having a voice within the academy was important to these women. One possible reason could be they are able to influence issues in

their everyday practices, however as highlighted earlier, they do not engage in wider systemic change.

The women in the study gave an account of how others perceived them, this tended to reflect an essentialist view of women leading, consistent with the literature (Coleman, 2000; Shain, 2000, Growe and Montgomery, 2001). Women who adopt stereotypical feminine practices are perceived as less capable as a leader (Amicus Curiae Brief, 1991). However, for those who expressed masculine practices, the women viewed this to be problematic for colleagues. Some women may internalise masculinist practices to succeed (Collinson and Hearn, 1996; Connell, 1995). Opening themselves up to censure, as they are not performing in stereotypical gendered ways (Fitzgerald, 2014).

Women in leadership positions who are successful, are invariably required to act in ways divergent from earlier relational, and nurturing career roles (William, 1991). This environment renders the position of women leaders untenable, on the one hand valuing so-called feminine practices to lead change, on the other, requiring masculine practices to make hard rational decisions. To some extent my findings are at odds with the literature, although a few women expressed what might be interpreted as traditionally masculine practices, generally the women displayed a caring ethic in the enactment of their leadership, and described only traditionally feminine practices. One possible reason is they do not acknowledge a requirement for masculine practices in their day to day practice. The women in this study generally conformed to stereotypical feminine practices, and by doing so may be constrained to the margins of the organisation. This approach brings them into less conflict with peers, and therefore stronger relationships are formed. The women who articulate masculine practices

recognise this poses a problem for their colleagues. This double bind can be problematic for women leaders.

The ethical, and moral positions expressed by the women, is expounded in discourses on ethics of care offering an alternative representation of organisations, and leadership to the traditional hegemonic masculine practices (Blackmore, 1999). However, ethics of care is arguably reduced to essentialism devoid of a shift in moral, and ethical values. This ultimately constrains, and disempowers women (Blackmore, 1999). The women identified with feminist discourse in regard to their leadership refuting a gender neutral position. The findings demonstrated nurturing, and the development of others as significant in the women's leadership armoury, and this was derived out of doing what is 'right', even at the expense of their own needs. It is taken for granted this is how women will behave (Fitzgerald, 2014). This study suggests this altruistic approach stultifies the women's own development.

### **Women's Construction of Gender Identity (RQ 3)**

In contrast to some reports in the literature, when asked about what it means to them being a woman leader, many of the women in this study reflected on gender being irrelevant. There were various conceptualisations articulated: gender had not occurred to them; there is no gender difference; to same treatment irrespective of gender. One possible reason for this, is equality legislation has muted the gender debate to the degree that gender is no longer recognised as an issue by these women (Fitzgerald, 2014). Nevertheless, gender inequalities in HE persist with continuing under representation of women in leadership positions reinforcing the maintenance of a masculine hegemonic culture. Some women, while declaring gender to be irrelevant in the workplace acknowledged the adoption of gendered roles in the home. Reporting



the disproportionate divisions of labour which is consistent with the literature (Fitzgerald, 2014), and immediately positions women different to men. The reason for this may be due to socialisation, and the expectations of family, and community. The competing demands of subject roles, and the inequitable division of domestic labour show women leaders exert a high degree of emotional labour. The amount of emotional labour required by women leaders is disproportionate to their male colleagues. This concurs with other studies (Gardiner and Tiggeman, 1999; Davidson and Cooper, 1998).

One woman leader relied on her ability to manage emotions (Acker, 2012), this was articulated by April, who did not want to be perceived as emotion driven at work. Women who display emotions such as anger, fear, and stress, are negatively perceived, and there is a requirement for women to appear caring, composed, instinctive, resilient, and approachable; to cry is to appear weak, and undermines their credibility as a leader (Hughes, 2002). They convey a sense of being under intense scrutiny from peers (Gardiner and Tiggeman, 1999), and feel an immense pressure to achieve as leaders, and as women.

### **Impact of Motherhood on Leadership (RQ 3)**

For those women who were mothers motherhood had a positive impact on their leadership. It may be these women were more adept at managing the competing demands of leadership, and parenting, with support from a partner or other family members and/or the financial freedom to source external support.

Women, as highlighted earlier, are expected to lead in gendered ways (Fitzgerald, 2014), for these women being a mother reinforced this premise. Caring was interwoven

in the women's narratives, women leaders with or without children are expected to look after their colleagues (Fitzgerald and Wilkinson, 2010). The women engaged in feminist discourse, particularly with regard to care. There is an expectation that women should conform to social norms.

Two women infantilised peers (Briskin, 1998), and felt the need to protect them. However, this mothering of peers is not always valued by institutional management (Devine et al., 2011), and arguably is detrimental in today's educational environment where there is a need for complex knowledge, and skills to synthesise detailed information. Coupled with the added responsibility to disseminate this information in a timely, and sympathetic manner. There are several possible influences: conforming to gendered socialisation; or influential paternalistic institutions, inducing them to behave as a mother as a way of controlling women, and maintaining the status quo (Leathwood, 2000). Nonetheless, mothering, and motherhood works to disadvantage women by underlining a subservient role in comparison to male colleagues (Fitzgerald, 2014). Hence workplace familial constructs maintain the balance of power in favour of men.

### **Gender and Power Relations (RQ 3)**

The findings demonstrated women are subjected to men's exertion of power, and control, this is consistent with the literature (Blackmore, 1999, Deem, 2003). There were examples of both 'conversation colonisation', and 'identity invisibility' (Blackmore, 1999) in the findings. This angered the respective women, however, they did not challenge the men involved, it might be the women considered they would be perceived as overreacting or emotional, and therefore kept silent. One possible reason for men to undermine women leaders, and marginalise their voice, could be to gain the

advantage in terms of authority to preserve hegemonic masculine practices. This masculine way of doing things is professionally unethical, and demonstrates professional masculine identity is still ensconced in positions of power, and authority (Blackmore, 1999).

My findings are to some extent at odds with the literature (Eisenstein, 1990; Blackmore, 1999). Instead of internalising the notion women view power as something negative, and oppressive, the women in this study seem to enjoy their position, and welcomed the ability to make a difference. However, the findings also demonstrated most of the women related to a feminist reconstruction of power (Blackmore, 1989) in their own enactment of leadership. In women's redefinition of the exercise of power as through, and with others, the notion of compassionate power, and authority came to the fore in the women's narratives. By developing respect, and trust effective relationships emerge where there is a connectedness between the leader and peers, revealing a dimension of authentic leadership (Northouse, 2010). The women strived to nurture, and develop colleagues, one possible reason could be to promote an environment where a sense of trust, and common purpose can flourish characterising their connectedness. This can lead to positive outcomes, such as higher productivity, and a greater understanding between the leader and their followers (Northouse, 2010).

Nineteen women reflected were content in their role and did not want to advance further. For example, Marie reflected:

I enjoy my role, and content where I am, I don't feel the need to go any further  
(Marie, Film and Television).

One possible reason could be they are socialised into unconsciously accepting their place in the organisation, and adopting self-exclusionary practices, such as not participating in established male dominated networks.

### **Women as Outsiders or the 'Other' (RQ 3)**

Some of the findings concur with the literature, women are perceived as outsiders or are 'othered', casting them as different. Othering can take many forms including ethnicity, class, and culture. Being disposed to some degree of 'othering' can result in insensitivity to colleagues from different backgrounds (Northouse, 2010). Amal, relates to feminist discourse on othering, and reflects on being an outsider all her life. Her life has been devoid of a sense of belonging. However, her perception is this has had a positive effect, enabling the transition between different environments; this agency has had an enabling effect on her career. As the literature suggests (Fitzgerald, 2014), women remain outsiders in the masculinist culture of HE stultifying career prospects. In addition, the double positioning of ethnic minority women further reinforces marginalisation in HE (Fitzgerald, 2014). One possible reason could be to reinforce the status quo by marginalising minority groups. With a reinforced glass ceiling, women are not positioned high enough in the hierarchical structure to effect change.

The study did not reveal whether the women 'othered' other minority groups. One possible reason could be the women are not aware of their own ethnocentric behaviour, and therefore would not reflect on 'othering' colleagues.

### **The feminised Body of Women Leaders under Scrutiny (RQ 3)**

My findings were consistent with other research, many of the women reflected on how they dress for their job, with some accentuating their femininity. The literature argues this is a form of compliance (Connell, 1987), by emphasising their femininity women are appealing to male colleagues' desires. However, by failing to dress in a feminine way, and being noncompliant, women are declared abnormal (Blackmore, 1999). Devine et al. (2011) argue this is how women leaders manage their 'otherness',

preserving their femininity to avoid being construed as overly masculine. Dressing in a modest manner so as not to appear too feminine or too masculine (Fitzgerald, 2014). The reason for this is not clear from the data, but it may be something to do with gendered 'power' dressing, and being taken seriously by peers.

One woman expressed concern about her size, potentially being viewed as undesirable. This can affect their confidence undermining their authority. For men the opposite is true, it is viewed as an augmentation of their masculinity, and power (Blackmore, 1999). One woman, a self-proclaimed feminist spoke eloquently about emphasising her femininity in the workplace countermanding preconceived ideas about feminists. An over accentuation of their femininity can be problematic for women, there is a requirement to strike a balance between appearing too compliant to dominant masculine ideals, or being too masculine in appearance (Blackmore, 1999). These women consider the image they portray is important to be perceived positively by peers.

#### **Women Leader's Health and Wellbeing (RQ4)**

An important aspect of the study was the findings around health, and wellbeing. As previously acknowledged, understanding the impact of leadership on the health, and wellbeing of women leaders is critical to developing strategies promoting equality of opportunity devoid of harmful effects. The analysis of the findings were broadly consistent with the literature, many of the women experienced conflict with the competing demands of various roles (Ward and Wolf, 2004) leading to additional stress, and a lack of time to engage in meaningful exercise.

All the women perceived their exercise level to be insufficient, irrespective of whether they engaged in informal or formal aerobic exercise. Possible reasons could be: the

women's lack of understanding of appropriate exercise levels to confer health benefits; the business of their lives meant insufficient time available for regular exercise; or an aversion to exercise. The findings also highlighted diet as an issue. A decline in physical activity coupled with a slower metabolism contributes to weight gain as we age. In addition, psychosocial factors such as exposure to stress can induce eating.

The findings also demonstrated some women engaged in excessive alcohol consumption. Possible reasons for this could be: a lack of awareness of the negative consequences of alcohol; exposure to higher levels of stress; or their environment encourages drinking.

Further analysis revealed some women employed healthy coping mechanisms. These included: use of partners as "sounding boards"; gardening; and the establishment of a female peer support network. These activities eased the tension experienced during the day, and reduced stress levels. The female peer support network was established out of a reluctance to engage in male hegemonic networks within the organisations. This had some advantages for the women, however, it also had disadvantages, and excluded the women from professional networks frequented by men, arguably, this can impede women's success (Fiske et al., 1991), and work to 'other' them (Hughes, 2002). To reduce the potential for stress individuals should: enhance their social support; develop techniques to improve resilience including reflection, and self-improvement; relaxation techniques; time management; and increase exercise levels.

My analysis indicated a compartmentalised approach to leadership had a beneficial effect on health and wellbeing. Meryl was able to successfully create space for quality social activities despite having a busy home life. In contrast there were benefits of

assimilating the two roles too, the women who managed this successfully such as Amal, indicated less stress, and less conflict between the roles. This demonstrates there is not an easy solution, and conditions suiting one individual do not suit another. Next I consider the importance of the study.

### **6.3 Importance of the Study**

To my knowledge this is the first study exploring gendered authentic leadership practices in HEIs, and the impact the enactment of leadership has on health and wellbeing. In exploring the intersection of the personal and professional worlds the complexity of the women's lives became apparent, demonstrating the interplay between the two worlds, and the subsequent contribution of knowledge to the field.

Table 6 (page 190) is a summary of the key outcomes linking the literature, data and analysis of this study. The compartmentalised worlds are separated into the personal and the professional worlds, while these worlds were defined in the literature review it became apparent during the analysis of the data that some of the women compartmentalised their worlds to minimise conflict (Past, 2017). For the majority of the women the worlds intersected, and the table illustrates the a priori themes and the emergent themes evident during the exploration at the intersection of the worlds.

For the women who compartmentalised their lives, the emergent theme was the interplay of the personae. For Meryl and Ivy, compartmentalisation did not equate to constructing different personae. In contrast, April explicitly saw the distinction between her personal, and professional personae. Sheila recognised she performed differently depending on the audience, and Ivy implied she performed a role indicating the adoption of a different persona.

The themes to emerge from an exploration of the intersection of the worlds: first, the impact of the personal world on the professional world, the themes to emerge were: time as a resource for these women, many espoused to a lack of time (Hughes, 2002); for some women being an outsider, 'othered', and not feeling they belonged (Fitzgerald, 2014); the feminised body under scrutiny (Bellamy and Ramsay, 1994), and hypervisible in the professional world (Gardiner and Tiggeman, 1999). Second, the impact of the professional world on the personal, themes to emerge were: again time as a resource for the women (Hughes, 2002). Third, exploration of how the professional world impacts on leadership, the themes to emerge were: Patronage (Johnson, 2002), many women experienced additional support from peers which furthered their careers; the professional environment (Currie et al., 2002); gendered power relations (Deem, 2003); othering (Fitzgerald, 2014). Finally, exploration of the interplay of the personal and professional worlds, new themes to emerge were: coping with the interplay of the personae (Acker, 2012), both healthy and unhealthy coping mechanisms were articulated by the women as a way of coping with the interplay of the personae, these included peer/ spousal support, and maintaining a work life balance, while others worked long hours and blurred the boundaries between home and work; the effects of managing the interplay of the personae, mainly had a negative impact on the women's health and wellbeing, with increased alcohol intake, poor diet, lack of exercise, and lack of sleep; balancing multiple roles (Ward and Wolf, 2004), that involved additional responsibilities; and the capacity to assimilate multiple roles such as mother, wife, daughter and colleague (Ward and Wolf, 2004), which resulted in less conflict for the women.



Compartmentalised World	Exploration of the Intersection of the Personal World with the Professional World			
	The Impact of the Personal World on the Professional World	The Impact of the Professional World on the Personal World	How the Professional World Impacts on Leadership	The Interplay of the Personal and Professional Worlds
<b>A</b> The Personal World <b>A</b> The Professional World	<b>A</b> Values (Hodgkinson, 1991) <b>A</b> Upbringing (Northouse, 2010) <b>A</b> Being a woman (Hughes, 2002) <b>A</b> Lived experience (Burkinshaw, 2015) <b>A</b> Critical Life Events (Northouse, 2010) <b>A</b> Culture, education & socialisation (Scott, 1986) <b>A</b> Caring responsibilities (Hughes, 2002)	<b>A</b> Ethics & Values (Hodgkinson, 1991) <b>A</b> Being a woman (Hughes, 2002) <b>A</b> Lived experience (Burkinshaw, 2015) <b>A</b> Health & Wellbeing (Gardiner and Tiggeman, 1999) <b>A</b> Labour intensive (Fitzgerald, 2014; Fanghanel and Trowler, 2008; Lynch, 2006; Morley, 2003) <b>A</b> Value conflicts (Hodgkinson, 1991)	<b>A</b> Identity (Busher, 2003) <b>A</b> Enacting leadership (Fitzgerald, 2014; Fanghanel and Trowler, 2008; Lynch, 2006; Morley, 2003) <b>A</b> Performativity (Butler, 1999) <b>A</b> Peer construct of leadership practice (Newcombe and Ashkanasy, 2002; Ashkanasy and Tse, 2000) <b>A</b> Role models (Johnson, 2002) <b>A</b> Power relations (Connell, 1998) <b>A</b> Masculine hegemonic practices (Burkinshaw, 2015)	<b>A</b> Personal & professional personae – the same or different? (Groves, 2006)
<b>E</b> The interplay of the personae	<b>E</b> Time as a resource (Hughes, 2002) <b>E</b> Outsider 'other' (Fitzgerald, 2014) <b>E</b> Feminised body under scrutiny (Gardiner and Tiggeman, 1999)	<b>E</b> Time as a resource (Hughes, 2002)	<b>E</b> Patronage (Johnson, 2002) <b>E</b> Professional environment (Currie et al., 2002) <b>E</b> Gendered power relations (Deem, 2003) <b>E</b> Othering (Fitzgerald, 2014)	<b>E</b> Coping with the interplay of the personae <b>E</b> The effects of managing the interplay of the personae <b>E</b> Additional roles (Ward and Wolf, 2004) <b>E</b> Assimilation of roles

**Table 6 Summary of the key outcomes linking the literature, data and analysis of this study**

Source: Personal Collection (Key: A = A priori, E = Emerging themes from the data and analysis)

During the enactment of their leadership practices the women in this study articulated the five essential characteristics of authentic leadership (George, 2003), to different degrees. Their leadership practices were underlined by their values, expressing notions of 'right' and 'wrong'; they developed trusting relationships with followers; expressed passion for their role as a senior leader; moderated their emotions and were self-disciplined; and revealed their compassion towards followers. However, a shortfall of authentic leadership theory is its lack of concern for gender power relations (Deem, 2003) rendering the capacity for authentic leadership to alter masculine hegemonic structures and processes in HE impotent.

The health and wellbeing of women in leadership roles in HE is a woefully neglected area of study. Exploring the interplay of the personal and professional worlds the women articulated both healthy and unhealthy coping mechanisms when balancing their respective roles (Ward and Wolf, 2004) in their everyday lives. Effective assimilation of life roles conferred benefits in terms of health and wellbeing, and this was reflected in the women who successfully compartmentalised (Past, 2017) their personal and professional worlds.

Enacting authentic leadership has the potential to be problematic for women leaders operating in an increasingly marketised, and commercialised male hegemonic environment (Blackmore et al., 2015). Compromising one's values to achieve strategic institutional goals leads to additional stress for these women.

In the next chapter, I will discuss my conclusions and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **7.0 Introduction**

This chapter will first outline the design of the study, then discuss the implications, and identify future directions for practice and research before setting out the study's recommendations.

#### **7.1 The Design of the Study**

The literature review defined what was known about gender and authentic leadership in HE. There had been much research into gender and leadership in HE (Fitzgerald, 2014; Morley, 2013; Barnard et al., 2016), however, no research was identified specifically focused on authentic leadership among women in HE, nor was there research about how the enactment of leadership might impact on their health and wellbeing. The adopted narrative inquiry approach developed from an analysis of the relationship between methodology and epistemology. The women's narratives focused upon their experience within senior leadership in HE regarding particular issues identified by me from the literature. These issues were added to by the participants. The data were analysed using previously identified themes as well as themes emerging from the research.

#### **7.2 Implications of the Study**

This study of women in HE provides documentation of the female world, and the study of women on their own terms, Stage Four, as recommended by Shakeshaft (1986). Furthermore, this study gave support to Shakeshaft (1986) suggests the best method of documenting the female world is through interviewing women. In presenting evidence gathered from the narratives of twenty women leaders from HE, this study

has implications for continued research on life experiences of women in HE, and the impact on leadership development.

To break the glass ceiling aspiring women leaders, and incumbent leaders need to be empowered to change traditional structures, and practices while remaining in them. HEIs need to do more to support women leaders to sustain authenticity, and maintain health and wellbeing.

Identifying how best to achieve this through such routes as leadership training programmes, academic textbooks, recruitment and retention practices, and promotional decisions in HE is not easy. The implications for women who presently participate in leadership positions in HE are clear, as much needed role models, and mentors of other potential female leaders in the academy (Bizzari, 1995; Haslett et al., 1992), it is important these women, and others continue to recognize, and value their knowledge, skills, perceptions, and beliefs. By expressing their 'feminine' practices, and concerns as women, women in HE are able to valorise their contribution to HE. A range of practices including traditionally ascribed feminine practices are needed in education to provide richness, authenticity, and wholeness. As one participant stated: "our femaleness is an asset".

Leaders need to perceive themselves as moral agents, develop the capacity to identify moral issues in the situations, and engage in ethical reasoning, only then are they approaching the moral dimensions of their leadership (Hodgkinson, 1991). This is in alignment with the definition of authentic leadership, these women describe authentic leadership practices including strong values, and moral purpose, and they act on their values, engage in relational leadership, and are passionate and, committed (George, 2003). However, only three women demonstrated engagement in moral reasoning, the

reality is most of these women engage in moral issues on an everyday level but are not necessarily engaging by disrupting the status quo, and reforming the system.

Taking an interpretative approach, has enabled the exploration of the lived reality of each leader, and how they have constructed their leadership identity through aspects of their life history. I have been able to answer questions about what influences the construction of leadership, the effect gender has on leadership, the practices of women leaders aligned with authentic leadership, and the impact of the enactment of leadership on health and wellbeing from the perspective of the women, hence the research can be considered as authentic, and relatable, allowing for knowledge to be widened and theory developed.

It would be inappropriate to generalise from this small sample. However, the data provides a rich foundation of women's construction of leadership identity, and the impact on their health and wellbeing, ripe for further development. Construction of leadership identity is multifarious, and evolves over time through the influences of varying aspects of life story. In re-contextualising and reconceptualising authentic leadership, it is apparent a degree of resilience is required in resisting pressures to conform to a hegemonic environment, and to maintain consistency as an authentic leader. Therefore, I propose this should be recognised as one of the essential practices for authentic leaders to demonstrate. However, the women's resilience may be impeded due to: lack of time; energy; capacity; awareness; or motivation, this is evident in Amal's reflection on 'choosing which hill to die on', consciously deciding to oppose issues in her sphere of influence. Improving one's hardiness in stressful situations is key to personal control, and managing the side effects of stress.

In considering gendered authentic leadership an account of the gendered context senior women leaders in HE work was discussed. The HE landscape, provides a dilemma for women leaders with an alternative preferred leadership practice; most of the women reflected their fair, supportive approach did not always result in the desired outcomes. If women are perceived as not conforming to stereotypical norms a backlash from peers may be experienced. This incongruity problematises authentic leadership for women as there is an emphasis on being 'true to self'. Women are often viewed as 'outsiders' in male hegemonic cultures, and as such operate at the margins, rendering relational leadership practices problematic for women, and hence support the perception of inauthenticity. It was evident the women in this study expended huge emotional labour in developing, and maintaining relationships built on trust. The five practices of authentic leadership do not go far enough, and are lacking in their capacity to challenge the status quo. In comparison, critical leadership has the scope to change systems, and bring about reform. Arguably, in recognising 'difference' and reconceptualising power, critical leadership has the capacity to effect social inequality, and educational reform.

It is clear HEIs cannot continue to ignore the health and wellbeing of their leaders if they want them to function effectively, and efficiently. Organisations need to raise awareness of the potential for stress, and resource effective support mechanisms, such as mentoring, and networks, to mitigate the risks of unhealthy coping mechanisms.

### **7.3 Recommendations for further Research**

There is a necessity to continue to draw on the experiences, and perceptions of women in leadership positions, as an inadequate perception can distort our perspectives on

women's experience. Even though feminist discourse has played a significant part in influencing changes in educational administration over the past twenty years, there remains a significant need to continue efforts.

There is a need to re-examine authentic leadership, considering 'difference', and a feminist reconstruction of power to enhance capacity for social equality, and system reform. Only then can women exercising authentic leadership disrupt the status quo.

Many empirical studies into authentic leadership have ignored gender issues, there is a need for more in-depth, longitudinal studies to address the problems women face in enacting authentic leadership, these I suggest are centred around: (i) evolvement of authenticity and remaining true to oneself (ii) enacting leadership, and effecting system change in hegemonic male environments, and (iii) alternative preferred leadership practices.

Further studies are required to explore the health and wellbeing of leaders, to identify effective interventions organisations can adopt into mainstream policies and practices. There is a need to ensure any such interventions are fit for purpose.

## **7.4 Recommendations**

This section outlines four recommendations

1. Preparation of future authentic women leaders in HE should focus first on helping them to pursue understanding of themselves, and others in a moral or values oriented conceptualisation of leadership, as a foundation to ethical behaviour in their leadership.
2. Efforts should also focus on value sensitivity, this should be reflected in a HE wide learning environment promoting the moral integrity of learning. Value

sensitive policies and practices would help to minimise value conflicts for HE leaders.

3. Leadership programmes need to reflect the ethical dimensions of leadership, and prepare future leaders for the role of an authentic leader. Programmes should be founded on five essential practices of authentic leadership: 1. Understand purpose; 2. Strong values; 3. Establish trusting relationships; 4. Demonstrate self-discipline and acting on values; 5. Demonstrate passion about their mission.
4. The development of formal mentoring systems, and networks, function to support women in their leadership role. This may have the additional benefit of reducing work-related stress, and hence reduce the adoption of unhealthy coping mechanisms.

## **7.5 Summary**

This study of twenty senior women leaders in HE has demonstrated aspects of life story have impacted on leadership construction, and this is a dynamic process evolving over time. Similarly, authenticity is a dynamic formation over time influenced by the women's experiences. Hence the study is a snap shot in time, and the responses are a consequence of the women framing, and reframing their experiences.

The study has also highlighted the gendering of authentic leadership is problematic, as demonstrated by the women. For men and women who demonstrate the practices of authentic leadership there is conflict, exposed by a marketised environment driven by assessment, and performance indicators. However, for women it is also problematised by a male hegemonic culture, and the relationship between agency, and structure. The dichotomy of preferred leadership practices presents women with a



dilemma, 'act male', and receive a backlash, exhibit gender normative practices, and be perceived as weak. There is much to be explored before authentic leadership can take the mantle of what I propose should be an inclusive ideal to which all leaders can aspire.

The study also revealed aspects of health and wellbeing may be detrimental to the organisation as well as the individual. Maintaining effective leadership in a competitive environment during times of austerity, and where the emotional labour of leadership is demanding, is paramount to the success of the organisation. However, as articulated by these women, the enjoyment of their role is also evident. Enabling leaders to consistently perform, HEIs need to be more proactive in promoting a healthy work-life balance.

It is apparent from the narratives of these women leaders, a multitude of factors impact on their construction of leadership over time. The construction of authenticity, and leadership is a dynamic process, and involves constituting, and reconstituting life experiences, as Amal reflected:

You're a product of your childhood, and your relationships, and the things that have happened to you.

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## **Appendix 1**            Interview Schedule

What life experiences/ life roles/ personal values have impacted on your leadership style?

How does your personal/ private persona differ from your professional persona as a leader?

What does it mean to you

I. Being a woman

II. Being a leader

How do you think people around you construct your leadership style?

How do you maintain your health and wellbeing?

Is there anything else you would like to add?

## Appendix 2 Discipline Descriptor

Discipline	Descriptor
Health	Faculty of Health is a multi-disciplinary school for professional education for students entering the health service and includes professions such as nursing, midwives, paramedics and physiotherapists.
Education	Faculty of Education is a school for the professional education of teachers and includes post graduate education for all educators from primary to HE.
Social Work	School of social work is for the professional education of social workers.
Business School	Business school confers degrees in business administration and management.
Computer Science	School of computer science/ engineering brings together disciplines including mathematics, engineering, the natural sciences, psychology and linguistics.
Film & Television (TV)	School for film and television studies and other media. Focuses on their complex interrelations and the creative and cultural contexts.
Women's Studies	An interdisciplinary field of academic study that examines gender as a social and cultural construct, the social status and contributions of women, and the relationships between power and gender.
Media/ Cultural Studies	An interdisciplinary field of academic study that examines the social, economic and political significance of media and cultural products and their role in shaping who we are, what we think and what we value.



## Appendix 3

## Voluntary Informed Consent

Informed consent form – please complete if you are happy to take part in the study.

Title of Study: Authentic Female Leaders: Rhetoric or Reality

Name of Researcher:

**Please  
tick the  
box**

- |    |  |                          |
|----|--|--------------------------|
| 1. | I confirm that I have read and understand the research information sheet for the above study.  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. | I have spoken to the above researcher and understand that my involvement will involve being interviewed at a time and place to suit me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. | I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. | I understand that the above researcher from the University of Birmingham who is working on the project will have access to my personal details.                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. | I understand that any data or information used in any publications which arise from this study will be anonymous   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. | I understand that all data will be stored securely and is covered by the data protection act.  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. | I agree to take part in the above study.   | <input type="checkbox"/> |

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
I wish to have access to a summary of the results

upon completion of the study

☐

## **Appendix 4**

### **Personal Reflection Post Interview – an example**

The interview was held in a small meeting room at the participant's place of work. The participant left instructions with her PA for no interruptions. Following introductions the participant reviewed the study information sheet again and signed a consent form. The interview was scheduled to last one hour maximum.

Overall the interview went well, at times I was mindful of time and had to bring the participant back to the interview question and also move on to the next question. This potentially meant I could have lost some valuable data.

Keeping the interview to time was challenging as the participant frequently wandered from the question.

The participant reflected that she enjoyed the interview and that the questions had prompted her to reflect on aspects of her life that she was not conscious of previously.

## Appendix 5      Participant Information

Dear

My name is Jane Powell I am a post-graduate student at the University of Birmingham and currently completing an EdD (Doctorate in Education). For my thesis, I am examining how female leaders construct their leadership style the study aims to broaden the knowledge and understanding about the construct of leadership by women leaders in a Higher Education (HE) context, whether it is aligned to the new emerging discourses on leadership. In particular what inhibits or indeed enhances the ability to adopt a more authentic, ethical approach to leadership and how women leaders can be supported.

With women leaders still being in the minority there is a need to learn from their experiences and support them to become the best leaders they can be. Enabling them to learn, adapt and move to an authentic leadership style that may have benefits for not only their health but also their effectiveness as a leader.

As a female Associate Dean or equivalent, I am inviting you to participate in this research study by agreeing to be interviewed. The interview will take approximately forty five minutes of your time.

The data collected will only be available to my supervisor for this thesis and possibly the external examiner. Any information discussed in the published thesis or resulting papers will be anonymised. The study has received ethical approval from the University of Birmingham and will be conducted in line with research ethics procedures.

If you choose to participate in this research, please complete the enclosed consent form and return to the email address below.

Participation is strictly voluntary and you may refuse to participate at any time. Once your interview has been transcribed I will send you a copy for checking, when this period is complete it will no longer be possible to withdraw from the study. The deadline for withdrawal from the study is 1<sup>st</sup> December 2013.

Upon completion of my thesis you will have access to a summary of the results should you wish, please indicate this on the enclosed consent form.

Thank you for taking the time to assist me with this research. The data collected will provide useful information for leaders and policy makers in the education sector.

If you would like a summary copy of this study once complete please complete and detach the Request for Information Form and return it to me in a separate envelope. Completion and return of the enclosed consent form will indicate your willingness to

participate in this study. If you require additional information or have questions, please contact me at the number listed below.

Yours sincerely

Jane Powell

If you wish to contact me in relation to this study please do so via the email address below:

[Jep082@bham.ac.uk](mailto:Jep082@bham.ac.uk)

Supervisor Contact Details:

Dr K. Fuller

School of Education

University of Birmingham

Email: [k.e.fuller@bham.ac.uk](mailto:k.e.fuller@bham.ac.uk)

## Appendix 6

## Transcript

Transcription Ref: DM-10017.DSS

INTERVIEWER: Thank you for agreeing to do this for me. I would just like to start off with the first question then. What life experiences/ life roles/ personal values have impacted on your leadership style?

RESPONDENT: Big question (laughs). I think...I suppose if I look back at how I ended up, where I am I suppose, that's probably the easiest way to try and understand I suppose. I don't know what my leadership style is (laughs). I was always in sales and I fell into education purely by chance. I went to do a professional qualification and getting to know the Dean of that business school, he, at the time was looking to bring more practitioners into teaching. So I went to do some part-time teaching and ended up taking a full-time role. But because of my professional background at that time I ended up in more corporate and professional programs and doing more of that. So I think from that professional aspect there were a different set of values and skills and [contributes] which, I'm probably talking about 20 years ago now I suppose, when I entered education or higher education. And at that time I think academia was probably quite a, I don't know, have certain view and a certain style and a certain set of characteristics which probably hadn't changed for quite a while, so I think they were on the point where they were looking to bringing in a more practical aspect to teaching, so I think because of my sales background and the sale training I had had that became very useful for a teaching perspective, so I think there was negotiation, negotiating and having some skills and those sorts of things, assertiveness skills in terms of sales and... I suppose also, bringing a women into that sort of environment and professional teaching and so that's where I was and it was more about being able to combined the Academic perspective to the practical aspect because I had come from a working background rather than, you know, research student. The straight academic normal route. So I think it was those professional skills that came into that, and I suppose in terms of where I came from was a professional program teaching. I then carried on to do a Masters which gave me much more academic perspective which combined well with that professional background I also had. So I think from me, it was a combination of the traditional academic skills and knowledge and experience combined with the apply all of that and look at it from a real-world perspective and there are practical skills and realistic skills and business acumen and commercial skills which actually combined well with the academic perspective. So in terms of the leadership perspective... I come from a business environment into more about bringing more of professional approach to academia, a more of the commercial sense to the business and I suppose it's that that has brought me to where I am I suppose, which is slightly different from those who have followed the usual academic route and have just [4.27] lecturer really perhaps into a research Post and then become Associate Dean. So in my route, because it's been a business professional route combined with the academic route, because I did a Masters and obviously PhD as well so I was quite unusual in the fact that I had a combination of all of those skills and was able to bringing in that professional business approach to it as well. And I think in terms of my style I am... I am quite firm, I am quite assertive, I am...I do have a good sense of... a business sense which I do try to bring

