ROLE FLUIDITY: A GROUNDED THEORY STUDY OF DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP IN BUSINESS TEAMS

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Deakin University
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ABSTRACT

This dissertation reports on a program of research study about follower behaviour in the context of organisational relationships. There is a dearth of research exploring how designated followers exercise influence at the level of the individual team member, particularly with a focus on leadership behaviours (Grint, 2013). Furthermore, there has been a call for qualitative research into how distributed leadership works in teams in the field (Bligh, 2011), for the development of a functional perspective on team leadership (Stagl et al., 2008), and for a focus on emergent leadership from a distributed leadership perspective (Burke et al., 2011). It is toward such objectives that the present research seeks to contribute. The substantive setting for the longitudinal research study comprised six autonomous decision-making business teams working in a large listed Australian financial services organization. Thus, the focus of the research is towards an exploration of leadership behaviours at the individual level, using a qualitative, traditional grounded theory approach. The associated research question is ‘How do designated followers exercise leadership in business teams?’

The contribution to knowledge made by this dissertation is an empirically based detailed analytic characterisation of a set of crucial case studies, with the focus being on explaining the phenomenon of distributed leadership within the research context. A substantive theory, which has been grounded in the data, is presented and provides a detailed explanation as to how designated followers exercise influence at the level of the individual team members. The main contribution of the present methodology is in illuminating the fluidity of team roles and possible contribution non-designated leaders/followers can make in their teams. The present findings outline the differing roles that team members can and do readily espouse in their team interactions, and identifies a hierarchy of influencing behaviours used by designated followers in exercising influence and the basic social process of role fluidity when transitioning between the roles of leading, following and disengaging.

In practice, leadership, followership and teams are inextricably interconnected. In the literature to date, however, each of these topic areas has been researched largely
independently of the others. The present research contributes theoretical propositions
to each of the fields and, due to the connectedness of those propositions within the
substantive grounded theory, promotes theoretical convergence, within the research
field at minimum, that more closely mirrors practice. A number of incidental
findings also make valuable contributions in relating emotions and group wisdom to
the social process of influence.

The present research aims to challenge and clarify many of the commonly held
perspectives on team leadership. Team leadership is no longer the domain of a single
individual. Moreover, the program of study presented here revealed that leadership
was often undertaken in a concurrent manner, and that most team members exercised
leadership. In this context, leadership was distributed in a fair but uneven manner, as
influence was directly linked to task-specific expertise. This alternate approach to the
dualist perspective provides new insights into how leadership is divisible and is
dynamically shared by team members. The theory of distributed leadership in
business teams meets a gap in the extant research about followership influence, and
provides a functional approach to exploring the research phenomena. The present
research also confirms an important role for grounded theory-based research in
understanding, at a more detailed level, the social processes by which leadership is
distributed, and in particular how this process is shaped by circumstances and human
behaviour in different situations.
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1.1 Introduction

Leadership is a prolific topic in social science research (Antonakis et al., 2004; Grint, 2011), and is the focus of this dissertation. Although leadership is readily identified in situ, the phenomenon has proven to be elusive and enigmatic, with no theory to date adequately capturing the phenomenon (Parry, 1998; Yukl, 2011). Historically, most conceptualisations of leadership are leader-centric (Lord & Brown, 2004), with the pervasive hierarchical approach to leadership reflecting the substantial influence of the military and church on the leadership field (Bowers & Seashore, 1966; Sorenson et al., 2011).

The leader-centric approach has assisted little to promote understanding of followers and the psychological processes and mechanisms that link leaders and followers (Lord & Brown, 2004; Malaykan, 2015), subsequently leaving the field of followers and followership largely under researched (Uhl-Bien et al., 2013). Kellerman (2008, p. 132) emphasises the restrictive impact that the leader-centric paradigm has had on the field and urges this to change:

Pervasive leader-centrism hampers us in every aspect, in theory and in practice ... By focusing on leaders to the near complete exclusion of followers we foolishly and unnecessarily circumscribe our conception of the leader-follower dynamic. Similarly, when the potential power and influence of followers is underestimated, the range of options for leaders and followers alike is limited – to the detriment of all concerned. Followers, even those who do little or nothing, have always mattered more than we give them credit for. But, for a range of reasons, we’ve now come to a point where leaders who would discount or dismiss them – or even simply make assumptions about them – do so at their peril.

This introductory chapter examines key concerns associated with the leader-centric paradigm and, together with scholars already cited, suggests that, although the leader-centric approach was useful historically, the social context in which leadership is now exercised requires different conceptualisations of leadership.
Distributed leadership is such an alternative conceptualisation of leadership, which recognises that more than one member in a team can be in a leading or following role and also that leaders and followers may switch roles.

1.2 Growing challenges of the leader-centric perspective

This section focuses on issues and problems associated with the leader-centric paradigm. An exclusive focus on designated leaders has resulted in there being little consideration of the role of remaining team members, who often make up the vast majority of the team. Not being the leader, these members are subsequently designated as followers. There are two apparent limitations of a leader-centric approach. Firstly, adherents have espoused a prescriptive delineation of leader and follower roles – people are either leaders or followers. Secondly, the fundamentally different approaches that have developed and dominated leadership research and thinking over a century have maintained the view that leadership is indivisible – only one person at a time can be leader (Yukl, 2012). Each of these two limitations is discussed in turn.

1.2.1 Prescriptive delineation of roles

A major problem associated with the traditional leader-centric approach is its generally prescriptive delineation of roles, with an individual leader and the rest followers (Gronn, 2002; Grint, 2005). Fundamentally, in this division of labour, a single person is responsible for and provides all leadership functions (Yukl, 2012). Raelin (2005), furthermore, describes the nature of the traditional leadership role as controlling and mostly dispassionate, with followers cast as infantile, dependent and sheep-like.

Bligh (2011) counters that the notion of a single complete leader is a myth. In a contemporary environment, it is no longer possible to expect that a single person can possibly be capable of attending to all the facets that require leadership attention (Yukl, 2012). To achieve this, leadership functions need to be delivered by more than a single individual in a team, which implies a distribution of leadership (and in turn
power) between team members (Bligh, 2011; Gordon, 2011). This alternative conceptualisation means effective followers are involved with sharing leadership (Kelley, 2008); and the line between leader and follower appears thus to be increasingly blurred (Bennis, 2008).

1.2.2 Leadership as indivisible

The industrial age division of labour appears a less efficient and less effective manner of operating in a contemporary environment. The huge advances in information technology have led to more efficient ways in which information is dispersed, and has changed the way in which businesses are able to organise and coordinate their affairs (Ancona et al., 2007). The advancement in higher levels of education and role-specific capabilities has remarkably changed the ways in which leadership and power are distributed (Gordon, 2011). In reality, contemporary leadership is divisible and is distributed amongst team members (Morgeson et al., 2010); with this becoming a pervasive trend (Bolden, 2011). Bedeian and Day (2004, p. 715), more recently, note an increasing recognition of the importance of informal leadership:

There is an emerging appreciation of the role of informal leadership processes in making things happen. Anyone can participate in informal leadership because it doesn't require a position or a title.

Hillier et al., (2006, p. 394) suggest that leadership is really not about a single leader but rather ‘an enacted shared role across team members’. This ties in well with the ideas of Ancona et al., (2007), who propose that leadership comprises a set of four capabilities: (1) sense-making, (2) relating, (3) visioning, and (4) inventing. To be effective, leadership is likely to be shared in some form with others who complement the aggregate leadership skills. The notion of distributing leadership, in some way dispersing it amongst members who would ordinarily have been cast as followers, thus represents a profound shift from the historical leader-centric perspective.
1.3 Distributed leadership: An alternative to the leader-centric approach

There is increasing support for the view that leadership is distributed (Yukl, 2012), and that followers make a valuable contribution in achieving team outcomes (Kelley, 1988; Owen et al., 2004). Moving away from a leader-centric perspective, a more inclusive view of leadership suggests that leadership is a process of social influence, involving the interaction of leader(s) and followers within a context (Bratton et al., 2005; Kempster & Parry, 2011).

This research is informed by the perspective that leadership is associated with individuals who exercise such influence and that leadership can be seen as an output linked to process, rather than the current leader and follower ontological premise that reflects leadership as an input-process dynamic (Drath et al., 2008). With distributing leadership being a relatively new perspective (Parry et al., 2014), the present research has been informed by a number of research opportunities, outlined below.

1.4 Research opportunities

A number of key areas, identified during the literature review, require additional research to enlighten and enhance our understanding of the phenomenon of distributed leadership. These topics include:

1. A focus on emergent leadership in the context of a distributed leadership perspective (Day et al., 2004; Mehra et al., 2006; Carsten et al., 2010);
2. An investigation of functions and processes, including leadership behaviours, associated with distributed leadership (Martinez et al., 2005; Burke et al., 2011);
3. How distributed leadership works in situ, rather than in theory (Harris & Spillane, 2008; Bligh, 2011);
4. A focus on how leadership is distributed within a field team setting (Salas et al., 2004; Stagl et al., 2007; Burke et al., 2011).
The present research focuses on all four of these highlighted areas, and each is discussed in turn.

### 1.4.1 A focus on emergent leadership

A significant focus for the present research is to discover how leadership emerges within the setting of autonomous decision-making business teams. Understanding how emergent leadership (Day et al., 2004) occurs seeks to provide answers to questions of how leadership occurs, in a distributed setting, where little is known of how formally appointed leaders in organisations interact within the much larger network of highly influential informal leaders, who often have lower or no formal rank. Furthermore, relatively little is known about what happens when teams have more than one leader leading simultaneously (Mehra et al., 2006).

Emergent leadership deals with non-appointed leaders assuming leadership and can be viewed ‘as leadership attributed to one or more individuals in a group comprised initially of members of equal rank/status’ (Berdahl, 1996, p. 27). Baruch (1998, p. 134) does not impose the requirement of equal status, pointing out that ‘emergent leadership occurs when individuals are ready and willing to be influenced by another individual.’ Therefore, any team member who contributes to the leadership functions in the team, regardless of whether there is, or they are, a formally appointed leader, exercises leadership (Hackman, 2004).

Carsten et al., (2010) observe that leadership cannot be fully understood without considering the contributions of designated followers in the social process; and how they influence and emerge into a leading role is not fully understood as yet. Fairhurst and Uhl-Bien (2012) concur and advocate for additional research to understand how emergent leadership occurs. Due Rue and Ashford (2010, p.123) discuss ‘granting a leader identity’ and ‘assuming a follower identity’ at different times; which gets to the very question of how team members might switch roles and emergent leadership works. Understanding this concept from a distributed perspective is vital.
1.4.2 Functions, processes and leadership behaviours associated with distributed leadership

Another area requiring further research relates to the leadership tasks encountered in a distributed leadership environment, as outlined by Martinez et al., (2005) and Burke et al., (2011) in their respective reviews. In the leadership field more generally, relatively few theoretical efforts have been made to specify the functional requirements of leadership in teams (Staniforth & West, 1995), even though teams have increasingly become the primary building blocks of organizations (Bell & Kozlowski, 2002). Zaccaro and Klimoski (2002, p. 5) also advocates for research to explain ‘how leaders create and direct team processes to achieve collective success.’

While the traditional focus in team leadership research has been on the influence of an individual leader on the team, little consideration has been given to the influence of the remaining team members and their relationships (Day et al., 2004). Day et al., (2004) suggest that, at a complex level, leadership happens as an outcome of team processes. The lack of attention to the specific tasks of leadership in a team, coupled with the failure to recognise the reciprocal influence of team members on leaders, has resulted in an incomplete understanding of team leadership functions (Stagl et al., 2007). This could help explain why distributed leadership, studied since more than 50 years ago (French, 1956) and readily observable in real life, particularly in organisations (Story, 2004), has not received much research attention in the past (Gronn, 2011). Parry et al., (2014) argue that research into leadership functions and influencing behaviours within a distributed environment is much needed.

1.4.3 Understanding how distributed leadership works in the field

Spillane (2004) suggests that the important focus is no longer whether leadership is distributed but rather how it is distributed in the team or group context. Related questions ponder how distributed leadership works, the nature of co-leadership (where two or more leaders lead simultaneously), and the extent to which this mode occurs (Spillane et al., 2006; Harris & Spillane, 2008; Bligh, 2011). Leaders, followers and situation or context are the essential components in this consideration.
Team leadership needs revolve around the development of group processes and conflict resolution relating to task and process issues (Barry, 1991). Contrary to reducing the need for leadership when the formal manager is removed, teams require more leadership. Despite autonomous teams being used in unprecedented numbers, Bolden (2011) notes that the question of how leadership is exercised in leaderless teams remains unanswered. Martinez et al., (2005) found that leadership alignment and power are important factors in distributed leadership and warrant closer scrutiny in future research.

More recently, with a new focus on followers also contributing to team leadership, Howell and Mendez (2008, p. 38) have called for a research focus on shifting roles:

> Viewing followership from a shifting role orientation has also received little attention by followership researchers ... and effective rotation between leader and follower roles deserves more efforts by leadership and followership scholars.

Bligh (2011) renews the call for the answers to this question of how team members switch roles and how leaders emerge in the context of distributed leadership.

### 1.4.4 Understanding distributed leadership in the context of a field team setting

Salas et al., (2004), Stagl et al., (2007) and Burke et al., (2011), in their respective literature reviews, identify several team-focused research needs, including the need for: (1) team research in the field; (2) development of a functional perspective of team leadership; and (3) the examination of how teamwork is distributed. Restated, this amounts to a call for research into team leadership in real teams, where teamwork is distributed in their everyday contexts, rather than in the experimentally created setting of laboratories. Zaccaro et al., (2008) pose the question of how team roles change as expertise in shared leadership changes. Each of these elements was addressed in the present research.
Day et al., (2006, p. 212) comment that the discipline of team leadership ‘appears to be on the cusp of some truly significant breakthroughs’, driven by advances in work on teams and leadership. They suggest that notions of collective leadership have made the largest advances, being suggestive of a need for a flexible view of leadership that recognises both ‘focused and distributed’ leadership. Kozlowski and Ilgen (2008) concur with this argument, in their review of work groups and team. They encourage future researchers to build on the solid theoretical and empirical base already established, to better capture and embrace the complexities of current team arrangements whilst seeking to better understand these rather than to fit them into our current frameworks.

Parry et al., (2014) emphasize that the key issue for team leadership is that it should incorporate the opportunity for all decision-making team members to reflect upon their personal experiences to provide a more holistic viewpoint.

1.5 Researching distributed leadership

Gronn (2002, p. 445) argues that the lack of research in this area presents a ‘window of opportunity for qualitative field studies into areas such as forms, frequency, and properties of distributed leadership, at various levels across the organization’. There is a comprehensive argument for increased efforts to develop theory, particularly as an individual-centric, distributed approach to leadership differs so profoundly from the leader-centric approach that has dominated leadership thinking. Corrigan (2013) argues that the field of distributed leadership is far from being a mature field of research, and in many regards is under researched.

Non-empirical forms of research, which have dominated early literature in the field, have failed to adequately account for distributed leadership in real world situations (Corrigan, 2013). Story (2004) and Bolden (2011) concur with the need for greater empirical research, renewing the call for qualitative enquiries into how distributed leadership works in teams in the field. The present research seeks to provide a better understanding of the phenomenon of distributed leadership.
1.6 Research aims and purpose

The primary aim of the present study is to investigate the research question, ‘How do designated followers exercise leadership in business teams?’ The research question is framed in a paradoxical manner because the prevailing leader-centric approach to leadership acknowledges only a single leader in a team, with the remaining members automatically being designated as followers.

The question of how designated followers exercise leadership in business teams simultaneously raises questions such as ‘can more than one member be leader simultaneously?’ and ‘what happens to a designated leader when another member assumes leadership?’ Providing answers to these questions will provide insights into how multiple team members might exercise leadership, and constitutes a substantial departure from the sole-leader paradigm.

1.7 Justification for the study

The researcher had previously engaged with the subject organization in a professional capacity in recent years on various commercial projects, and additionally was a keen observer of the decision-making team processes used. This interest led to the focus of this research project in an exploration of making sense of this phenomenon of distributed leadership in the substantive context. An investigation of multiple leaders in a team constitutes a distributed leadership perspective to leadership, an increasingly utilized perspective (Corrigan, 2013). Distributed leadership could have a profound influence on the way leadership is perceived in general, and how leadership development is tackled in particular. The present research will help to understand how followers are perceived and how leaders and followers could be developed in the future. Knowing how followers influence and exercise leadership from a non-designated leader position will assist both leaders and followers to maximise inputs from all individuals in a group or team, and therefore create the potential to achieve greater productivity, satisfaction and desire to stay in the team.
1.8 Research context

The substantive focus of this research comprises six formally organized, autonomous decision-making business teams working in a large listed Australian financial services organisation. Team members, who are experts in their respective fields, voluntarily joined these teams with the view to participate and complete complex financial banking and brokerage projects. By definition, organizations within this industry require a highly developed ability to form successful internal work groups whose members can readily adapt to a rapidly changing environment and leadership structure. Team members operate with high autonomy (Hackman & Walton, 1986; Stewart & Manz, 1995), including the ability to control their work methods, schedules, meetings and task assignments, and to solve interpersonal problems.

The use of autonomous decision-making teams in a contemporary knowledge-based environment is a pervasive trend (Parry et al., 2014), and is broadly aimed at continually increasing employee involvement with the aim of collaborative success (Parry, 2014). Stewart and Manz (1995) outline the use of autonomous teams to solve complex problems, and to improve, amongst other things, productivity, quality, cost savings, and employee morale, and to decrease absenteeism and turnover. There is a shared responsibility in autonomous teams (Barker, 1993), with the many roles that members assume being flexible and dynamic in nature (Seers, 1989). As such, any member of an autonomous decision-making team maybe called upon to provide leadership on a specific task. Typically, the person with the most appropriate knowledge, skills, abilities, and traits for a specific task provides leadership on that task (Pescosolido, 2002; Kozlowski et al., 2009).

1.9 Research approach

The present study is qualitative in nature, which approach is well suited to examining interactions between individuals (Parry, 1998) and also the leadership process (Bryman, 2004). Quantitative methods have been unable to adequately capture and convey the complexities associated with the multi-level nature of leadership, tending to produce descriptors stripped of rich detail (Parry, 2002).
From a practitioner’s perspective, a quantitative approach provides limited value, as details of processes are often missing from generalised descriptors. Given the ripeness for change, Conger and Pearce (2003) are advocates for developing new models of leadership rather than relying on the old. The focus on transformational or ‘new leadership’ (Hunt 1999, p. 137) has led to an increased use of qualitative techniques in leadership research, with specific methods including observation, interviews and case studies. The present qualitative study employed a traditional grounded theory research methodology. Grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) provides a methodology that is well suited to developing new theory in areas where little such work exists (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Grounded theory methodology also provides guidance and procedures for preventing existing theory from constraining theory development in emerging areas (Parry & Meindl, 2002). A qualitative approach, using observation and semi-structured interviews in a multiple case study research design, is well suited to developing a grounded theory that discovers and explains complex concepts and their inter-relationships. Observation provided a very useful means of triangulating interview data, which were the key data source. Grounded theory constitutes ‘a compromise between extreme empiricism and complete relativism’, by attending to actors’ perceptions of reality, and is better suited to researching interpretations of reality than pursuing objective reality (Suddaby 2006, p. 634). Easterby-Smith et al., (2002) observes that, generally, people invest a great deal of time making sense of their experiences. In contrast, researchers often focus more on quantification and description, ‘at the expense of understanding why things are happening’ (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002, p. 3). Leadership study often constitutes ‘an imprecise, inexact exploration into the causes and consequences of complex human interactions’ (Jago 1982, p. 315).

Team leadership takes place in social contexts that are often complex (Day et al., 2006), largely because the situations faced by teams are so varied (Hooijberg et al., 1997). As a process, leadership occurs between leader and follower, and includes any member who might exercise leadership (Kan & Parry, 2004). Kempster and Parry
(2011) suggest that leadership is comprised of a complex set of variables that are interrelated, asserting that a grounded theory approach is an appropriate method for making sense of such complexity. Parry (2014) also proposes that grounded theory is particularly appropriate for studying social processes in leadership; and it has been widely applied to the study of team leadership.

A holistic methodology was needed in order to resolve the problematic phenomenon of distributed leadership within group settings. The present research adopted a constructivist perspective on leadership, focusing on the interpretive paradigm (Veal, 2005) of leadership behaviour. In this approach, in social science, scientific truth emerges via observation and consensus of meaning of the community of observers, after analysis and interpretation (Kempster & Parry, 2011). Empirical reality is derived from ongoing observation and interpretation (Suddaby, 2006; Kempster & Parry, 2011). This research seeks to make sense of the experience of a particular set of people with a focus on understanding how leadership happens in their teams (Parry et al., 2014). Examining ‘concepts which are subordinate to the overarching concept of leadership’ but closely related, as suggested by Parry (1998, p. 93), is congruent with a grounded theory approach.

In the present study informants were asked in various ways about those who exercised influence, how this influence was achieved, and what impact it had on team members. The present study involved investigating team-wide leadership behaviour, examining how multiple members in the team exercise leadership (Pescosolido, 2002). Team performance and team behaviours were also sampled under a wide range of different conditions and varying situations, addressing Burke et al.,’s (2011) caution that, because team behaviour is so complex, single snapshots should be avoided. Observations (multiple and successive) contributed to moving the study beyond single snapshots of data, and deepened the understanding of distributed leadership.
1.10 Structure of thesis

The structure of this thesis follows the conventional style of reporting scientific research (Introduction, Review of Literature, Research Methodology, etc.), as if findings were uncovered through a deductive approach. However, the grounded theory approach, which is largely inductive in nature, does not follow this sequence. The major difference is that the literature review was only conducted after the research had been completed. Other than necessarily checking to see the extent of research around followers and followership prior to conducting this research study, the literature review and integration occurred only after formulation of the substantive grounded theory in accordance with the principles of Grounded Theory Methodology (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

The thesis covers three broad areas: (1) literature review and method; (2) data analysis, and (3) location of the findings with the extant literature. In the first area, Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the present research; Chapter 2 presents an initial literature review; and Chapter 3 addresses research methodology. The second area develops the substantive grounded theory and includes substantial quotes from the informants, all cited and acknowledged with an R identifier (R1 for informant 1, etc.).

Chapter 4 outlines the ten influencing behaviours that emerged during the study and focuses on the primary influencing behaviours. Chapter 5 examines the secondary influencing behaviours identified in this study, and Chapter 6 covers the situationally contingent influencing behaviours that emerged. Chapter 7 examines influencing, team roles and outlines the core category of role fluidity.

In the final area, Chapter 8 presents a grounded theory of distributed team leadership and discusses the research findings in the context of the extant literature. Chapter 9 concludes the thesis with an examination of contribution to theory, relevance to practitioners, limitations and recommendations for future research.
1.11 Contribution

Distributed leadership is an alternative to the well-established single leader approach. The field of distributed leadership is still a relatively new perspective; and this research study contributes a substantive theory of distributed leadership in business teams. Although there are many definitions of leadership, most agree that influencing others is a fundamental tenet of leadership. The influencing behaviours that emerged from this study add insights into how specifically non-designated team members exercise influence and make valuable contributions to their team outcomes.

This study focused on distributed leadership within a team context and, accordingly, contributes simultaneously to the quite separate body of literature on teams. The mechanism whereby team members switch between leading, following, and occasionally disengaging roles, enhances understanding of the processes associated with role distribution and fluidity. Importantly, this mechanism for switching roles also contributes to the sparse body of literature on followership. In particular, the basic social process of role fluidity provides insights into how individuals in a team may, for a period of time, occupy a leading role and then, at other times, occupy a following or disengaging role. Occupying these roles is not related to the formal assignment of roles. In the present study, social identity theory was found to have a very limited impact upon the core category as team roles were behaviour-based rather than personality-based due to the substantive context. Equity theory was also considered and found to have a very limited effect on the core category.

Collaborating and belonging emerged as two important and inter-connected considerations for all team members, varying according to team role being occupied. The interplay of these elements, unlinked in prior literature, is a further contribution to the leadership, followership and team literatures. In practise, leadership, followership and teams are inextricably linked; however, in the literature to date, each of these topic areas has been researched largely independently of the others. The present research contributes theoretical propositions to each of the fields and, due to the connectedness of those propositions within the substantive grounded theory, promotes a theoretical convergence, within the research field at minimum,
that more closely mirrors practice. A number of incidental findings also make valuable contributions in relating emotions and group wisdom to the social process of leadership.

1.12 Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of the research study. The present research study is situated in the field of distributed leadership, a paradigm challenging the leader-centric perspective that has dominated leadership research to date. A key justification for this study is to develop and extend theory according to this new paradigm. The study uses a qualitative approach by employing a traditional grounded theory methodology.

The focus of the present research study was six formally organised, autonomous decision-making business teams, operating within a major competitor in the Australian financial services industry; and the primary outcome of the research is a substantive grounded theory that provides fresh insights into how designated followers in the study exercise leadership as well as more general insights into the new field of distributed leadership in business teams. The key focus of the research will be on probing the data to provide answers to the following questions:

1. How designated followers emerge to become leaders?

2. How do they switch between roles?

3. Can there be concurrent leadership?

4. What happens to a designated leader when a designated follower assumes leadership?

Appendix A offers an operational definition of key terms that are applicable to the research study.
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Leadership is a complex notion (Hunt & Dodge, 2001; Connell et al., 2002; Yukl, 2011), and many authors have sought to explain it in terms of an equation or formula (Pagonis, 2001; Dvir & Shamir, 2003). This conceptualization recognizes that a comprehensive view of leadership requires recognition of elements other than the leader alone. The three key elements in the leadership equation are the leader, the followers, and the context (or situation) in which the interaction occurs (Nye & Nye, 2002; Antonakis, 2006).

The leadership equation provides a useful framework for examining the topic of leadership, and provides the basis for organizing this chapter. The chapter is divided into three main parts. In the first section, each of the three key elements of the leadership equation is discussed, namely: the leader or leadership; followers or followership; and finally, the team as context within which leaders and followers interface. In the second section, the adequacy of the current leader-centric perspectives is examined. Finally, finding that both leader-centric and team-centric approaches render only an incomplete understanding of the complex and multi-dimensional social phenomenon that is leadership, an alternative individual-centric, distributed notion of leadership is examined. A distributed approach provides a fresh alternative, viewing the leadership function as divisible and allowing for multiple individuals in a team to engage in leadership, sometimes sequentially and sometimes concurrently. Distributed leadership involves individuals, who ordinarily would have been designated as followers, exercising leadership at some time.

2.2 Perspectives on leadership

This section focuses on the first key element of the leadership equation, leadership. A variety of definitions of the topic, which has been the subject of scholarly research, are presented. This is followed by a discussion of the important issue concerning the
difference between leadership and management, highlighting that the two terms represent quite different concepts.

Finally, there is a brief summary and analysis of the four distinct, historical approaches to leadership: (1) the trait approach, (2) the behavioural approach, (3) the contingency approach, and (4) the ‘new leadership’ or relational approach, which includes transformational leadership.

2.3 Definitions of leadership

Leadership is easy to identify in situ; however, it is difficult to define precisely. Given the complex nature of leadership, a specific and widely accepted definition of leadership does not exist and might never be found. (Antonakis et al., 2004, p. 5)

Scholarly research has put forward many varied definitions of leadership (Grint, 2011), but to date there is little consensus on a common definition (Parry et al., 2014). In fact, this ongoing diversity of views and apparent lack of progress in the leadership field, despite decades of research, has frustrated many (Parry, 2008), leading some to question whether there is such a construct as leadership (Uhl-Bien et al., 2013). Jago (1982, p. 315) proposed that leadership should be viewed as a property, affected by individual’s characteristics and qualities; and also as a process, where influence is central:

Leadership is both a process and a property. The process of leadership is the use of non-coercive influence to direct and coordinate the activities of the members of an organized group towards the accomplishment of group objectives. As a property, leadership is the set of qualities or characteristics attributed to those who are perceived to successfully employ such influence.

By contrast, and more than two decades later, Wood (2005, p. 1103) suggested that ‘leadership is best understood as a process rather than a property or thing’, reflecting a definite trend away from viewing leadership as arising from characteristics of a single individual leader. Agashae (2001, p. 94) captures the relational element of leadership, describing it from the perspective of a person who has responsibility for
others in the context of a work setting, as ‘a process whereby an individual uses his/her power relationship to influence others to achieve specified goals’. In a similar vein, and emphasising the influencing theme, Osborn et al., (2002, p. 805) suggest that it is ‘a subjectively identifiable pattern of influence attempts’; and Parry (2002, p. 180) sees it as a ‘social process of influence’. Lord et al., (1999) suggest that there is a broad recognition that leadership is a social process involving leaders and followers.

Bowers and Seashore (1966, p. 240) propose that ‘leadership is organizationally useful behavior by one member of an organizational family toward another member or members of that same organizational family’. They suggest that leadership might result from either formal appointment or informally, based on group support needs. In the context of autonomous teams, Stewart and Manz (1995, p. 750) defined leadership ‘as guidance and direction provided to a team by someone functioning in a role constituting formal authority to influence the team’.

Although there are varied definitions of leadership, ‘exertion of non-coercive influence towards a common goal’ is the recurring theme reflected in most definitions (Bratton et al., 2005; Yukl, 2012). Alvesson and Sveningsson (2003) qualify that the nature of the influence should be intentional so that, for example, a poor manager who influenced others to take action through personal inaction would not be seen as taking the lead. For the purposes of the present research, leadership is defined as ‘intentionally influencing others towards a common goal’ (Parry, 2008; Yukl, 2012). It is further assumed that the influence is non-coercive. This research is informed by the perspective that leadership is associated with individuals who exercise such influence and that leadership can be seen as an output linked to process, rather than the current leader and follower ontological premise that reflects leadership as an input-process dynamic (Drath et al., 2008).

Section 2.4 outlines the differences between leadership and management. This is an important distinction, as the present research is about exploring the influence-based process and relationships between designated followers (i.e. leadership) rather than formalized designated relationship accordingly to title or position (i.e. management).
2.4 The leadership versus management issue - A paradox or nexus?

There are important distinctions between leadership and management (Bedeian & Day, 2004). This section will outline these differences. An appointment to a management position provides an individual with the basis for a formal, authority-based relationship with any subordinates who might fall within the scope of the manager’s role description. The extent to which an influence-based relationship develops will determine whether or not that manager could also be regarded as a leader (Gronn, 2002). Although this conceptualization is a simple notion, the reality is quite different. The key area demonstrating this lack of consensus relates to the lack of clarity around the appropriate use of the terms leadership and management. Table 2.1 highlights the key differences, as outlined by Zaleznik (1997).

Table 2.1 Differences between management and leadership (Zaleznik, 1997)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management</th>
<th>Leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conservators and Regulators</td>
<td>Leaders seek change opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compromise conflicting values</td>
<td>Generate solutions via vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>Projection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process oriented solution</td>
<td>High risk positions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on process</td>
<td>Relational oriented solution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structured and methodical</td>
<td>Focus on leading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intuitive and empathetic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Zaleznik (1997) argues for deep-seated personality reasons that the two behaviours of leading and managing, and those who exhibit them, are quite different. Although the notions he proposes lack clarity, Zaleznik (1997) played a vital role in the field by challenging the prevailing perspective that leadership and management are the same. Kotter (1990) argues that leadership differs from management, with each a distinctive but complementary system of action. Neither is more important than the other, nor its replacement, and some people are more effective at one than the other. The key differences are outlined as follows in Table 2.2.
Table 2.2  Management and leadership comparison
(Kotter, 1990)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management</th>
<th>Leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practices and procedures</td>
<td>Dealing with change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivers order and consistency</td>
<td>Set direction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan and budget</td>
<td>Align for change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organise and staff</td>
<td>Motivate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management controls and problem solving</td>
<td>Inspire to realize change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.5  Major approaches to conceptualizing leadership

Approaches toward leadership research over the past century have changed radically (Yukl, 2012). There have been four major approaches taken in the study of leadership (Jago, 1982). They are: (1) the trait approach; (2) the behavioural approach; (3) the contingency approach; and (4) the relational or ‘new leadership’ approach (Parisi-Carew et al., 2000). After a major review of leadership theory and research, Jago (1982) suggests that little is to be gained from seeing the four approaches as competing alternatives. Jago (1982) notes that, despite their lack of an unequivocal explanation of leadership and their limitations, each approach nevertheless enjoys some empirical support, and all contribute to a better understanding of a complex subject (Cacioppe, 1997). A brief overview of the four approaches is outlined below.

2.5.1  The trait approach

The trait approach assumes that ‘leaders possess a certain constellation of personal attributes differentiating them from non-leaders’ (Jago, 1982, p. 72). Leader-centric research focuses on measuring and quantifying leadership traits and also establishing their relationship to leader effectiveness. The trait approach focuses strongly on the individual, and is reliant on both personality theory and test-measurement theory.
There inherent flaw in this approach is that it does not consider those being led or the situation in which leadership might occur (Yukl, 2012); and this is a key reason why it became regarded as incomplete.

2.5.2 The behavioural approach

Following on after the trait approach, a behavioural approach was the next approach with a focus on leader behaviours (Yukl, 2012). This approach developed a detailed well-refined list of four meta-categories of leader behaviour (Yukl et al., 2002; Yukl, 2012). Each category is independent but not mutually exclusive, allowing some behaviours to appear in all meta-categories, as illustrated below:

1. Task behaviour – planning short-term activities, clarifying objectives and role expectations, monitoring operations and performance;
2. Relations behaviour – supports and encourages, recognizes achievements and contributions, develops member skill and confidence, consults when making decisions, and empowers members to take initiative in problem solving;
3. Change behaviour – advocating change, proposes innovative strategy or new vision, encourages innovative thinking, and takes risks to promote necessary change;

The early period of behavioural research was confronted by problems very similar in nature to those confounding the trait theorists (House & Aditya, 1997). A major challenge in finding a universal set of leader behaviours was the reality that situational variations exert a major influence on team behaviours (Jago, 1982). The approach was also hampered by under-developed theory and measurement methods, including the widespread use of questionnaires that relied on informant recall. Given that context plays a major role in leadership research, there was an inherent shift to a contingency approach (Yukl et al., 2002).
2.5.3 The contingency approach

The contingency approach was developed in a bid to overcome the problem that (just as in the search for a single leader type) a single set of leadership behaviours that fitted all situations could not be found (Jago, 1982). The contingency approach evolved from the trait approach, focusing on whether the leader's disposition for either task-motivation or relationship-motivation matched the situation type. A notable example of this approach was Fiedler’s Contingency Theory (Ayman et al., 1995), which, despite its limitations, advanced the understanding of leadership by challenging assumptions that there was a one-best-way-to-lead. The theory proposes that managers are either ‘task-oriented’ or ‘people-oriented’, and that, depending on the situational favorableness (degree of control a leader has over a situation), they act in particular ways (Ayman et al., 1995).

An alternate perspective of contingency theory that grew from behavioural theory, considers the interaction between leader behaviour and situation, namely Path Goal Theory, developed by House (1971). This theory proposed that subordinates consider leader behaviour satisfying and motivating if it delivers immediate satisfaction, or the likelihood of satisfaction in the future. The leader needs to provide the necessary conditions and support for followers to achieve goals and objectives that are compatible with those of the group (Jago, 1982). When tasks are not structured, initiating structure by the leader contributes to satisfaction. Alternatively, when tasks are structured, initiating structure behaviours are demotivating but consideration behaviour would motivate. There are numerous other theories that fall under the contingency approach, but there has been little empirical evidence to support many of these theories. In the contingency approach there is strong emphasis on non-leader factors, however the purpose of focusing on other variables is solely to enhance the effectiveness of the leader-individual (Meindl, 1995; Bass, 2008) in a wider variety of situations.
2.5.4 The relational approach

Following diminished interest in earlier contingency theories, researchers focused on other elements of the leadership phenomenon (Conger, 2011). Many of these newer theories reflect an interest in relational aspects of leadership, including a greater consideration of followers. Transformational leadership focuses on how leaders might use ‘charisma, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, or individualized consideration’ to move followers beyond self-interest (Bass 1999, p. 11). The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) measures the extent to which leaders employ transactional and transformational factors, with effective leadership found to be more transformational than transactional (Uhl-Bien, 2006).

In reviewing relationship-oriented leadership theory, Uhl-Bien (2006, p. 654-655) points out that, although relation-orientation is one of the two classic dimensions of leadership behaviour, ‘relational leadership’ is a relatively new term. Relational leadership approaches developed from the ‘entity perspective’, focusing on interpersonal relationships between individuals. An alternative, and less well known, approach is the relational or ‘multiple-realities’ approach, which adopts a constructionist perspective. The relational approach contends that social reality is constructed in the context of relationships. Both approaches constitute a notable shift in thinking about leadership and are worthy of further consideration.

Notable examples of relational theories are LMX (leader-member exchange) theory (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1982) and Hollander’s Relational theory (Hollander, 1978). LMX theory is concerned with the outcome of the leadership process affected by the quality of relationship between leader and followers, with all parties enjoying benefits when the relationships or partnerships are mature. Hollander’s Relational Theory (Hollander, 1978) argued that followers, who are also affected by what the leader does or does not do, share the journey and, during the exchanges or transactions, exert their own influence within the relationship. Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe (2005) conducted a relational study where six factors emerged and are highlighted in order of importance:
1. Valuing individuals - concern for development and well-being of others;
2. Networking and achieving - inspirational communicator, networker, achiever;
3. Enabling – empowers, delegates, develops potential;
4. Acting with integrity - integrity, consistency, honest and open;
5. Being accessible – accessible, approachable, in-touch; and

Uhl-Bien (2006) argues that most relational theories focus on reality at an individual level, and that this realist ontology perpetuates individually oriented perspectives of leadership that have focused largely on leader-follower dyads. Some theories, however, have adopted the constructivist ontology, examining processes involved in leading and following as emergent and fluid. This perspective outlines communication between parties, rather than individuals, as its unit of analysis (Uhl-Bien, 2006). Here the main focus is on communication facilitating relationships, rather than on leader attributes or behaviours. The relational framework, from which the present research aims to develop theory, includes:

1. Adopting the view that leadership is not limited to hierarchical position or role;
2. Viewing leadership relationships as emergent, and connected with processes that contribute to action and social order;
3. Taking a collective, whole-systems, and socially constructed view of leadership; and finally,
4. Taking much closer account of the context in which leadership relationships occur.

The present study advocates for viewing leadership as an emergent process that might be distributed collectively between individuals within an entity and understood as an output linked to process, rather than the current leader-follower ontological premise that reflects leadership as an input-process dynamic (Drath et al., 2008).
2.5.5 Summary

In conclusion, the main finding from a review of the leadership literature is that none of the successive approaches and paradigms, each building on prior research and changing focus to overcome extant limitations, satisfactorily explains leadership and that there are still notable gaps in our understanding. Focusing on a leader-centric perspective has constrained our framing and understanding of this complex and ever changing phenomenon. This research calls for a fresh perspective to the problem. Leadership research should not be constrained by the current leader-follower ontological premise that reflects leadership as an input-process dynamic (Drath et al., 2008) but should rather be seen as an emergent process that might be distributed collectively between individuals within an entity and understood as an output linked to process. An individual-centric perspective is a fresh approach offering the opportunity to bear fruitful new meanings to an elusive and complex phenomenon. Followers and followership are the next major consideration in the leadership equation and discussions on these topics are offered below.

2.6 Perspectives on followership

A study of followers, followership, collaborators, and even collaborator-ship, indicates the ‘initiative to look finally at the enigmatic masses that sit in the dark shadows of organizations’ (Adair 2008, p. 139). In examining followership, definitions of the term ‘follower’ are discussed below, followed by a reflection on the difference between the terms follower and subordinate. There is brief consideration of how the follower and leader roles are seen in relation to each other, and then a more in-depth account of the follower role. This section ends with the assertion that, in some cases in theory and in practice, behaviours have been labelled as follower behaviours when they may have been attributed just as correctly as leadership. Designated followers have therefore been exercising influence (leadership) all along. However, this has not been recognised due to the fact that the focus has been mainly on the sole leader (Meindl et al., 1985).
2.7 Conceptualisation and definition of followers

Preoccupation with leadership has resulted in insufficient attention being afforded to designated followers and followership and leader-follower interrelationships (Adair, 2008; Bligh, 2011). In just a short space of time, the number of researchers and commentators in the field of followership has rapidly expanded; and, along with this growth, has come a growing variety of definitions. A number of emerging themes are highlighted below:

1. Followership as a role
2. Followership as a relationship
3. Followership as a complement to leadership
4. Followership focussed on a common purpose
5. Followership requiring obedience and/or support to a leader

Carsten et al., (2010, p. 559) defines followership as:

A role in relation to a leader that is conceived of differently by followers and is dependent on contextual variables, such as leadership style and organizational climate.

This well regarded view concurs with the concept of followership being upward leadership.

2.7.1 Followers and leaders

In a leader-centric world, followership is often seen as being less attractive than leadership (Kellerman, 2008). Chaleff (1995, 2003) comments that many experience visceral discomfort with the term follower, and often language associated with followers and followership conveys a sense of subservience, compliance and even weakness on the part of the follower. Brown and Thornborrow (1996, p. 5) argue that the term follower is associated with ‘unfavourable images of passive, low status underlings, unable or unwilling to assume responsibility and unlikely to achieve
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anything significant’. Dixon and Westbrook (2003) point out that managers who do not understand followership often adopt a transactional style that devalues the contribution of followers. Offermann (2004, p. 55) cautions leaders that they might be susceptible to follower influence and advises leaders that, ‘a good set of values, some trusted friends, and a little paranoia can prevent them from being led astray’. Although it recognises that designated followers do have influence, this view equates ‘follower influence with a strain of influenza and is to be avoided’, and thus it retains negative connotations.

A key idea, neglected as a result of the leader-centric view of leadership, is the essential role that followers play in influencing leadership outcomes. Follower behaviour plays a major part in determining how effective a leader may be judged as being (Bedeian & Day, 2004). Followers also add legitimacy to the leader role, according to Antonakis (2006); a sentiment echoed by Corrigan (2013) in his review of distributed leadership. Meindl (1995) proposes that leadership should be considered a notion constructed by followers to help them make sense of their organizational experiences, emphasising an alternative follower-centric view of leadership.

Uhl-Bien and Pillai (2007) argue that a potential consequence of the romance of leadership is the effect on followership, in which the contributions of followers are diminished when organizational performance is attributed to the leader. This devaluation of followers results in what Uhl-Bien and Pillai (2007) call the subordination of followership, a corollary to the romance of leadership. Their proposition would suggest that individuals identify prototypical behaviours of followers and self-identify as prototypical followers. Followership schemas develop through socialization and past experiences with both leaders and other followers, and are invoked when followers interact with leaders and/or followers, suggesting that social identification within a group influences the follower’s self-concepts. Their work lays the foundation for exploring the nature of followership from the framework of the self-concept, identity theory, and social identity.
Carsten et al., (2010) made significant attempts to understand how individuals socially construct their roles as followers. The purpose of their study was to give a voice to followers, allow them to define what it means to be a follower, and from their understanding develop a more accurate and clearer definition of followership than those offered in the literature. Their argument is that a more truthful understanding of followership is possible when the follower’s perspective is taken.

Vondey (2012) looked at how followers understand what it means to follow, adopting the framework of the self-concept, identity theory, and social identity. The results show that around half the participants held a follower self-concept. In addition, the follower self-concept was distinguishable at the individual, relational, and collective levels. The study also provides the most current definition of followership from a follower’s perspective. Followership is outlined as a relationship, and is defined by Vondey (2012, p. 146) as ‘the duty of a person to a leader and to members of a group to perform his or her role so as to benefit the group and to achieve the common purpose.’

2.7.2 Follower or subordinate

In the present research, a distinction is made between leadership and management; and, consequently, subordinate and follower are also regarded as different roles. The term subordinate denotes a formal line (reporting) relationship between an individual and a superior (Bedeian & Day, 2004). Subordinates and managers might be thought of as being conceptually on opposing sides of the same coin. In the leader-follower relationship there is no formal reporting relationship. Followers have freedom to choose their actions, while subordinates, in a formal relationship with a superior, follow orders to gain rewards, avoid punishment, or execute contractual expectations (Baker, 2007). Adair (2008, p. 139) uses a coin analogy, adding that researchers ‘have stared so long and hard at the leadership side that most have no idea what sits on the other side of that coin’.

For the purposes of the present study, only research that uses the term ‘follower’ was examined. However, as a consequence of the interchangeable use of the terms
subordinate and follower in the literature, much of the research into followers is in fact research on subordinates rather than on followers or followership. This issue highlights that researchers who use the term follower or subordinate either implicitly or expressly recognise that power in the relationship does not reside exclusively with the leader/manager. Arguably, this represents an acknowledgement of the potential fluidity of roles: shifting between leader and manager and subordinate and follower, respectively (Dixon & Westbrook, 2003).

2.8 The role of followers

Baker (2007) argues that conceptualising leadership and followership as roles that individuals can fulfil, rather than as permanent dispositions, will help advance the understanding of followers. Thinking in this way means that individuals might at some time be leaders yet at other times be followers. It also means that the breadth of the follower role should be explored from the individual follower perspective rather than from a leader-centric perspective.

2.8.1 Influence of followers

The act of following simultaneously attributes the act of leading to the person who is being followed. A key question that arises at this point is, ‘Why do people choose to follow?’ Barbuto (2000) proposes that, in the context of leader-follower relationships, follower compliance could be attributed to one of ten influence triggers, grouped into three categories, namely: (1) power-derived, (2) relations-derived, and (3) values-derived influences. Influence triggers are the follower’s perception of, and response to, the leader’s attempt to influence and do not necessarily reflect the leader’s intent. While providing a useful perspective on non-leader perspectives of influence, these findings are probably more relevant to manager-subordinate than leader-follower relationships.

Valikangas and Okumura (1997), adopting a follower-centric perspective while updating earlier work by Kelman (1961), propose that followers choose to follow for any of three reasons: (1) utility, (2) identity, and (3) values. Utility involves the
follower believing there will be gratification or rewards/avoidance of punishment through following the leader. Identity relates self-image and to associating with a leader or social group; while values refers to following someone whose leadership behaviour is congruent with their own values. Although often there might be some utility, and even identity, they are motivated by perceived congruence of values. Another closely related reason for following is often explained by reason of follower mindset and follower type.

2.8.2 Follower mindsets and follower types

Kets de Vries (2001) calls for an examination of follower mindsets, expectations, and the power dynamics between them and the leader, when considering leadership. This matrix divides the ‘power of the leader’ and ‘power of the follower’ to drive four categories: (1) Drifting (low power of leader, low power of follower); (2) Strong guidance (high power of leader, low power of follower); (3) Self-managed teams (low power of leader, high power of follower); and (4) Balance (high power of leader, high power of follower). Balance implies a high influence position for both leader and follower.

Kelley (1988) developed a construct using two dimensions, ‘active versus passive’, and ‘dependent/uncritical thinkers versus independent/critical thinkers’, to derive five follower types:

1. 'Sheep', who are passive and dependent uncritical thinkers;
2. 'Yes people' who are active but dependent and uncritical thinkers;
3. 'Alienated followers' who are critical independent thinkers but passive;
4. 'Survivors' who are only partially active / independent, critical thinkers;
5. 'Effective followers' who are active and independent critical thinkers.

The preceding discussion would suggest that followers be typecast as sheep rather than any of the other four other types (Kelley, 1988). In a more recent study, Kelley
(2008) outlined the reciprocal focus of followership and that great followers create great leaders and organisations.

2.8.3 Active or effective followers

Effective followers exhibit self-management, unselfish commitment to the organisation and others, develop their own potential, and are trustworthy and courageous (Kelley, 1988). Baker (2007) acknowledged, in a detailed study of the antecedents of the concept of active/effective followers, that Kelley (1988) and Chaleff (1995) have played a key role in advancing understanding of the topic. Brown and Thornborrow (1996, p. 7) note that this theory ‘has considerable face validity and intuitive plausibility’, and also highlight the inherent paradox associated with the effective follower category – that many of the characteristics of effective leaders are characteristics of effective followers. Similar inferences about the importance of follower influence/follower leadership behaviour apply to Chaleff’s (1995) courageous followers. Chaleff (1995) suggests that courageous followers operate on five dimensions: (1) they assume responsibility; (2) they commit to hard work and service; (3) they challenge the leader and group according to their sense of what is right; (4) they champion and support change; and (5), they leave when the behaviour of the leader becomes grossly incompatible with their own behaviour and they are unable to effect a change.

Alcorn (1992) found that cooperation, flexibility, integrity, initiative and problem solving were critical skills of dynamic followers. Dynamic followers are team members who assume greater responsibilities than determined by their job descriptions. This links closely with the ideas of Authentic Leadership Development (Avolio & Gardner, 2005), which embrace the notion that followers could act like leaders over time as a result of role modelling by the leader. If these followers are exercising leadership, then they are ‘leaders’ rather than merely acting like leaders.

Shamir (2007) identifies five roles that followers occupy, from passive to active, identifying followers as:
1. ‘Recipients of leadership’ – leader behaviour affects follower’s attitudes;
2. ‘Moderators of the leader’s influence’ – leader influence moderated by followers;
3. ‘Substitutes for leadership’ – followers have a more dominant role;
4. ‘Constructors of leadership’ – followers co-construct leadership; and
5. ‘Leaders’ – shared, distributed or disbursed leadership.

Howell and Mendez (2008) describe effective followers that fit the interactive role orientation as competent, collaborative, supportive, influential, and willing to participate in organizational transformation. On the other hand, they describe ineffective followers as those who go along with the leader in order to secure rewards or to protect themselves.

Kellerman (2008) created five follower types:
1. ‘Isolates’ – no level of engagement;
2. ‘Bystanders’ – low level of engagement;
3. ‘Participants’ – medium level of engagement;
4. ‘Activists’ – high level of engagement; and
5. ‘Diehards’ – very high level of engagement.

Kellerman (2008, p. 93) also suggests seeing things ‘from the bottom up’, as this can make a difference in how followers respond to leaders and vice versa.

Carsten et al., (2010) explore how followers construct their roles themselves. Their research reflected that how followers view themselves is just as important as how leaders view them. Characteristics of an effective follower were: team player; positive attitude; initiating behaviour; expressing opinion; flexibility / openness; obedience / deference; responsible / dependable; taking ownership; mission conscience; integrity. These could also be argued to be leadership characteristics, and that followers have been exercising leadership without formal acknowledgement.
2.9 **Followers are co-producers of leadership**

The idea of mutual responsibility for what happens between leaders and followers was expanded further by Shamir (2007), who asserted that followers are co-producers of leadership, in which the follower is actively involved in a relationship that is jointly influenced by both the leader’s and the follower’s characteristics and behaviours. This is an additional argument that followers have been exercising leadership, and subsequently followers and leaders have been switching roles.

2.10 **A follower-centric approach**

Kohles et al., (2012) put forward a view that leader-follower communication regarding the vision integration process is crucial. A more follower-centric conceptualization of vision is offered that underscores significant commitment, job satisfaction, and supervisory ratings of performance. In a review of followership and follower-centric approaches, Bligh (2011, p. 431) calls for additional research, under Future Directions, into proactive followership with a focus on ‘the role of context in understanding leader-follower processes’ and thereby answering the questions ‘how do courageous followers act as leaders themselves?’ and ‘can followers empower one another to step up and take leadership responsibility?’

2.11 **Research on follower’s self-concept**

Lord et al., (1999) argue that followers’ self-concepts determine follower behaviour and reaction to leaders. They propose that leaders can influence followers’ self-concepts by changing the way followers view themselves, and that followers’ self-schemas can influence their perception of leaders, which can, in turn, impact leader behaviour. The purpose of van Knippenberg et al.,’s (2004) study was to review the research on the role of follower self-concept in leadership effectiveness and to offer an agenda for further research. After providing a brief introduction to the literature on self and identity, van Knippenberg et al., (2004) present a framework for reviewing the self-concept/leadership effectiveness literature. They show that the
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self-concept has been construed as both a mediator and moderator in the relationship between leadership and follower behaviour. The research of van Knippenberg et al., (2004) on follower self-concept as a mediator of the leader–follower relationship focuses mainly on the aspects of self-identification and self-efficacy, distinguishing between social identification, or collective self-construal, and personal identification, or relational self-construal. They also note that few studies have considered leadership’s relationship to relational self-construal.

Collinson (2006) outlines the potential value of post-structuralist theories for the study of followership and follower identities, presenting an alternative way of conceiving identity and power, and examining a wide repertoire of follower selves, exploring in particular the workplace enactment of conformist, resistant and dramaturgical identities.

Lord (2008) suggests that self-identity is associated with an individual’s ability to take leadership. Likewise, it has been argued that followers are increasingly demonstrating and being expected to demonstrate independent or self-leadership roles without regular direction from their leaders (Lord, 2008), especially amongst professional and highly trained service workers (Howell & Mendez, 2008).

Howell and Mendez (2008) offer three perspectives on followership, in which they consider how an individual’s role orientation impacts the leader–follower relationship. The definition of role-orientation is based on the way individuals perceive their duties and responsibilities. Suggesting that followers’ self-concepts, along with leader expectations and organizational factors, influence how followers view their role, they proposed three types of active roles:

1. ‘Independent’ – act more independently than their leaders,
2. ‘Interactive’ – followership as an interactive role complementing leadership, and
3. ‘Shifting’ – reflects need to alternate between leadership and followership.

Their goal was to provide a framework for understanding the active role that followers play in order to decrease conflict in the leader-follower relationship and
thereby increase organizational effectiveness. This provides further argument of the influence of followers and how they exercise influence.

2.12 The shifting role of the follower

The shifting role of the follower is particularly salient in teams where the leader and follower roles are dynamic and flexible. Howell and Mendez (2008) affirm that members of a team must engage in both followership and leadership behaviours simultaneously to be effective. Positive behaviors consistent with this role orientation include monitoring the environment to identify needed changes, active decision making, accepting responsibility for goal achievement, role modeling team member prototypes, and maintaining rich communication among team members. This supports the argument that followers can and do exercise leadership.

Howell and Mendez (2008) note that one negative side to the shifting role orientation is when group pressure diminishes critical thinking, resulting in groupthink. The collective self-concept influences the shifting follower role due to the strong identification of the individual with the group. Instead of leader expectations, team expectations are reflected in the norms and objectives established by the group. Furthermore, a turbulent environment and an organization’s heavy reliance on teams are contextual factors that could encourage followers to adopt a shifting role orientation.

2.13 Fairhurst and Uhl-Bien's relational (discursive) approach

Fairhurst and Uhl-Bien (2012, p. 1024) offer a discursive approach to leadership that positions followers as ‘actors’ who ‘engage, interact and negotiate’ with leaders to influence organizational understandings and produce outcomes. Leadership is viewed as a ‘relational process co-created by leaders and followers in context’ (Fairhurst & Uhl-Bien, 2012, p. 1025). Those taking discursive approaches study this process by examining the micro-dynamics of communication in interpersonal interactions. They look for co-construction by examining, for example, sequential patterns of control among leadership actors (i.e. acts of leading and following), influential acts of
organizing (e.g. influence attempts and responses), and the ‘language games’ played by those acting in leader and follower roles (e.g. how individuals position themselves to one another and how patterned redundancies get institutionalized into roles, identities and systems (cf. DeRue & Ashford, 2010).

While Fairhurst and Uhl-Bien (2012) do not privilege followership in their discussion, the critical role of following is implicit in this process. Followership and leadership can be seen in how individuals act and respond in relational control moves, in mobilizing moves, and in language games (e.g. in acts of claiming and granting (DeRue & Ashford, 2010), to see if they are constructing or not constructing leadership (Larsson & Lundholm, 2013).

### 2.14 A new conceptualisation of followers

Followers are the largest constituent part of teams, yet their role and contribution relating to team influence has been overlooked or ignored by researchers until recently. The scarcity of extant research delivers rich and abundant opportunities for the present research, and raises a number of fruitful questions, such as: (1) When members do change roles, from following to leading or leading to following, how might that occur? (2) Just how do effective or courageous followers come to exercise leadership? (3) How do followers step up to assume the leadership role? (4) How does the switching process work between leading and following? These are vitally important questions in exploring distributed leadership; and the present research offers needed answers to these questions. As leaders and followers mostly interact in the context of teams, understanding team context is crucial, and is discussed in the next section.

### 2.15 Perspectives on context: Leadership in a team

The third element of the leadership equation is context. Context is so important that Osborn et al., (2002, p. 797) comment, ‘change the context and leadership changes’. Small groups or teams provide the context for a substantial portion of human interaction (McGrath et al., 2000). When examining leadership in teams, it makes
sense to explore issues relating to teams and teamwork (Day et al., 2004). Autonomous decision-making teams are the context for the present research, and constitute the first part of the discussion in this section. Team roles and processes are then discussed in the context of the present research. Finally, the role of emergent leadership is explored to show many non-designated leaders (followers) exercise leadership. Emergent leadership research has largely focused on leader-follower dyadic relationships (Yukl, 1999), where the individual leader (Berdahl, 1996) was formally appointed (Baruch, 1998). Only recently have researchers begun to investigate the role and behaviours of emergent leaders (Pescosolido, 2002); and the concept of emergent leadership is ripe for closer research scrutiny.

2.16 A team context for team leadership

Context plays an important role in determining leader behaviour and outcomes (Antonakis, 2006). Mowday and Sutton (1993) and Dvir and Shamir (2003) assert that context exerts influence on individuals, and that context itself is a consequence of individual or group behaviour. Context includes situational influences that are not all simply accessories of leadership but powerful constituents that help shape and define it (Spillane, 2004; Carsten et al., 2010). Teams are being used more than ever before (Callanan, 2004; Rico & Tabernero, 2011), and they are an important part of organizational activities (Yukl, 2012). Meindl (2004, p. 463) describes this as the ‘glory days of the ideology of teams’.

2.16.1 What is a team / group?

A team is a particular type of group (Allen & Hecht, 2004). Salas et al., (2000) define three features distinguishing teams from groups:

1. Team member interdependence
2. Communication (information exchange)
3. Finite lifespan
Teams generally comprise members whose skills are complementary and who pursue a shared purpose for which they accept mutual accountability (Katzenbach & Smith, 2003). Teams are more likely to be effective if five conditions (Hackman, 2004; Burke et al., 2011) are fulfilled:

1. They should be real teams (rather than a happenstance collection of individuals), clearly linked, having stable membership over time, and with members operating interdependently;
2. Teams need a clear purpose, where the focus of efforts is on ends, rather than the means of achieving them;
3. Team structure – composition, task, and norms – should facilitate rather than obstruct teamwork;
4. Members should have ready access to resources and support through the social system context;
5. Teams ought to have access to team coaching to overcome obstacles and exploit opportunities.

Groups that meet these conditions would be redefined as teams.

2.16.2 Team roles and team processes

Researchers have recently adopted a more complex systems view of teams (Illgen et al., 2005). Illgen et al., (2005, p. 18) describes teams as ‘complex open systems with fuzzy boundaries that are comprised of smaller embedded systems (members)’. These in turn form part of the larger system of the organization (McGrath et al., 2000; Marrone, 2010). The main aim of teams is that members will operate more effectively as a collective than each individual operating independently. It follows that team roles and team processes are essential in ensuring that teams are effective (Marks et al., 2001; Salas et al., 2008).
2.16.3 Team roles

Individual behaviors that are organized and associated with a position in a team are known collectively as ‘roles’ (Mintzberg, 1975; Salas et al., 2005). Almost all leadership theories incorporate the concept of roles (Bass, 1990). The key elements of a team role are:

1. A role is socially oriented rather than personality oriented;
2. Occupiers are expected to behave in a particular manner; and
3. A role is enduring.

A team role (Sieber, 1974, p. 569) is defined as ‘a pattern of expectations which apply to a particular social position and which normally persist independently of the personalities occupying the position.’ It is necessary to understand that it is possible for multiple people to occupy a role, and that they may do so in a simultaneous manner (Hackman & Wageman, 2005). Furthermore, that role content can be fluid and changeable (Baker, 2007). Historically, the dualist perspective has prevailed, with the roles of leading and following seen as complementary (Baker, 2007). Antonakis (2011) points out that, by following, team members legitimize and influence leaders.

In contrasting research, Holmes (1980) identifies three team roles, each based on a distinct personality type:

1. Leaders engage in participating, organizing and motivating, and tend to be extraverted and impulsive;
2. Followers offer ideas and promote group cohesiveness, and are less extraverted and more reflective, conservative and pragmatic;
3. Isolates contribute little to group task or relations, and either withdraw or antagonize the group. Isolates are largely introverted, with a strong sense of independence.
A valuable insight from Holmes (1980) is the notion that not all team members contribute all of the time. The role of ‘isolate’ is a third social role, in which the detached team members are neither leading nor following. It follows that there are three possible primary roles assigned on the basis of member contribution. In addition, there is the recent view that leaders and followers can change roles. Roles are dynamic (Antonakis, 2006), unlike personality (Holmes, 1980), and leaders and followers change roles when the direction of influence changes. Adair (2008) argues that team members often occupy more than one role, with leaders becoming followers and followers becoming leaders. This notion differs profoundly from the notion of an individual leader held in most leadership research.

2.16.4 Team processes

As leadership is a ‘process of social influence’ (Parry, 2008; Yukl, 2012), it follows that team processes are very important in understanding the key elements of leadership. Team processes contribute to team effectiveness (Zaccaro et al., 2001; Marrone, 2010). Team processes (Marks et al., 2001, p 357) are defined as:

Members' interdependent acts that convert inputs to outcomes through cognitive, verbal, and behavioral activities directed toward organizing task-work to achieve collective goals.

Team processes, according to Hackman (2004), are responsible for: (1) maintaining the social components of the team, and (2) directing, aligning and monitoring the task-work of the team. Table 2.3 outlines team processes discovered by Stevens and Campion (1994) and Sheard & Kakabadse (2002), in their respective studies. While some of the terms may differ, many of the fundamental elements are quite similar, and some virtually identical.
Table 2.3  Team processes
(Stevens & Campion, 1994; Sheard & Kakabadse, 2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team Processes</th>
<th>Team Processes</th>
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<tr>
<td>(Stevens &amp; Campion, 1994)</td>
<td>(Sheard &amp; Kakabadse, 2002)</td>
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<td>1. Conflict resolution</td>
<td>1. Goal definition</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Collaborative problem solving</td>
<td>2. Allocating</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Communicating</td>
<td>3. Leading</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Managing performance</td>
<td>5. Focus on task</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Planning and coordinating</td>
<td>6. Resources</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7. Personal Contribution</td>
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2.17  Approaches to team process

Much of the empirical research on teams over the past few decades has been heavily influenced by a classic systems approach. In a linear conceptualization, Inputs (I) give rise to Processes (P), which in turn generate particular Outputs (O) (Illgen et al., 2005). However, Illgen et al., (2005) note that the I-P-O (Inputs-Process-Outputs) model is limited for a number of reasons, including:

1. That teams are complex rather than simple systems, and do not follow a simple linear path from inputs through to outputs;
2. That many of the elements previously considered team processes are instead mediating factors (e.g. emergent cognitive or affective states);
3. That there is an inability to account for interactivity between combinations of inputs, processes, and emergent states.

Illgen et al., (2005) suggest an updated Input-Mediator-Output-Input (IMOI) model. This model substitutes Mediators for Processes, acknowledging that a broader range of influencers act on and in the team system. This includes a second ‘I’ representing a feedback loop that allows emergent influences to impact on the system. Removal of the dash between each letter represents an acceptance of non-linearity in the system.
2.17.1 Team processes and process interdependence

Team members usually undertake various functions within the team, often in an interdependent manner, to achieve team objectives (Allen & Hecht, 2004). This results in either a ‘process gain’ or ‘process loss’ (Hackman & Wageman, 2005, p. 25). Not all teams are successful or meet expectations, with the key reason for under-performance being that less effective teams suffer from process losses (Hackman & Wageman, 2005). Salas et al., (2005) outlines a number of reasons for team failure:

1. Poor planning
2. Lack of sponsor support
3. Breakdown of team processes
4. Process failure from poor communication or coordination

Day et al., (2004, p. 863) suggest that, despite much research attention, teamwork remains ‘a dynamic and elusive phenomenon’. The present research aims to explore and provide insights into the dynamic and elusive phenomenon of distributed leadership in business teams.

2.17.2 Teamwork processes and team effectiveness

Salas et al., (2005, p. 76) identify five core components, dubbed ‘the big five’, that contribute to team effectiveness. These are:

1. ‘Team leadership’ - directing and coordinating member activities, assessing performance, assigning tasks, developing member capabilities, and fostering a positive environment;
2. ‘Mutual performance monitoring’ - accurately monitoring member performance based on common understanding;
3. ‘Backup behaviour’ - anticipation of member needs through understanding of everyone's responsibilities, and shifting workload if required;
4. ‘Adaptability’ - capacity to redirect team activities and resources in response to changing conditions; and

5. ‘Team orientation’ - primacy of team goals, and inclination to consider members’ behaviour during team interaction.

Salas et al., (2005, p. 562) make the point that:

Teams do more than simply interact with tools, and don't only engage in task-work. Coordination and a capacity to interact collaboratively are required to develop a common understanding of team objectives, team resources and constraints.

Salas et al., (2005, p. 565) highlight that support and coordination mechanisms are necessary to hold together the different factors, including ‘shared mental models’, ‘mutual trust’, and ‘closed loop communications’.

2.18 Team leadership

A team leader’s basic tasks are to secure sound conditions for performance and then assist members in delivering their best possible outputs (Hackman & Wageman, 2005). Despite its strong association with team effectiveness (Salas et al., 2005), Staniforth and West (1995, p. 28) note that ‘surprisingly little has been written about leadership in the particular context of teams’. Avolio and Gardner (2005, p. 317) also comment on the lack of attention to processes associated with leadership, observing that ‘most leadership theories have been originated without a focus on the essential core processes that result in the development of leadership’. Most leadership research has focused on formal or designated leaders, with little research being conducted into processes that lead to informal leadership (Belbin, 1981). Even when there is a designated leader, it is possible for an informal or non-designated leader is able to exercise influence. Limited research in the area of leader emergence would suggest that this is a worthwhile avenue for the present study. Recognizing that individual designated followers influence the social process of leadership will further our understanding of the phenomenon.
2.18.1 Leadership as a systems input

A contemporary view of leadership is as a process, rather than as an individual (Wood, 2005). Concepts of leadership and teams are closely connected, and it is no surprise that the Input-Process-Output (I-P-O) model of teams (Illgen et al., 2005) has also influenced research into leadership behavior. The I-P-O model considers leadership as one of the Inputs into the team system. Leader behaviours contribute to team processes and to team outputs (Fleishman et al., 1991), and leaders need to ensure that all the functions (system inputs) that facilitate task completion and team maintenance occur in order to be successful.

2.18.2 Leadership as both a systems input and an output

Team members often impact on leadership style (Illgen et al., 2005), and Day et al., (2004) argue that leadership behaviour should not only be viewed as an input but also an outcome. Komaki & Minnich (2002), along with Morgeson et al., (2010), highlight the complex and temporal nature of leadership tasks (inputs). The present research highlights that both the amount and type of leadership behaviours required vary notably over time, depending on the situation. The Input-Mediating-Input-Output (IMIO) model (Illgen et al., 2005) facilitates the adoption of a more complex view of leadership behaviour by individual leaders. This includes providing an explanation of how leader behaviour might change over time in response to the influence of other team members and changing conditions. Feedback from various system components plays a substantial role in facilitating adapted behaviour (future inputs and outputs).

2.18.3 Leadership as a social property of the collective

The Ohio Studies propose an alternative view that leadership might also be viewed as a property of social groups (Fleishman et al., 1991; Platow et al., 2015). Yukl (1999, p. 40) suggests that, in addition to the heroic perspective of the sole leader who influences followers, it is possible that leadership is, instead, a more collective
process: ‘Different people may perform a particular leadership function at different times, and different functions may be performed by different people’. By implication, people who lead will sometimes follow. Pearce (2004, p. 48) reflects on evidence from teams in a variety of industries where all members in the team ‘are not hesitant to influence and guide’ other team members, as needed, to achieve maximum potential.

Zaccaro and Klimoski (2002, p. 5) point out that a lack of research into team leadership has resulted in little being known about ‘about how leaders create and direct team processes to achieve collective success’. Yukl (1999, p. 40) notes, with regret, that although increasingly important, ‘few researchers seem interested in studying shared leadership processes in groups and organizations’. Hambley et al., (2006) posit that both leadership style and conflict management mode have strong influences on learning performance. They also elucidate the interaction between leadership style and conflict management mode. The present research will explore how leadership is shared and how team processes are facilitated in order to be successful.

2.19 Autonomous work teams

Autonomous teams are formally organized teams that are given responsibility and authority beyond that traditionally experienced by team members (Hackman & Walton, 1986; Stewart & Manz, 1995). Such teams have high autonomy and control over their tasks (Hackman & Walton, 1986; Manz & Sims, 1986), including the ability to control their work methods, schedules, meetings and task assignments, and to solve complex work and interpersonal problems (Manz & Sims, 1993). Stewart and Manz (1995) outline the use autonomous teams to solve complex problems and to improve, amongst other things, productivity, quality, cost savings, and employee morale, and to decrease absenteeism and turnover. The use of autonomous teams in a contemporary environment is a now a well-established norm (Yukl, 2014); and these teams are formed with the broad aim of continually increasing employee involvement with the aim of collaborative success (Parry et al., 2014).
2.19.1 Leadership in autonomous work teams

Barker (1993) notes that there is always a shared responsibility in autonomous teams, and that there are many varied roles that individual team members need to fulfill (Seers, 1989). Any member of an autonomous team can be called upon to provide leadership on a specific task. Typically, the person with the most appropriate knowledge, skills, abilities, and traits for a specific task provides leadership on that task (Pescosolido, 2002).

Leadership in autonomous teams refers to ‘guidance and direction provided to a team by someone functioning in a role constituting formal authority to influence the team’ (Stewart & Manz, 1995, p. 751). Bower and Parry (2014) argue that leadership is necessary for self-managing groups to perform at high levels, with some self-managing groups being unwilling to function without some form of leadership. Leadership is emergent in nature and dependent on context. Parry et al., (2014) argue that more research needs to take place to understand how this holistic form of leadership occurs. The present research seeks to answer the call by Parry et al., (2014); key questions are how the process of leadership works and how team members become leaders.

2.20 Emergent leadership

Hollander and Julian (1969, p. 389) observe that ‘comparatively little attention is directed to followers, especially in terms of the phenomenon of emergent leadership’. There is a clear distinction between formal and informal leadership (Baruch, 1998; Bedeian & Hunt, 2006), with informal leadership often referred to as emergent leadership (Gronn, 2002). Being appointed itself does not confer leader status (Gronn, 2011), but when an appointed leader does actually exercise some leadership behaviours, they would qualify as both a leader and an appointee (Hackman, 2004). Formally appointed leaders could ‘benefit from being informal leaders as well’ by drawing on informal sources of power such as referent or expert power, in addition to their formally bestowed positional power (Balkundi & Harrison 2006, p. 56). Emergent leadership can be explored from an individualist perspective (Bedeian &
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Hunt, 2006) or an alternative approach where leaders are ‘emergent phenomena within leaderful situations’ (Wood 2005, p. 1103). Emergent leadership could also be viewed as a socially constructed phenomenon occurring when group members ‘interpret their relationship as having a leadership-followership dimension’ (Meindl 1995, p. 332). Meindl (1995, p. 332) highlights that this social construction of leadership differs from ‘formal positions of leadership’.

2.20.1 Single versus multiple leaders

Despite the definition of emergent leadership encompassing the notion of more than one leader, research into leader emergence has focused largely on single team leaders (Berdahl, 1996). This focus on single leaders is a limiting factor in leadership research (Misiolek, 2005). Under the individual leader perspective (Day et al., 2004), emergent leadership is associated with notions of hierarchy, competition and elimination (Grint, 2011). Team members compete metaphorically, in knock-out style, until the one who becomes ‘the leader’ is left standing. These conditions (Mehra et al., 2006) suggest the possibility of conflict for leadership tearing the group apart. Inherent in this conceptualization of leadership is a higher level of status ascribed to the leader role than to those of other group members (Berdahl, 1996).

2.20.2 Focus of extant emergent leadership research

Research into emergent leaders and emergent leadership has examined conditions contributing to leader emergence, and also the effects of emergent leader behaviour on outputs of groups (Pescosolido, 2002; Denis et al., 2011). Kickul and Neuman (2000) explored elements of the teamwork taxonomy of Stevens and Campion (1994), seeking particularly to identify abilities and personalities that account for effective teamwork and also emergent leadership. The research found that ‘cognitive ability’, ‘openness to experience’, and ‘extraversion’ were the best differentiators of leaders and followers, and predicted emergent leadership. However, personality factors rather than cognitive ability accounted for much of the variance in the key skills and abilities (KSAs) of teamwork. This research seems to indicate that leaders
might engage in behaviours that mitigate personality differences present in the team according to changing context. Erez et al., (2002) state that emergent leadership has a number of drawbacks, including:

1. Members transferring responsibilities they should carry to the emergent leader;
2. The emergent leader feeling there is a diminished level of responsibility because there is no formal appointment, and thus no formal accountability; and
3. Potentially reduced effort from all members.

They propose an alternative of rotated leadership as a viable option for team structuring; but the research findings were only limited to small groups with limited team processes. Even though leadership might be one of the classic functions of management, the appointment to the position of manager does not, and cannot, confer the status of leader on the individual. Sorrentino et al., (1975) found that quantity of communication affected attribution of leadership in teams performing single tasks; however, the quality of communications became a key factor in teams whose lifespan was greater than one-off tasks. Mullen et al., (1989) suggest that quantity and quality of communications are both factors in determining leader emergence.

In another study highlighting the role of communication in leader emergence, Sudweeks and Simoff (2005) explored emergent leadership online. They found that, in both synchronous and asynchronous environments, several individuals emerged as leaders in addition to the appointed leaders. Emergent leaders were found to have participated the most in terms of content and volume of communication. In the case of temporary project teams with all team members having a similar rank and/or without a formal leader (Day et al., 2004), the traditional perspective posits that one or two individuals might emerge as leaders; but Day et al., (2004) suggest instead that leadership might be shared or distributed by all team members. It is possible for some groups (Day, 2011; Bower, 2014) to have a centralized influence (one leader), as well as for others to have a more decentralized approach (distributed leadership).

It can be held that a number of themes are observable from the literature:
1. Particular types of team contribution (context related) determine who exercises leadership (Pescosolido, 2002; Malakyan, 2015);

2. Communicating (in the form of behaviors and actions) is important as to how leadership emerges (Mullen et al., 1989; Yukl, 2012);

3. That, in many cases, more than one member in a team is capable of exercising leadership (Day et al., 2004; Burke et al., 2011);

4. Furthermore, even where leaders are appointed, non-appointed leaders emerge (Day et al., 2004; Bligh, 2011).

Conceptualizing the possibility that more than one person in a team might exercise leadership constitutes a profound paradigm shift away from that of an individual leader.

2.21 Leadership in a team context

The increasing importance of teams in the workplace, coupled with the ubiquity of teams and groups in wider society, provides strong grounds for research efforts that will contribute to a better understanding of how teams function (McGrath et al., 2000). Team leadership is among many topics that might further that end, particularly since studies of dyads have largely neglected the reality that leaders and followers are members of a larger team (Pescosolido, 2002). Historically, research into teams has been dominated by the positivist paradigm. Until recently, key questions relating to team effectiveness have remained incompletely answered. The recently proposed IMIO model of teams signals a new understanding of teams and team context, viewing both as being more dynamic and subject to emergent influences created by the team itself.

Manz and Sims (1987) also advocate that autonomous teams promote self-management and responsible autonomy in the workplace, and explore the advantages of self-management over traditional hierarchies (Manz & Sims, 1993). In relation to leadership, the symbiotic relationship between team research and leadership research has seen a hero or individual leader view of leadership dominate; yet, although a
scarcely-explored idea almost a half-century ago, there is growing interest in the idea of leadership being in some way a collective function of teams. The source of leadership has consistently emerged as a theme in each of the three elements of the leadership equation, and warrants closer examination.

2.22 The value of an alternative paradigm of leadership

After having examined the three key components of the leadership equation, it is apparent that researchers have either intentionally or unintentionally allowed one of the components to predominate. Leadership research can be alternatively classified as follows: (1) leader-centric; (2) team-centric or (3) individual-centric.

Leader-centric theories concentrate on leadership by the leader-individual. Team-centric theories focus on leadership shared by the collective that constitutes the team or organizational unit. Designated followers provide the final perspective. An individual-centric perspective focuses on how these individuals exercise influence and hence leadership. To date, neither a leader-centric nor a team-centric approach has provided a satisfactory account of leadership. The one entity in the leadership formula that remains largely unexamined is the individual, mostly referred to as the follower. Theories advocating the distribution of leadership functions amongst individuals are now emerging (Hunt, 2005), and gaining adherents (Yukl, 2012). Distributed leadership is an individual-centric view of leadership that recognizes that multiple individuals in a team exercise leadership and understood as an output linked to process, rather than the current leader-follower ontological premise that reflects leadership as an input-process dynamic (Drath et al., 2008).

2.23 Perspectives on distributed leadership

In contrast to the sole-leader approach to leadership, Quinn (2004, p. 12) suggests that ‘leadership is a temporary condition, arising when an individual chooses to implement certain key skills.’ He asserts that thinking about leadership in this way amounts to ‘a radical redefinition’ of leadership, where everyone could be a leader, and recognized leaders (and others) are for most of the time not actually engaged in
leading. Such a distributed approach to leadership (Barry, 1991; Parry, 2008), which views leadership as a set of readily divisible functions (Tyson, 1998; Bolden, 2011), has the potential to provide new insights into the nature and exercise of leadership. This section will commence with a review of definitions of the concept of distributed leadership and a brief consideration of its development, for purposes of providing some positioning within the broader field of leadership. Thereafter, the properties and forms of distributed leadership are discussed. The section concludes with a consideration of implications of the current position of the field.

### 2.23.1 Definitions of distributed leadership

Leadership can be distributed among many members or concentrated in a few; the pattern of leadership is a distribution essentially describing the whole group. (Parry, 2014, p. 3)

As a result of the literature review, it was revealed that the initial notion of distributed leadership was outlined by French (1956) many years ago, but to date it has remained an undeveloped concept (Gronn, 2002). Definitional concerns, relating to the inconsistent use of the terms shared and distributed (Story, 2004), illustrate the types of issue typically raised in the early stages of a developing field, and confirm the need for further theoretical clarity (Yukl, 2012) and associated research. There is no single clear definition of what comprises distributed leadership (Harris & Spillane, 2008), and extant definitions are quite disparate (Bennett et al., 2003). The definition problem is further exacerbated by the multitude of definitions of leadership (Lashway, 2003). Terms such as distributed leadership and dispersed leadership (Nelson et al., 2006), and shared and distributed (Day et al., 2004), are often used interchangeably.

### 2.23.2 Distributed leadership involves multiple leaders

In its most simple form, distributed leadership means more than one leader (Day et al., 2004). This view represents a profound paradigm shift from the long and widely held individual leader perspective. Carson et al., (2007, p. 1218), who use the terms...
distributed and shared interchangeably, define shared leadership as ‘an emergent property resulting from the distribution of leadership influence across multiple team members’. Currie and Lockett (2011) outline the use of distributed leadership as a unit of analysis in the healthcare sector, drawing attention to the iterative relations between leadership, followership and context.

### 2.23.3 Distributed leadership is situational and episodic in nature

Pearce (2004, p. 48) suggests that distributed leadership involves continual mutual influencing by team members, ‘characterized by serial emergence of official as well as unofficial leaders’. Changes in leadership would most likely be frequent and continuous, responding to needs and circumstances. Rabey (2005, p. 215) suggests that leadership of this nature is ‘more situational and episodic’ than constant in nature. Notable examples are Reeves et al., (2008) in online gaming, and Boje et al., (2011) in virtual leadership.

### 2.23.4 Distributed leadership is capability (expertise) driven

Mintzberg (2006) proposes that distributed leadership implies a role that might be occupied by different people in a group, depending on their capabilities. He offers the development of internet-based Wikipedia and the computer operating system Linux as examples of distributed leadership in action. Yukl’s (2012) view of shared or distributed leadership practices as a set of particular leadership functions links with Mintzberg’s (2006) notion of capability playing a role in the distribution of leadership. The particular functions performed by different members at different times outlines the temporal consideration of roles.

Cope et al., (2011) outline the temporal dimension to the appropriateness of distributed leadership, in the context of the entrepreneurial business, by suggesting that the contextualization of distributed leadership may offer longevity to the maturing business. Overall, the leadership actions of all members combined is more important than any single leadership action; and, for the approach to be effective, there is a strong need for coordinated, complementary shared leadership activities.
This represents a fundamental shift in perspective from leader to leadership (Ulrich & Smallwood, 2007) – from personal qualities to methods or behaviours that achieve desired outcomes.

2.23.5 Distributed leadership at the nexus of leaders, followers and context

Spillane and Camburn (2006, p. 9) develop the concept of ‘distributed leadership to mean more than one leader’. They define distributed leadership practice as the ‘product of the interactions of leaders, followers, and their situations. Practice takes shape at the intersection of these three elements’. Interaction is a key dimension; with this view further endorsed by Fitzgerald and Ferlie (2012) in their exploration of links between leadership patterns and organizational outcomes.

2.23.6 Distributed leadership is about reciprocal influence

Definitions of distributed leadership from Elmore (2000) and Martinez et al., (2005), set in the context of schools, which provide the context for much of the early research in the field, present insights into how Yukl’s (2012) functions might be shared. Distributed leadership involves guiding and directing, terms implying reciprocal influencing not present in controlling, from multiple sources (Elmore, 2000). Distributed leadership follows ‘the contours of expertise in the organization, made coherent through a common culture’ (Martinez et al., 2005, p. 15).

A common task and shared values are the two essential elements of the context within which distributed leadership occurs. The work of Gronn (2002), according to Bennett et al., (2003, p. 15), provides ‘the most sophisticated attempt to develop a conceptual description of distributed leadership’. Gronn (2002, p. 428) views leadership as a voluntarily ascribed status, where such attribution might be to any one of a variety of ‘focal units’ of leadership, from a single individual, through increasing aggregations of individuals, to ‘larger plural-member organizational units’. Such attribution of influence may be experienced or ‘reputed, presumed or imagined’. Important concepts surfacing in this definition include attribution
(through experience or interpretation based on reputation, presumption, or imagination) rather than appointment, and a notion that leadership might reside within an aggregation of individuals rather than only in specific individuals.

2.23.7 Towards a convergence of views

A large variety of definitions of distributed leadership having emerged over recent time. The most common themes extracted are highlighted below:

1. Leadership being shared amongst people;
2. Leadership emerging through attribution;
3. Various leadership functions distributed according to personal capability;
4. The effect of context on who assumes leadership; and
5. The role of time.

These different perspectives on distributed leadership mirror the multitude and variety of views about leadership itself. Most definitions of leadership differ in form according to their context, but concur that leadership is about influence. Similarly, definitions of distributed leadership place an accent on different contextual aspects of the phenomenon, but all contain the principle that it involves more than one person exercising leadership.

Bennett et al., (2003, p. 7) offer their own definition of distributed leadership. They suggest that distributed leadership comprises three distinctive elements:

1. It is ‘an emergent property of a group or network of interacting individuals’;
2. Boundaries of leadership are open to allow a wider ‘net of leaders’ than the traditional sole-leader perspective;
3. Distributed leadership recognises that ‘expertise is distributed amongst the many, not the few’.
Of these three elements, it is the ‘concertive’ nature (Gronn, 2002) of this form of leadership that distinguishes it from other leadership perspectives (Bennett et al., 2003).

### 2.23.8 A definition of distributed leadership for this research

The definition of leadership adopted earlier, which encapsulates the commonly accepted view that leadership involves influencing, can be adapted to include the one commonly accepted notion that distributed leadership is being exercised by more than one person. For the purposes of the present research, distributed leadership is defined as ‘the intentional influencing of others that is exercised by multiple members, towards a common goal, through a range of influencing behaviours that emerge over time according to context and member capability’ (Parry, 2014). Shared leadership may imply distributed leadership, but not necessarily so. A single leader can share leadership by handing over to another single leader. Distributed leadership, on the other hand, implies that the leadership functions in the team are distributed in some form amongst at least some team members.

### 2.24 Development of distributed leadership

Despite the concept only recently receiving serious research attention, Timperley (2005, p. 418) points out that ‘leadership has always been distributed within organizations’, and expresses surprise at how long it has been overlooked. One reason may be that leadership has become more complex, because the social context in which it is exercised has become more complex (Osborn et al., 2002; Rabey, 2005); and that there is greater awareness that more people need to be involved in leadership (Harris & Spillane, 2008). The changing nature of work in knowledge economies includes finding methods whereby smarter people can share their knowledge. The increased complexity of challenges (Fisher, 1998; Dvir & Shamir, 2003), and the unlikelihood that single team members will possess all the knowledge required to make correct decisions (Nelson et al., 2006; Uhl-Bien & Pillai, 2007),
usually means that individuals are not capable of addressing such challenges alone. Simply put, contemporary work requires a distributed approach (Parry et al., 2014).

Gronn (2011) proposes that leadership might be seen more holistically as a ‘leadership complex.’ Although individuals might ultimately perform particular behaviours, these are ‘concertive’ (Gronn, 2002) in nature, rather than simply an aggregation of behaviours of multiple individuals. There have been changes in the way in which work is organised, and the result is the dispersal of power (Gordon, 2011). This new form of leadership suggests a blurring of previous boundaries between leader and followers (Bolden, 2011). In organic leadership, there are many leaders, depending on capability and context (Day et al., 2004). Distributed leadership has garnered sufficient interest for many to regard it as the new paradigm of leadership (Gordon, 2011). Yukl (2012) believes that this new post-heroic alternative of leadership, one that places a greater emphasis on the reciprocal influencing process, has great potential. A numerical or additive approach accommodates the perspective that many, or even all, team members may at some time exercise leadership (Harris, 2007). These acts of leadership do not imply an elevated status or special privilege (Gronn, 2002). Essentially, individual leadership behaviours are interdependent rather than independent behaviours, forged through dynamic, interactive, interdependent relationships.

### 2.25 Properties of distributed leadership

A number of properties of distributed leadership may be distilled out of the various forms of the phenomenon described, and are outlined below:

1. ‘*Shared*’ - distributed leadership is a shared influence process (van Ameijde et al., 2009; Bolden, 2011);
2. ‘*Emergent*’ - distributed leadership involves emergent leadership rather than being formal appointed (van Ameijde et al., 2009; Bolden, 2011);
3. ‘*Attributed*’ - followers choose to be influenced and attribute leadership (Gronn, 2002, Bolden, 2011);
4. ‘Interdependent’ - relationship between leader and willing followers (Gronn, 2002; Gronn, 2011);

5. ‘Collaborative’ - sharing of power, and enables role sharing (Gordon, 2011; Yukl, 2012);

6. ‘Coordinated’ – involves coordination of activities (Gronn, 2002; Bolden, 2011).

While most of these properties would also be useful descriptors of good teamwork, it should be highlighted that in this context their association is with team leadership. This congruence between descriptors of distributed leadership and teamwork nevertheless provides evidence that distributed leadership is oriented towards inclusiveness. Each of the properties is viewed from a leadership rather than teamwork perspective.

2.26 Implications of a distributed leadership approach

The difference between sole-leader and distributed leadership properties necessarily results in quite distinct manifestations and experiences of leadership and followership. Some of the major implications of a distributed leadership approach are discussed below.

2.26.1 Questions around accountability

A distributed approach to leadership implies a blurring of the traditional hierarchical distinction associated with the leader-follower dualism (Gronn, 2002), and formal accountability also becomes unclear. Harris (2003, p. 319) suggests that distributed leadership requires that formally appointed leaders ‘relinquish power to others’. Much of the early discussion around distributed leadership appears to have focussed on distributing management and authority (Spillane et al., 2006) rather than on dispersing leadership (Youngs, 2007). These concerns arise because leadership is not being attributed and managers are being called leaders regardless of whether they are actually being followed.
2.26.2 Enhanced inclusivity

Distributed leadership permits members to involve themselves in interpreting the nature, values and identity of the business, resulting in a more keen sense of the position of the business within the competitive environment (Torpman, 2004). Manz and Simms (1986) advocate that leader behaviours are likely to be linked through cognitive schemata, and models intended to influence a single behaviour are also likely to indirectly influence other behaviours.

2.26.3 Social and cultural context

Distributed leadership is inexorably intertwined with the social and cultural context within which it operates (Bennett et al., 2003). It can be expected that distributed leadership is not compatible with all forms of social and cultural contexts, and implementation would pose substantial challenges in some contexts. Findings from the GLOBE study on leadership and culture (House, 2004) and Hofstede’s (2005) Cultural Dimensions would support the notion that cultures exhibiting high power distance relations might not easily share or distribute leadership.

2.26.4 Impact on team dynamics

The context in which leadership is exercised has, for the purposes of this research, been linked closely to teams. The literature suggests that most work teams are comprised of members in superior-subordinate relationships. Consequently, as most people have been socialized in teams that have a sole-leader, it is expected that moving to a distributed form of leadership would require some if not quite substantial amounts of support and facilitation in the early stages of such a change (Pearce, 2004), as processes are reengineered to suit the new leadership format. Fitzsimons et al., (2011) advocate alternative approaches for studying shared and distributed leadership; and this impetus towards a renewed focus on this important topic drives the following conclusions and statement of research questions below.
2.27 Conclusion and formal statement of research questions

The literature review above shows that the role of followers and following is essential to leadership, so much so that it is hard to disentangle followership from leadership. This is particularly true in constructionist views, which see followership as a necessary element in the co-construction of leadership, although it also applies to role-based approaches. One of the biggest challenges for the emerging study of followership is semantics that emanate from reductionist logics, which cause us to immediately hone in on the ‘follower’ as an individual or role, overlooking the fact that ‘following’ behavior is crucial in the construction of (or failure to construct) leadership.

Following is a particular form of behaviour that involves recognizing and granting legitimacy to another's influence attempt or status (DeRue & Ashford, 2010). If there are no following behaviours, there is no leadership. In fact, it is probably easier to recognize leadership in following behaviours than it is in leadership behaviours, since individuals attempting to be leaders are only legitimized in the responses and reception of those willing to follow them. Uhl-Bien et al., (2013) intimate that this creates obvious challenges for leadership scholars. It means that, if we are going to study the leadership process, we need to stop relying on our broad labels of leader and follower, and better understand the nature of leading and following.

Bedeian and Hunt (2006) call this the ‘truth-in-advertising’ claim in leadership: we study managers or appointed leaders, but do we really study leadership? This concern is also raised in Fairhurst and Antonakis (2012), who describe the problem as coming from our observational units (individual perceptions) being out of line with our ontological units (leadership and followership behaviours and processes). If we are interested in studying leading and following then we need to adopt methodological approaches that allow us to see these behaviours in action (Fairhurst & Uhl-Bien, 2012). This understanding will provide a clearer picture of the social process of distributed leadership in business teams (Parry, 2008).
The present study will provide answers to the research questions outlined below:

**PRIMARY RESEARCH QUESTION**

RQ: How do designated followers exercise leadership in business teams?

**SUBSIDIARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

RQa: Can more than one member be leader simultaneously?

RQb: What happens to a designated leader when another member assumes leadership?

Answering these questions will provide insights into how multiple team members might exercise leadership, and constitutes a substantial departure from the individual leader paradigm. The next chapter will outline and explain the methodology to be employed in the present research to best answer the research questions outlined above.
CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The present research study follows a traditional grounded theory approach to examine and provide answers to the research questions. Consequently, although this research study uses a conventional reporting format (i.e. literature review, research methodology and results), most of the literature review was conducted after data analysis had been completed, in accordance with the principles of Grounded Theory Methodology (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The primary focus of this research was to develop a substantive grounded theory of distributed leadership in business teams. This was done by exploring how designated followers exercise influence (leadership), as experienced by teams of three to eleven members voluntarily participating in autonomous decision-making business teams, working within a major competitor in the Australian Financial Services Industry.

All observations and insights where gained by the researcher in the present study in the field setting, as prescribed by Bligh (2011), with documented field notes and written participant observations also contributing additional data. The major data source was 44 interviews (of between 60 and 90 minutes duration), involving 41 informants, which were conducted and transcribed by the researcher. The semi-structured interviews, with a mix of 38 individual and 6 group interviews, examined the research question from a variety of perspectives, according to the role that informants had played in the decision-making teams. Informants who formed part of the interview sample were purposively rather than randomly selected, using sampling techniques that are outlined in depth in this chapter. Using the grounded theory methodology detailed in this chapter, a theory was developed about how designated followers in this substantive field exercise influence (leadership). In the interpretive approach it is essential that ‘the perspectives and voices of the people’ (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 274) are included, and that substantial use is made of thick description, a key element in grounded theory development and testing.
According to Bryant and Charmaz (2007) thick description uses detailed rich descriptions of both how participants experience phenomena and the context of those experiences. Accordingly, informant quotes are used frequently in the results chapters of this thesis, to provide a better explanation of the findings, as called for by Urquhart (2013). In the sections that follow, the choice of research methodology will be outlined, along with a more detailed account of the research procedures that were followed.

### 3.2 Key issues confronting the researcher

The three key research issues confronting any researcher are outlined and then discussed below:

1. In which scientific paradigm is the researcher operating?
2. Which research methodology might, congruent to the scientific paradigm, appropriately answer the research question?
3. What methodologically consistent methods will be used to gather, interpret and then analyze data, delivering a trustworthy outcome?

Each of these issues is discussed below; and the chapter concludes with a brief overview of the ethics procedures followed in this study.

### 3.3 Paradigm justification

Issues relating to the philosophy of theory have been extensively debated and are considered central when approaching this type of research design (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002). Three research benefits arise from an understanding of relevant philosophical issues include:

1. Selecting an appropriate research design that guides data collection and interpretation to address the research question;
2. Discerning *between* different designs; and
3. Conferring a capacity to work outside previous experience and adapt research
   designs when needed.

A paradigm is a conceptual framework providing a particular view of the world.
Through a collection of basic concepts and ideas, a paradigm models how a
discipline is understood (Creswell, 2009). Three major concepts in Section 3.2 are
closely associated with two overarching research paradigms, namely positivist and
critical/ interpretivist.

3.4 Paradigm components

Birks and Mills (2011) point out that paradigms are a basic set of beliefs that guide
action. Three components, ontology, epistemology and methodology, all guide
inductive and deductive research design. An examination of each in turn provides the
basis for a more detailed analysis of these paradigms.

3.4.1 Ontological considerations

The constant debate around absolute or interpreted reality is the first key
philosophical issue a researcher needs to consider when selecting a research
paradigm. Ontology considers how individuals see themselves in relation to the
world around them (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006). Ontology also influences how
others are seen, and will have a bearing on whether the researcher can be an
independent observer or an involved actor (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006). Reece
(2004) outlines a number of possible questions to probe ontology:

1. What is the nature of reality?
2. What is already known about this reality?
3. What is already known about the real world?
4. Is this how things really work?

Goulding (2002) suggests that adopting a view of reality that is ever changing, which
is the position adopted for the present research, embraces ontological reality. The
dynamic social nature of teams means that reality is changing continuously. Reviewing extant literature provides perspectives on how others perceive reality, and how things are perceived to work. Charmaz (2014) further points out that a continually changing reality poses challenges for epistemological reality, which issue is discussed next.

### 3.4.2 Epistemological considerations

Epistemology, another key paradigmatic consideration, according to Rosenberg (2000, p. 4), contemplates ‘the nature, extent and justification of knowledge.’ Whitehead and McNiff (2006, p. 23) describe this ‘theory of knowledge’ as encompassing both ‘what is known’ and how that knowledge is acquired. Reece (2004) outlines a number of possible questions to probe epistemology:

1. What is the relationship between the researcher and the researcher’s perceptions of reality?
2. Does the researcher share this reality with others?
3. What impact has the research had on its portrayal – is it researcher shaped or is it true reality?

Bryman (2011) asserts that adopting a meta-physics of change (promoting movement, change and transformation), rather than the more traditional metaphysics of substance (promoting stability, permanence and order), acknowledges ontological reality. Our understanding of ontological reality (epistemology) is constructed because we use static representations of an ever-changing reality.

This research is positioned in the context of the epistemological questions the researcher considers, and which influenced the selection of research methodology. In the present research, the view is adopted that people have a perceived sense of reality, formed through a personal interpretation of the world they experience, as outlined by Remenyi (2014). A researcher can never be a completely detached, neutral processor of facts - human data processing is an interpretative rather than
absolute act. If knowledge is categorized and framed in a similar way, then understanding of a particular phenomenon might be highly aligned, apparently common, and even shared.

### 3.4.3 Methodological considerations

The third consideration is research methodology, ‘a study of how we do things’ according to Whitehead and McNiff (2006, p. 23), as distinct from methods or techniques used to generate knowledge.

Ontological and epistemological perspectives impact on the selection of methods chosen to study phenomena (Ponterotto, 2005), as the researcher contemplates the question, ‘Which research approach/methods will be congruent with ontological and epistemological perspectives?’ (Reece 2004, p. 144).

This research adopted a critical/interpretive approach (Veal, 2005) and, congruent with that paradigm, a qualitatively oriented Grounded Theory Research Methodology. Reasons for paradigm and research method selection are presented in the sections that follow.

### 3.5 Research paradigms

Adherents of a particular paradigm hold particular views relating to ontology and epistemology, and choose research methodologies congruent with those perspectives (Walliman & Walliman, 2006). Two core research paradigms, positivist and critical/interpretive, have been identified (Veal, 2005). The essential elements of both of these major paradigms are discussed below.

#### 3.5.1 Positivist paradigm

The ‘scientific or positive’ (Whiteley 2004, p. 11) tradition was developed in the 19th century (Ponterotto, 2005). The main principles of positivist research, as
outlined by Easterby-Smith et al., (2002), Veal (2005) and Remenyi (2014), are explained in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1 Core principles of positivist research
(as outlined by Easterby-Smith et al., 2002; Veal, 2005; Remenyi, 2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independence</th>
<th>Observer independent of the research situation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Value Freedom</td>
<td>Researcher’s choice of study topic and research methods are determined objectively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Causality</td>
<td>Research aims to identify causal explanations and laws explaining social behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothetico-deductive</td>
<td>Research uses a process of hypothesizing using fundamental laws and deducing what will demonstrate truth/falsity of hypotheses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operationalisation</td>
<td>Concepts defined to allow quantitative measurement reductionism - problems are best understood when reduced to simplest elements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generalisation</td>
<td>Samples of sufficient size are needed to allow generalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-Section Analysis</td>
<td>Regularities are most easily identified when comparing variations across samples</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The positivist approach has dominated social science research (and also studies of leadership) for at least a century; but a sufficiently large number of researchers have challenged and rejected the approach in favour of the phenomenological, or interpretive approach. The scientific revolution and the ongoing critique of the positivist approach resulted in a wide array of different but related methodologies (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002) that have changed the research landscape.

3.5.2 Critical/interpretive paradigm

The early name of the alternate approach, phenomenology, reflects the major philosophical difference between the old and new research paradigms. Positivists would assert that they were studying things in themselves or the raw reality. However, Gomm (2004) asserts that most social scientists would say they study only phenomena or perceptions of reality, namely the thing as it appears. This alternative
A grounded theory study of distributed leadership in business teams has become better known as the critical/interpretive paradigm, according to Veal (2005), acknowledging the role of interpretation of social phenomena by both informants and researchers.

### 3.5.3 Summary of key paradigmatic differences

Any research conducted within a particular paradigm generally adheres to the broad ontological, epistemological, and methodological tenets of that paradigm, according to Veal (2005) and Oktay (2012). Methodology and methods associated with a particular approach also determine the nature and form of research trustworthiness, namely validity, reliability, and generalisability (Charmaz, 2014).

Table 3.2 below highlights the key differences between the two paradigmatic alternatives, namely the positivist and critical/interpretive, that the researcher considered when choosing between the approaches for this study.

**Table 3.2 Paradigmatic differences between research approaches**
*(as outlined by Easterby-Smith et al., 2002, Veal, 2005 and Charmaz, 2014)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Positivist Approach</th>
<th>Critical/ Interpretive Approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Researcher Choices</td>
<td>Objective and detached</td>
<td>Subjective interpretation (detached or involved)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Views the world from perspective of metaphysics of substance (stability, permanence</td>
<td>Views world form perspective of metaphysics of change (external fluxing reality / cannot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and order)</td>
<td>accurately represent with static symbols, concepts, categories – all only abstractions at a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>point in time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Investigates external world</td>
<td>Engages with research subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Testing theory</td>
<td>Generating theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Often deductive – quantitative</td>
<td>Often inductive – qualitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Begins with hypothesis</td>
<td>Interrogates data to discover meaning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.5.4 Choice of interpretivist paradigm

Patton (2002, p. 13) suggests that decision making about research methods should be pragmatic, noting simply that ‘some questions lend themselves to numerical answers; some don't’. The research question in the present study deals with leadership, a social phenomenon (Mumford et al., 2002; Parry, 2008). Pettigrew (1997) notes that social reality is not a static state, and thus leadership, as a component of social reality, constitutes a perceived reality, and a continuously changing mix of social dynamics and processes. Pragmatically, the topic can appropriately be researched through: engagement with the research subjects; using inductive inquiry; interrogation of data to discover meaning; using smaller numbers of informants from a specific population, with limits on generalisability; and conducting investigation in the field. These choices align with the interpretivist research paradigm; and the present research was pursued under that paradigmatic umbrella.

3.6 Qualitative methodology and grounded theory

Interpretive inquiry is sometimes alternatively known as qualitative inquiry (Gomm, 2004). ‘Qualitative methods facilitate studies of issues in depth and detail’ (Patton 2002, p14), and the end-goal is description (Glaser & Holton 2004). Essentially, qualitative methods involve a search for depth, openness, and detail. Approaches are

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Positivist Approach</th>
<th>Critical/ Interpretive Approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthiness</td>
<td>Does it measure what it claims</td>
<td>Full access to knowledge and meanings of informants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Validity</td>
<td>Same results at different times?</td>
<td>Similar observations at different time points?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>Probability patterns represent population</td>
<td>Will ideas or theories be applicable in other settings?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Generalisability  | Probability patterns represent population                                          | Will ideas or theories be applicable in other settings?             |
substantially less constrained than the more structured designs of quantitative methods, which, broadly, have as an end-goal a numerical outcome from a set of predetermined categories derived from standardised measures (Patton, 2002). Qualitative research has surfaced in the leadership field to explore elements pertaining to leadership processes that quantitative research would probably not have tackled (Conger, 1998; Parry, 2011). Furthermore, qualitative researchers have also responded quickly to new ideas in leadership, such as the sharing of leadership (Bryman, 2004; Kempster & Parry, 2011).

One of the primary aims of quantitative research is to achieve generalizability, and this requires a large, random sample. Alternatively, qualitative research seeks insights from data that have depth, detail, and richness. Researchers focus on collecting rich and detailed data from a smaller sample not considered significant or random. Qualitative researchers focus on ensuring that the final output, containing insights extracted from rich data, constitutes an accurate representation of the sample, rather than achieving generalizability (Patton, 2002). The research methods and sample in this study were selected to deliver rich data rather than randomness and statistical significance; and a resultant limitation is limited generalizability of the research findings. At best, critical realists suggest ‘tendencies toward applicability in other contexts’ (Kempster & Parry, 2011, p.115). Grounded theorists should have no problems with such a position, with ‘the notion of substantiveness, and not generalizability, being axiomatic of the method’ (Kempster & Parry, 2011, p.117).

In addition Charmaz (2000), from a constructivist perspective, suggests that other researchers can explore and make their judgments as to ‘how the substantive theory might fit other contexts and extrapolate whether a theory from one context is generalizable to another’ (Kempster & Parry, 2011, p.118). Berg (2006, p. 4) comments that quantitative research, with its foundation on numbers, is ‘erroneously’ regarded as being more scientific than qualitative approaches based instead on ‘words, images, and descriptions’. One possible reason for this view relates to the ‘vestiges of scientific method’ (Dunne et al., 2005, p. 83), which has historically dominated all research philosophy and practice.
In qualitative research the focus is on the ‘skill, competence, and rigor’ of the researcher in the field (Patton 2002, p. 14); and this is discussed in more detail at an appropriate point in the chapter. Quantitative research, instead, relies on prescribed and standardized administration of precise instruments for validity (Patton, 2002). Each approach has its own strengths and weaknesses, and are often viewed as an alternative rather than mutually exclusive options for research (Patton, 2002). Grounded theory has played a major role in legitimising the qualitative approach to research, and is an inductive approach for generating new theory (Kempster & Parry, 2011). More recently, grounded theory has been used in leadership studies and is a well-considered and accepted approach in exploring leadership phenomena. A brief overview of the history of grounded theory follows.

3.7 History of grounded theory research methodology

Grounded theory is a general methodology for developing theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and analyzed. Theory evolves during actual research, and it does this through continuous interplay between analysis and data collection. (Strauss & Corbin 1994, p. 273)

Grounded theory research methodology was developed by sociologists Glaser and Strauss (1967) as a pragmatic means of exploring empirical reality through observation and analysis of actors in their real settings (Suddaby, 2006). Importantly, they argued that social and natural sciences do not deal with the same subject matter, and challenged the applicability of positivist ontology and traditions of the natural sciences (Whiteley, 2004), the methods of which were pervasive in social science research. They adopted a constructivist approach, maintaining that, in social science, scientific truth emerges via observation and consensus of meaning of the community of observers, after analysis and interpretation (Suddaby, 2006). Empirical reality is derived from ongoing observation and interpretation (Suddaby, 2006); and the essence of grounded theory has not changed from its inception (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).
Grounded theory is widely accepted, not only in its founding discipline of sociology. As a research method, grounded theory methodology has had a major impact on legitimising the use of qualitative research methods in applied research in the social sciences in general (Thomas & James 2006). However, widespread adoption of a method raises ‘the risk of becoming fashionable’ (Strauss & Corbin 1994, p. 277), where it is used and modified by researchers not cognisant of its fundamental elements. To avoid making this type of error in the present research study, the methodology chapter and research methods focus largely on the work of the original authors of grounded theory and their close associates.

3.8 Overview of grounded theory methodology

In grounded theory, ‘research must not start with a theory to prove, disprove or extend’ (Fernandez, 2004, p. 84). The researcher aims to generate a theory grounded in the data collected that relates to the substantive field of investigation. A primary reason for researchers to choose a grounded theory methodology is because it induces substantive theory from everyday realities (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Grounded theory works because it involves a systematic cycle of coding, analysing, and then recoding until the hypotheses reflect the substance of the data (Glaser, 1998). The paradox of the methodology is that, while systematic procedures deliver rigour to the research, they also permit creativity in a manner not available in forcing methodologies. Glaser (1998) uses the term forcing, critical of the practice of positivist researchers who, he claims, massage (or ignore) data to create a fit with extant theories developed by respected leaders in the field. Kempster and Parry (2011) outline the underlying assumptions of grounded theory, namely:

1. Substantive theory building as a core goal, where a theory is a set of propositions designed to establish an explanation of a phenomenon in a particular context;

2. A contextualised focus to understanding, explaining and theory development, related to levels of analysis, for example leadership within a team;

3. Hierarchy of theory abstraction;
4. Use of metaphors and related (and unrelated) concepts and theories to aid substantive theory development.

### 3.8.1 Methodological departures from positivist methodology

Grounded theory researchers face scrutiny because the two main methodological tenets, ‘constant comparison’ and ‘theoretical sampling’, violate core principles of the positivist tradition (Suddaby, 2006): clear separation between data collection and analysis and hypothesis testing, and random sampling (Glaser, 1998). Positivists assume that data will be collected first and then analysed, that sampling will be random, and that hypotheses, formulated prior to data collection, will only then be tested against the data. Key aspects of significance are the emphasis on social, contextual, processual and relational aspects of leadership. (Kempster & Parry, 2011, p. 109). An in-depth discussion of each respective issue will now follow.

### 3.8.2 Grounded theory development

The iterative process commences by sorting or open coding data into concepts and categories that might be relevant. Through constant comparison, the importance of particular codes becomes apparent and the researcher samples more purposively (Parry, 1998), using theoretical sampling, until a stage where nothing new is being learned about the concepts. At this point of theoretical saturation (Glaser, 1998), the research then focuses on enunciating the relationships between the concepts, and developing the substantive theory becomes the primary focus (Charmaz, 2014). Berg (2006, p. 19) suggests that, ‘in an applied context, theories can be understood as interrelated ideas about various patterns, concepts, processes, relationships, or events’. Concepts are smaller components of theories, and can usually be identified in clusters, or propositions, outlining how concepts are related.

Glaser (1998, p. 134) prescribes that conceptualization ‘cannot be ad hoc or impressionistic.’ Grounded theory has many conceptual levels, organized hierarchically:
Chapter 3 Research Methodology

1. A concept is an idea;
2. Concepts become properties when they relate to a category;
3. Categories chart properties that are inter-linked;
4. Sub-core categories relate predominantly to core categories;
5. Core categories reside at the highest conceptual level and are related to all other categories; and
6. Theoretical codes reflect the relationship between substantive codes; and the substantive theory integrates all theoretical codes.

According to Glaser (1998), conceptual levels vary over time. In the present study, little significance was attached to any particular code in itself, with some higher order codes ending only as properties of other codes as the theory developed. There were several higher order categories which were ultimately subsumed by the core category. The grounded theory approach is described as being grounded in a particular setting (Glaser, 1998) and is limited in generalizability to the substantive field only. There are a number of commonly held misconceptions about grounded theory, and these are discussed in the next section.

3.9 Misconceptions about grounded theory methodology

Suddaby (2006, p. 634) identifies ‘six common misconceptions about grounded theory’, which were given attention for the duration of the present study:

1. ‘Grounded theory is not an excuse to ignore the literature’ – the extant literature is vital and was examined once analysis was nearly complete;
2. ‘Grounded theory is not presentation of raw data’ – the major contributions of this study are the result of theoretical coding;
3. ‘Grounded theory is not theory testing, content analysis or word counts’;
4. ‘Grounded theory is not perfect’ – raised awareness to limitations of the method;
5. ‘Grounded theory is not easy’ – the researcher was alert to possible periods of uncertainty and the time consuming nature of qualitative research;

6. ‘Grounded theory is not an excuse for the absence of a methodology’ – essential principles of grounded theory methodology were closely followed in this study, including use of constant comparison.

Misconceptions about applying creative thinking to the process of inquiry in grounded theory lead to basic processes being uncovered but not developed any further (Charmaz, 2014). Incomplete use of the methodology fails to realize its capacity to generate conceptually rich theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Techniques of concept mapping, post-it notes and constant innovation were used to facilitate creative thinking.

3.10 Legitimacy of grounded theory

Conger (1998) and Parry (1998), amongst many other researchers, advocate the use of qualitative research methods to study leadership. To date, the field has been mainly dominated by quantitative researchers (Parry, 1998), mostly from the field of behavioural psychology, according to Gronn (2003). Parry (1998) was amongst the first to argue for the use of grounded theory to study the process of leadership, largely because leadership is so closely associated with change. Outlined below are the main reasons as to why grounded theory methodology is an appropriate research approach for leadership studies:

1. There has been a lack of progress towards an ‘enduring and integrative study of leadership’ (Parry, 1998, p. 85) in a field dominated largely by psychologically oriented, quantitative studies;

2. The requirement for a methodology that reflects the longitudinal nature of change incidents (which constitute leadership processes);

3. The requirement to be able to examine leadership in the form that it manifests, as social influence processes, and the identification of basic social processes as part of the grounded theory method (Parry et al., 2014); and
4. The capability to deal with a wide variety and range of data and variables, and to generate theory (Kempster & Parry, 2011) rather than test it.

Chia (1999) provides additional support for a grounded theory approach to study leadership, arguing that organisational studies (of which leadership is part) needs to be much more process focused to be able to capture the essence of an ever-changing social reality. Pettigrew (1997) argues that process thinking is driven by the assumption that social reality is always in flux. Grounded theory is a methodology best suited to answer questions about processes ‘by which actors construct meaning out of inter-subjective experience’ and how they ‘interpret reality’ (Suddaby, 2006, p. 634). Kempster and Parry (2011), and Charmaz (2014), among many others, advocate for the use of grounded theory in business disciplines as an inductive approach to developing new theory.

3.11 Grounded theory is trustworthy

Other key issues associated with qualitative studies include ‘accuracy, truth, trustworthiness or objectivity’ (Glaser & Holton 2004, p. 1), coupled with procedure and rigour. Glaser (1998, p. 11) claims that, although different from other research approaches, the methodology is nevertheless rigorous and, by implication, also trustworthy:

The rigor of grounded theory is as stringent as it is in the more forcing or quantitative methods of survey and control oriented research. In grounded theory interpretations of hypotheses are constantly checked by the constant comparative method. They are as much a part of the theory and as grounded in it, as the main concern and its continual resolving.

Corbin and Strauss (1990) outline four criteria that should be used when generating, elaborating or testing theory:

1. Validity, reliability and credibility;
2. Plausibility and value;
3. Adequacy of research process; and
4. Empirical grounding of emergent theory.

These criteria are substantially similar to the original criteria of Glaser and Strauss (1967), and also to the more recent criteria outlined by Chiovitti and Piran (2003) of credibility, auditability and fittingness. Most recently Kempster and Parry (2011) outline the criteria of plausibility, resonance and connectivity in seeking out internal validity of grounded theory findings. The sections which follow examine the four criteria proposed by Corbin and Strauss (1990), and outlines how the trustworthiness of the present study has been ensured.

3.12 Validity, reliability and credibility

Specific threats to validity, reliability and credibility emanate largely from the observer/researcher, according to Douglas (2003, p. 53); these are outlined as:

1. Constrained data collection;
2. Interpretation bias; and
3. Intellectual factors impeding the researcher’s capacity to ‘prevent the statements of actors being taken at face value’.

Douglas (2003) and Urquhart (2013) outline possible ways to mitigate these potential threats:

1. Drawing on multiple data sources collected in different ways;
2. Substantial time being spent in the field (to gain a good understanding of the substantive area); and
3. Researchers regularly reflecting on their own potential impact on outcomes.

Patton (2002, p. 1) also offers researchers advice that ‘when in doubt, observe and ask questions. When certain, observe at length and ask many more questions.’ Each of these threats, and ways of mitigating them, is discussed below.
3.12.1 Multiple sources of data and triangulation

Rigour, validity and credibility in grounded theory methodology were achieved through a formal and systematic approach (Parry, 1998) to each stage of research (data collection, data analysis and theory development) (Douglas, 2003; Fernandez, 2004). Critical realism (Kempster & Parry, 2011) is a valuable contribution to the field; however, the present research closely followed the systematic procedures of the traditional grounded theory methodology as outlined in this chapter. Multiple sources of data were used in the present study to enhance validity, reliability and credibility (Parry, 1998; Charmaz, 2014). Presenting results that incorporate thick description (Morrow, 2005), as has been done in the present research, also contributes to credibility, as the reader is provided with a view of actual informant contributions.

The use of multiple sources of data is one possible kind of triangulation. Triangulation may be thought of as ‘multiple lines of sight’ (Berg, 2006, p. 5). In land surveying, triangulation pinpoints a location based on its reference to two landmarks, to construct maps. In research, triangulation tests for consistency, rather than proving that different approaches or sources of data deliver similar results (Patton, 2002). Indeed, Patton (2002, p. 556) stresses that ‘somewhat different results’ may be found as a result of different perspectives and should contribute to deepened insights into the interrelationship between phenomena being studied and the inquiry approach being used, rather than impinge on the credibility of the research. Patton (2002) outlined four different kinds of triangulation:

1. Methods triangulation;
2. Triangulation of sources;
3. Analyst triangulation; and
4. Theory/perspective triangulation.

The present study employed triangulation of sources and analyst triangulation. The benefits of multiple sources of data, as described by Patton (2002), include:
1. Reconciling observations and interviews;
2. Comparing statements made in public versus those made privately;
3. Comparing the views of the different parties linked with the research situation; and
4. Comparing interviewer responses with documentation associated with the research situation.

These recommended techniques were closely followed. Triangulation through analysis was also possible in the study, even with the limiting factor of a single researcher. Analyst triangulation was implemented by having key informants as well as an expert audience review the emerged theory. Patton (2002, p. 561) points out that triangulation may be achieved if participants/experts review the outcomes of the study and find them accurate, complete, and fair, arguing that ‘face validity’ is bestowed on the research. The theory was also discussed informally with the few informants who had not been interviewed. Feedback consistently confirmed that the substantive theory represents an accurate and fair account of informant input. Additionally, a detailed outline of the substantive theory was delivered to numerous seminars, colloquiums and doctoral workshops attended throughout the present study. Scholars and academic staff, who had expertise in the substantive field being studied or a closely related field, provided feedback that was supportive of the substantive theory.

3.12.2 Researcher experience and time in the field to enhance credibility

Qualitative research methodology heightens scrutiny of the researcher, who does not enjoy the same strict and clear degree of separation from the research as in the positivist tradition, according to Patton (2002). In the present study, the researcher had previously engaged with the subject organization in a professional capacity in recent years on various commercial property projects, and additionally was a keen observer of the decision-making team processes used.
Prior experience of the researcher might pose a risk to qualitative research but, paradoxically, it also provides a great opportunity to enhance research credibility (Strauss & Corbin, 1994; Glaser, 1998). Prior research, training, and reading may all be useful if compared systematically against research data and emerging theory. In the present study, the researcher’s current and past experiences contributed to the continual questioning of the data in the field during the advanced stages of theoretical coding and during the literature review.

3.12.3 Predisposition of researcher

Another major concern relating to any research process is the effect of researcher predisposition or bias on the results (Morrow, 2005). Patton (2002, p. 553) argues that this might occur, ‘unconsciously, inadvertently, or intentionally’, and suggests that this is addressed by the researcher explicitly acknowledging any potential bias or predispositions that may be present, including those which might accompany the methodology, method, or technique chosen as part of the research design. Identified researcher factors that may impact on the present research could possibly include: a long-standing interest in leadership; a long association with the decision-making teams that were studied; holding a leader-centric view of leadership; extensive training as an interviewer and observer of groups and teams; and wide experience in commercial project management and negotiations.

The first way in which the researcher addressed issues of predisposition was to explicitly note all of the potential sources of bias, how they may manifest, and the impact each would have on the process. The constant comparison technique of the grounded theory methodology continually reminded the researcher to compare the emerging theory against any new data. Included in that continuous regime were questions such as:

1. How does this data fit?
2. Can this be explained in any other way?
The development of the emerging theory was continually grounded in participant data, with this practice aiming to reduce the risk of bias. Additionally, another way of reducing the risk of bias was to delay reading literature that related specifically to the research context until a time when the data had been largely collected and analyzed. This aim was to reduce the risk of forcing, or shaping the data, to fit preconceived ideas, as prescribed by Glaser (1998).

3.13 Plausibility and value

Even if grounded theory research is reliable, valid and credible, it will be worth little if it is not also plausible and of value in explaining actions in the substantive area, according to Glaser (1998). For a grounded theory to be workable, its concepts and their inter-relationships should largely and accurately account for situations within the scope of the study and also be readily modifiable to incorporate new data that emerges (Glaser, 1998; Kempster & Parry, 2011). Grounded theory methodology places a particular emphasis on the value of research to the participants in the substantive area; and Glaser (1998) notes that, when research directly addresses issues relevant to the participants, then a strong identification occurs. Key informants as well as experts in the field showed strong identification with the substantive grounded theory generated in this study. With the experts, this occurred during discussions at seminars, colloquia and doctoral workshops and a few informal meetings where the theory was presented. In the case of key informants, feedback was both informal, during presentations of the substantive theory, and formal, during the last few interviews. Criteria, such as resonance and connectivity, outlined by Kempster and Parry (2011), were also tested and it was found that the substantive theory resonated well with participants and experts in the field. Interviewees felt particularly a solid connection (Kempster & Parry, 2011) to the substantive theory confirming their experiences in the substantive setting. The research explanation provided was certainly plausible (Kempster & Parry, 2011) and provides much value to the field by meeting the criteria outlined above. In this sense internal validity of a substantive grounded theory is oriented toward resonating with reality. If the grounded theory connects to peoples lived experience and also provides explanation
and sensemaking, then ‘we have epistemic gain through practical adequacy’ (Kempster & Parry, 2011, p. 115).

3.14 Ensuring the adequacy of the research process

The research process should be adequate; and a variety of questions relevant to research adequacy, as raised by Corbin and Strauss (1990, p. 17), were addressed during the present study:

1. How was the sample selected?
2. What major categories emerged?
3. What events, incidents, actions gave rise to these categories?
4. How did theoretical sampling guide data collection? How did this line of research support the categories?
5. What relationships between categories were hypothesized and how were they formulated and tested?
6. Were there instances when the hypotheses did not hold up? What of discrepancies – how did they affect the hypotheses and how were they accounted for?
7. How and why was the core category selected? How were final analytic decisions made? How extensively did the theory account for situations in the substantive area?

3.15 Empirical grounding of emergent theory

Once the research process has been considered, a further means of assessing the credibility of grounded theory methodology research is to examine the extent to which the substantive theory accounts for situations in the research field. According to Suddaby (2006, p. 633), empirical reality is derived through the ‘ongoing interpretation of meaning produced by individuals engaged in a common project of observation.’ During the present study, the researcher continually compared
emerging theory with data from the field, until a plausible and adequate theory emerged. Chapters 4-7 outline in detail the near-core categories and the core category that were discovered and developed during this research. Chapter 8 outlines the grounded theory of distributed leadership in business teams. The extensive use of informant quotes reveals the exploration of the phenomena through the use of the participants’ voices, with the aim of providing transparency in how the theory is grounded in the data.

3.16 Evaluating which grounded theory approach to follow

Over time, grounded theory methodology has split into two groups, the Glaserian or ‘traditional’ (Glaser & Holton, 2004) approach, and the Straussian or ‘formalised’ approach. Glaser (1998) and Strauss (joined by Corbin) (1990) share the same epistemology and ontology (Charmaz, 2014), but adopt sufficiently disparate methodological differences as to warrant researchers needing to declare which approach they follow, according to Urquhart (2013). In addition to these two mainstream approaches, the researcher is also aware of a number of contemporary approaches that have developed from these two original fields. More notable examples are the approaches undertaken by Eisenhart (1989), Locke (2001), Goiai et al., (2012) and Charmaz (2014), which are all variations of the two original approaches. The next section outlines the essence of the two original approaches (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). An argument for why the present study adopted the traditional Glaserian approach is put forward.

3.16.1 The ‘Straussian’ and ‘Glaserian’ approaches

Strauss and Corbin (1990) address concerns relating to rigour around coding and analysis by proposing a more formalized process for analysis than is found in the classic approach (Heath & Cowley, 2004). Partington (2000, p. 94) describes the work of Strauss and Corbin (1990) as the ‘proceduralization of grounded theory’, capturing the essential difference between the two approaches: the traditional approach is less structured, which may bring a range of possible problems due to a
lack of a standard framework; and the Straussian approach is ‘proceduralised’ with the attendant criticisms of over-formalisation and rigidity (Thomas & James, 2006). The role of induction and deduction is the key difference between the Glaserian and Straussian approaches to grounded theory methodology (Heath & Cowley, 2004). While both subscribe to theory emergence and the role of induction in that process, in the Straussian approach ‘deduction and verification dominate’ the analytical process, with enhanced theoretical sensitivity as the end goal (Heath & Cowley, 2004, p. 144). Outlining reasons for the variation in approach, Strauss and Corbin (1994, p. 277) intimate that ‘Glaser and Strauss overplayed the inductive aspects’. They also note that the traditional approach had underplayed the influencing role of extant theory on the researcher, suggesting it should play a greater role in emergent theory formulation.

Glaser and Holton (2004) firmly believe that directly related extant theory is best explored late in the research process. The deductive processes of Strauss and Corbin (1990) probe the data for consistency, and the early phase fragments data into its component parts. While this delivers the benefit of deeper understanding, it results in a proliferation of codes, according to Urquhart (2013). According to Remenyi (2014), an additional level of coding (axial coding) is needed to reconstruct the data in a structured manner, and to reduce the number of codes. Accordingly, the model seeks elucidation of relationships between a category and its subcategories, and focuses on causal conditions, phenomenon, context, intervening conditions, action or interaction strategies, and consequences, as outlined by Corbin and Strauss (1990).

An analytical tool, the conditional matrix, identifies relationships between context, consequences, strategies and conditions at every one of the eight levels of scale, from macro to micro. These relationships are then integrated into theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). The conditional matrix might be conceptualized as ‘a set of circles, one inside the other, each (level) corresponding to different aspects of the world’, with international focus at the most macro level through to action at the most micro level (Strauss & Corbin 1994, p. 275). Adding structure may overcome concerns surrounding exactly what research steps to follow, but it simultaneously expunges
the level of researcher spontaneity espoused by the traditional approach. The formalised approach provides, and possibly even imposes, a framework that critics argue dilutes the value of the original induction-centred approach. According to Birks and Mills (2011), in the traditional approach, the focus is on data rather than technique.

Jones and Noble (2007) point out, in a comprehensive comparison of the two schools, that, in contrast to the Glaserian approach, the Straussian school has undergone a number of changes to suggested methodology, some of which have been contradictory to earlier positions. Jones and Noble (2007) found that many studies claiming to use the Straussian approach actually omitted core components of the grounded theory method, this omission often resulted in greater rather than reduced methodological inconsistency in the approach.

3.16.2 Choice of the traditional ‘Glaserian’ approach for the present research study

The cost of the traditional approach is often confusion and uncertainty at some points during the research process (Fernandez, 2004), but the benefit is a technique that produces an accurate grounded theory in a substantive area. The framework of Strauss and Corbin (1990) also delivers a grounded theory, but is more rigid and formalized in prescription, according to Charmaz (2014); which, to some extent, results in forcing data to fit an existing theory (Glaser, 1998). However, the key reason that grounded theory methodology was developed in the first instance was to avoid forcing. Over time, the Straussian approach has come to offer increased methodological inconsistency (Jones & Noble, 2007), with many researchers becoming so embroiled in the set procedures around coding that they overlook core elements of the grounded theory methodology.

Good research practice associated with extracting meaning from a natural setting avoids reducing data excessively (Langley, 1999). As a social process, distributed leadership is ‘chameleon-like, with complex perspectives’ and often ‘it means different things to different people’ (Harris 2007, p. 338). Choosing the Straussian
approach risks reducing data excessively, and thus succumbing to one of the key challenges grounded theory originally sought to overcome when it was devised. For the purposes of this study, techniques of Glaserian approach were thus adopted. The researcher further considered a number of similar contemporary approaches as well, but decided upon the traditional Glaserian approach in the interest of methodological consistency in researching the phenomenon of distributed leadership in decision-making business teams. A discussion on the techniques of constant comparison and theoretical sampling follows.

3.17 Constant comparison

Constant comparison (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), also known as theoretical comparison (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), requires that the researcher simultaneously collect and analyze data to foster emergence and verification of a theory grounded in that data (Glaser & Strauss, 1965). Constant comparison addresses the most important criticism founders of the grounded theory approach have made against positivist perspectives: that hypotheses are fixed prior to data collection, which can lead to data being forced to fit preconceived notions (hypotheses), instead of allowing the data to speak for itself and letting theory emerge through demonstrated connections between concepts (Glaser, 1998). Constant comparison seeks to source out the subtle nuances of a situation (for example, elements such as mood, positioning or texture), to achieve conceptual density through accuracy and completeness of description:

The data is reviewed over and over to generate a theory for exactly what is going on. There is no time for preconceptions or deduction. After it is discovered what is going on, then research may be done to test some of the hypotheses. (Glaser 1998, p. 11)

Conceptual density is the ‘richness of concept development and relationships’ developed through a thorough awareness and systematic scrutiny of the data (Strauss & Corbin 1994, p. 274). During constant comparison, ongoing analysis is in the forefront of the researcher’s mind as hypotheses are developed and reworked; and written analytical memos, usually drafted during reflective time away from direct observation, serve to formalize the implicit coding that the researcher uses to make
increasing sense of the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1965). Constant comparison occurred from the start of data collection in the present research and continued for the duration of the study. Notable examples of this are outlined below:

1. Observations conducted in the beginning of study, and from which initial concepts were developed for exploration during the first interviews;
2. Concepts developing during and after the first batch of interviews with participants;
3. Concepts emerging during additional observations in the field after the first batch of interviews;
4. Second round interviews, where concepts were significantly more dense, and contributions to the emerging theory comprising the different perspectives of key informants and group interviews, including the researcher’s own rapidly expanding bank of research memo’s, as well as concepts developed and further espoused with the use of informant leadership review documents.

Constant comparison is closely tied to theoretical sampling (Glaser & Holton, 2004), used to enhance understanding and promote conceptual density.

3.18 Theoretical sampling

Theoretical sampling is a hallmark of grounded theory methodology (Charmaz, 2014), occurring with the purpose of probing and deepening understanding around the emerging categories and their properties, the inter-relationship between categories, and ultimately, conceptualization of the core category (Glaser, 1998; Glaser, 2002). Developing and explaining conceptual connections is in itself a major contribution of social research (Glaser, 1998), although it is only the start of a process that ends when theoretical saturation is reached. At that point, the theory will consist of dense concepts, considered complete, having been integrated, usually through an extended bank of memos, in a manner that ‘accounts for most of the action in the substantive area’ (Glaser, 1998, p. 134).
Douglas (2003, p. 51) describes theoretical sampling as the ‘the process of sampling events, situations, populations, and responses, making comparisons between the samples of responses, descriptions, and behaviours in inductively generating theory.’ Theoretical sampling, like the comparisons being made, is purposive; and a variety of purposive sampling techniques were used, based on phase of the research. It is important for the researcher to use purposeful comparison based on the research questions, and to note that not everything needs to be compared with everything else, according to Oktay (2012). In the present study, the theoretical sampling process commenced very soon after research started, following the techniques described in the paragraphs above. The researcher found it useful and essential to be continuously aware of the level of development of all of the emerging concepts and their categories, and the extended periods of immersion in the study played an important role in helping to keep concepts in the front-of-mind, and in developing theoretical connections. A discussion of sampling techniques that were adopted follows.

3.18.1 Sampling techniques

Sampling logic is a key differentiator between quantitative and qualitative methods (Patton, 2002); and qualitative studies derive their power from purposefully selected samples, usually smaller in size. A non-probability sampling approach was used during the present research, as randomness was never sought in this qualitative study. Interviews continued until conceptual saturation was achieved, where additional interviews did not contribute any new information, as prescribed by Glaser (2002).

A variety of Patton’s (2002) sixteen variations (not necessarily mutually exclusive) of purposeful sampling, each with its own value and limitations, were employed in the present study. Sampling technique varied according to the timing of interviews (Patton, 2002), conducted in multiple phases during the data collection period. The sampling methods and processes used in this research study align closely with a stepped-process, a constant comparative method that was advocated by Glaser (2002). The six autonomous decision-making business teams being studied (listed in Table 3.3) worked in a large listed Australia Financial Services organization.
Table 3.3 Outline of teams in research study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team</th>
<th>Number of informants</th>
<th>Number of interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Team 1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team 2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team 3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team 4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team 5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team 6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Team members, who were experts in their fields, voluntarily joined autonomous decision-making teams with the view to participate and complete complex financial banking projects. In the present study most teams had an even balance of gender and only two teams had team members with some formal designation (i.e. designated leaders). The remaining teams had no formally appointed leaders. Team members varied in age between 26 and 61 years old with the average organizational tenure of 8 years. Most team members had previously participated in similar group activity, and the organization involved is a well-known market leader in the Australian Financial Services Sector, operating nationally with five key divisions.

This large listed company utilizes this particular practice, of using a complementary team formation of members with specialized expertise, to tackle and solve complex problems or challenges currently facing the organization. The present longitudinal research project was mainly conducted in multiple locations where team meetings took place, namely Brisbane and the Gold Coast in Queensland and also Sydney in New South Wales, Australia, over a twenty-two month period during 2014 and 2015.

Strict confidentiality agreements were put in place to ensure market-sensitive data were adequately protected, and for these purposes it would be inappropriate to provide a further description of their places of business. Sensitive market data or information has been omitted for reasons of confidentiality, and the reporting focus was to deal more with team processes and interactions than to outline the nature of
the tasks undertaken by the teams. Informants were individual team members who participated in interviews (Parry, 2002). Data analysis and collection is a complex iterative process. A number of interviews were conducted over three phases, including group interviews.

**Phase 1: Convenience sample of informants (inception)**

Interviews commenced with a convenience sample (Glaser, 1978) of 15 informants from the six teams. The interviews were conducted at the inception of the data collection period, and were a useful start in providing an understanding of the phenomena.

**Phase 2: Criterion and homogenous sampling (post meetings)**

Interviews focused on participants involved in their group meetings (Parry, 1998), and were conducted immediately after them. Participants were chosen carefully for a variety of reasons. Firstly, there was an element of criterion sampling (Glaser, 1978) of informants from teams that had performed well and teams that had encountered a variety of problems. This allowed the opportunity for the research to probe potential reasons for differences in team performance (Parry, 1998). This was important for the validity of the research. Homogenous sampling (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) involved interviews with a large proportion of some teams, with the intention of reducing between-group variation, and of examining the nature and variation of individual contributions to the collective (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

**Phase 3: Theoretical, chain and opportunistic sampling (follow up)**

Phase three interviews (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) were conducted a few months after completing phase two interviews and towards the end of the interview process. In the months between phases, a lot of work was done after each phase, first on refining substantive coding (Glaser, 1992), and then on integrating the patterns and connection between those codes using theoretical coding (Glaser, 1998). Informants who had the potential to elaborate on specific emerging concepts were selected using theoretical sampling (Glaser, 1978). Some concepts emerged from the first two
rounds of interviews that required further exploration (Glaser, 1992). For example, it emerged that some teams had experienced problems with disengaged and negative members.

This concept was checked and explored more deeply (Parry, 1998) in phase 3 interviews with other members in the team. Informants were identified through the interview content of earlier informants (Parry, 1998). This was in the form of chain sampling (Glaser, 1978) and also opportunistic sampling (Glaser, 1978), because the researcher followed emerging leads in a flexible manner (Patton, 2002). For example, an informant in phase 3 suggested that the researcher interview a particular team member who might be able to provide more insight into the concept of how team members switched between roles. The present research involved the qualitative analysis of a range of data, the discussion of which is presented below.

3.19 Sources of data and data collection

Glaser’s (1998, p. 8) statement that ‘all is data’ was a key consideration when selecting data sources for this study. The present study made use of multiple observations in situ, and documentary evidence generated by key informants; but the key source was semi-structured interviews (and interview transcripts), which contributed the largest and most vital source of data in this research study.

3.19.1 Observation

Distributed leadership analysis ought to examine the actual leadership activity, associated artefacts, and relationships; and observation in person is thus an important research method, according to Timperly (2005). In the present study, the researcher was present, as a non-participant observer, for most of the meetings that formed part of this research study. In the initial decision-making meetings, the researcher gathered extensive data providing a broad overview of associated activities. In subsequent meetings the researcher took notes and gathered data for the duration of the meetings. The grounded theory technique of memoing during the meetings facilitated constant comparison on new data against the emerging theory. The
researcher attended various meetings and observed many of the decision-making team processes.

The sampling approach resulted in not all teams being seen at all times by the researcher; however, the approach followed was deemed sufficiently satisfactory in the substantive context by related experts in the field (Parry, 2014). Douglas (2003) suggests that experience and length of time in the field is likely to enhance research rigour and validity. It should be noted that the researcher had been personally involved with the organization in a business capacity for many years, so was very familiar with the key points of team problem solving and when observation of key events was most needed. While the researcher did not participate in any group meetings, all necessary precautions were taken to have a minimal impact on group proceedings (Patton, 2002). Specific threats to validity, reliability and credibility include: constrained data collection; interpretation bias; and intellectual factors that impede the researcher’s capacity to ‘prevent the statements of actors being taken at face value’ (Douglas 2003, p. 53). In the present study these potential threats were addressed through:

1. Drawing on multiple sources of data collected in different ways;
2. Substantial time spent in the substantive area to gain a good understanding; and

### 3.19.2 Data collection documents

Participating team members completed a Leadership Recognition Feedback Form after each decision-making session, to promote reflection. The simple table captured perceptions about team leadership in situ by posing three questions: ‘Who exercised leadership?’, ‘Why do you say this?’, and ‘How did this impact you?’. A fourth column allowed informants to rank the leaders they identified. Teams also completed an Interpersonal Feedback Form mid-way and at the end of each meeting, which prompted informants to consider, for each member in the team, what was the
‘Behaviour in team during the last session?’ and ‘How do you see this team member in relation to leadership in the team?’. A copy of each form is attached in Appendix C.

The feedback forms were used for reflection and discussion by teams in situ. Participants were invited to submit those forms to the researcher, who then added a unique code to ensure confidentiality. The forms enabled the researcher to determine what behaviours and roles members believed they had performed, and how they had perceived others’ team behaviours and roles. The documentation provided a source of triangulation with participant perceptions at the time during interviews. Field notes, transcripts, and researcher memos, developed using the constant comparative method, were other documents available to the researcher.

3.19.3 Interviews

In-depth interviewing is the most fundamental qualitative research method, and is an appropriate instrument to gain insights into opinions and beliefs about a matter or situation and a deeper understanding of an informant’s world (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002). The present research used semi-structured interviews in order not to be too prescriptive, on one hand, or totally unfocused, on the other.

Informants were interviewed by the researcher in a private room, with the aim of minimal distractions. An interview protocol guided the general format of the interviews, as outlined in Appendix B. In every interview, care was taken to ensure consistency. Initially, consent procedures were covered and the researcher tried to establish a rapport with informants by assuring them that their account was confidential and that it was an important and valuable contribution to the study. Glaser (1998) advocates strongly against recording, arguing that it slows the solo researcher’s capacity to formulate emergent theory, only captures words, and might compromise confidentiality. After considering the caution and potential negative impacts, the researcher decided that the interviews would be audio recorded and transcribed, taking steps to address Glaser’s (1998) original concerns.
Notes were taken during interviews and used in constant comparison and the formulation of memos to emerge concepts. Transcribing the interviews personally proved a valuable source of comparison (and source of triangulation) between emerged concepts and theory that had been reached by the end of the interview process. By using a convergent style of interviewing informants, interview questions later in the process were focused on concepts that had not yet reached theoretical saturation, so that the interviews were increasingly time efficient and effective. All informants were also offered the opportunity of raising any additional issues, allowing new concepts to be identified if they arose.

Interviews needn’t be only one-on-one configurations, with some investigations lending themselves to group interviews (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002). In the present study, there was a mix of one-on-one interviews, and group interviews with two to five informants. Having members from the same group in an interview constituted a group interview, rather than a focus group comprising unrelated parties (Berg, 2006). Group interviews are useful tools in leadership research (Parry et al., 2014), with the researcher finding initiating and facilitating such interviewing skills to be particularly useful (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002) in the present study.

Benefits from group interviews (Watts & Ebbutt, 1987) include obtaining perspectives from collectives or from a particular combination of individuals. This was helpful in the present research to find out more about teams and to assist in triangulating team member’s accounts of incidents. It also provided prompts from multiple recollections and perceptions of an incident; and reduced concerns about being recorded in a group interview situation. No participants voiced any concerns about being recorded. The sessions were recorded and subsequently transcribed to help gather data accurately. Parry et al., (2014) recommend keeping interview groups small (five or fewer informants); and suggest that, through the interviewer (researcher) personally transcribing the interviews, reliable analysis can be obtained. Another potential problem is domination by single members. Where this did occasionally occur, it was overcome through interview techniques that sought contributions from all participants.
As recognized in grounded theory, conceptual saturation occurs where further data does not add to understanding (Glaser 2002). This was achieved after 44 interviews involving a total of 41 informants, when it was considered that additional interviews were not necessary. In the final few interviews the content was confirmatory of concepts raised previously and did not offer any new insights that added to the theory. The final few informants were also presented with elements of the theory that had emerged and invited to assess how accurately it fitted with their perceptions, providing an opportunity for rebuttal or modification. Informants were also encouraged to offer any additional insights that might have been missed. In one of these interviews, an informant felt that one of the concepts was worthy of greater importance than had been previously afforded it, but this was the only such instance.

3.20 Analysis of the research data

Berg (2006) suggests that, just as many people enjoy building complex jigsaw puzzles, many researchers enjoy the coding and analysis processes, particularly as a complete picture emerges from the parts. The ultimate aim of the present research was to successfully completed the analysis of all data which would ultimately result in producing a grounded theory of distributed leadership in business teams. Data analysis involved coding and analyzing the interviews, developing research memos, and reviewing selected segments of data to compare how the emerging theory fitted in with the observed events.

3.20.1 Coding of data

All of the data collection methods described previously yielded abundant data; which is only of any use if organized in some manner that allows comparison, and grounded theory methodology requires constant comparison. Even the first observations of the decision-making teams indicated a number of themes and a number of ways data might be viewed. For example, a single behaviour of a team member could be viewed from multiple perspectives, including the member’s own perspective, the
perspectives of other team members, and relative to antecedent or subsequent behaviours.

In order to make sense of data collected early in the research (in the form of field notes, interview notes and research memos), it was categorized and coded by the researcher in the open coding phase, using substantive codes, as prescribed by Glaser and Holton (2004), which are essentially descriptions of the empirical data. Using the traditional grounded theory approach, codes were assigned to chunks of text (rather than single lines) that conveyed a particular concept (Glaser, 2002). In a notable example, informants usually described behaviours, such as communicating or listening, in, at the very least, a few sentences. This amounted to one or more paragraphs in the transcript rather than a single line. Once categories were compared with other categories and other data, in a process called theoretical coding (Glaser & Holton, 2004), relationships between the categories began to emerge. Thematic analysis is another term describing the method of emerging central ideas from data (Charmaz, 2014).

The research was single handedly conducted by the individual researcher, with informants being able to verify that their contribution and experience was accurately represented in the final grounded theory. Additionally, rich data (Glaser & Holten, 2004), using thick description (Morrow, 2005), as recounted directly by the informants, was used to report findings. Concerns about multiple coders are reduced when the reader is provided with increased levels of transparency around processes and emergent thinking of the informants (Nicol, 2005). During theoretical coding, when concepts originating from informants’ comments were mapped and compared against each other, some codes emerged as more important than originally detected during interviews, while others were less important than originally perceived.

By the time interviews were transcribed by the researcher, and together with the research memos being formally coded, concepts were already reasonably advanced compared with the set of concepts originally determined when the first interviews were held. Memoing played a vital role in the development of theoretical codes (Glaser, 1998). All care was taken by the individual researcher in handling the large
amount of data, resulting in an enhanced precision and rigour when analyzing data, as prescribed by Parry (1998). In the present research, the computer program Leximancer was used to code all of the interview transcripts, and also those research memos developed after interviews were transcribed. Leximancer was used in a largely organising role (Parry, 2014), with the responsibility for developing and assigning codes resting solely with the researcher.

Leximancer was also helpful in quickly organising and reorganising chunks of coded text for further analysis. Leximancer was chosen over other comparable text-mining software because it has been proven effective in similar studies in handling large volumes of data with quick identification of concepts. Leximancer provides an efficient way to check and compare data and codes, but Parry (1998) also recommends the use of more traditional creative tools such as idea mapping on a white board. This recommendation was used to map broad categories of data, and supplemented the computer-based coding process with more diagrammatic and graphic-oriented methods during the numerous iterations of open (drawing concepts directly from informant data) and theoretical (mapping emerging concepts against one another) coding.

The researcher developed concept maps (information maps) on large sheets of paper, serving as a very accessible and creatively engaging means of organizing data. Post-it notes were also very helpful. Notes containing concepts/ideas were placed on a large wall and then organized and reorganized over time in search of a deeper understanding of the concepts and their inter-relationships. These codes are presented in the code list in Appendix D.

Each method of data organization, including coding and recoding at various stages, constitutes a re-contextualization of data (Dunne et al., 2005). Re-contextualization also occurs at various phases of the research study when moving from field to initial analysis, and then again when that analysis is presented. Re-contextualization is congruent with grounded theory research methods, which seek abstraction from initial bits of data to the final emergent theory that is presented (Glaser, 2002). This process reinforces the notion that ‘all is data’ (Glaser & Holton, 2004), and also the
core and ever-present role of the constant comparative method. Appendix E outlines the Hierarchy of Abstraction that emerged from the present study along with an overview of how the findings are discussed within the thesis.

3.20.2 Memoing

Memoing is another core analytical tool of grounded theory analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994), and building a bank of research memos, converting ideas into concepts and ultimately into substantive theory is fundamental to the present research (Glaser, 1998). During memoing, the researcher develops and captures in writing thoughts, ideas and questions about the data in general, and often concepts and codes in particular. The memos become increasingly focused and complex over time as codes become denser, until theoretical saturation is achieved. Memoing was used extensively throughout the study, commencing immediately once the research had started. Memoing served as a formal process through which concepts were developed and research issues surfaced, and also provided direction for theoretical sampling. The most recent memos at any time provided a useful repository of concepts that was easily accessible. The growing bank of memos also served as an ideas trail and a history of how concepts developed, and a further source against which emerging ideas could be contrasted. An example of a memo is outlined in Appendix F.

3.20.3 Negative case analysis

Negative cases can provide useful insights during the research process; thus the researcher scanned the data for contrary explanations. In the early stages of theory development, the exceptions were usually new ideas that complemented the emerging theory. In the latter stages, where the theory had reached conceptual density, there were no further exceptions. Only a single instance arose where one individual tried to exercise sole authority (in dictatorial fashion) but, as documented in the findings section, did not succeed for very long.
3.21 Ethical considerations

This study has taken into account all the necessary ethical considerations, which are characterized by the following general principles, as stated by Veal (2005):

1. No harm should be caused to the research participants;
2. Informants will participate freely; and
3. Informants will participate on the basis of informed consent.

Informed consent, as outlined by Thomas (2011), is an agreement from participants that they understand the nature of the study and participate willingly. There is also a further understanding that the information and data they provide will remain confidential. Participants were provided with the following information in an understandable, non-technical format, including: (1) the purpose of the study, (2) expected benefits, (3) confidentiality and anonymity clauses, (4) the period of the data being held and when it will be destroyed, (5) as well as the researcher’s contact details. Individual members had the freedom to decide if they wish to participate or not. In this study all members were willing participants. This research required approval by the Deakin University Ethics Committee. Full ethics approval, under DUHREC BL-EC 12-15, was obtained prior to any data collection. All research was conducted in an ethical manner during the present study.
CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS: PRIMARY INFLUENCING BEHAVIOURS

4.1 Introduction

In traditional grounded theory research, categories typically emerge from the data collection process and are grouped in a conceptual way, to facilitate understanding of phenomena present in the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Lower order emergent categories and their relationships can be grouped in a conceptual way into higher order or near-core categories (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) before becoming ultimately subsumed into the core category. Chapters 4-7 outline in detail the near-core categories and the core category that were discovered and developed during this research. This process identified the presence of phenomena at increasing levels of abstraction within the conceptual framework of categories. Appendix E contains a diagrammatical outline of the hierarchy of abstraction that emerged from the present study as well as an outline of the structure the thesis will follow in reporting the findings. During the present study, the researcher continually compared emerging theory with data from the field, until a plausible and adequate theory emerged. Chapter 8 outlines the grounded theory of distributed leadership in business teams. The extensive use of informant quotes reveals the exploration of the phenomena through the use of the participants’ voices, with the aim of providing transparency in how the theory is grounded in the data.

This basic social process of role fluidity emerged as the core category. The main contribution of the present methodology is in illuminating the fluidity of team roles and possible contribution non-designated leaders/followers can make in their teams. The present findings outline the identification of a hierarchy of influencing behaviours used by designated followers in exercising influence as well as differing roles that team members can and do readily espouse in their team interactions. A key contribution of the present research is the identification of ten broad influencing behaviours that were used by team members in the research field: communicating, listening, coordinating, motivating, committing, risking, mediating, facilitating, exemplifying, and encouraging.
During theoretical coding, it emerged that these influencing behaviours fell into one of three categories, primary, secondary, or situationally contingent, according to the importance of the action. More important influencing behaviours were exercised with greater frequency than were less important behaviours.

4.2 Hierarchy of influencing behaviours

A summary of the ten influencing behaviours that emerged from this research is provided in Table 4.1 below. Not all of the ten influencing behaviours identified in this study were demonstrated in equal measure. The influencing behaviours can be assigned to one of three categories, as illustrated in Table 4.1, in terms of their relative importance to influencing; and, as components of a complex social process, are ‘interlinked’ (Parry, 2014):

1. **Primary Influencing Behaviours**: these played a major role in other influencing behaviours and were essential in most if not all team situations; team could not be sustained without these influencing behaviours.

2. **Secondary Influencing Behaviours**: these were important in most team situations and, in their absence, teams functioned less efficiently or effectively.

3. **Situationally Contingent Influencing Behaviours**: these were situation dependent, emerging as important in certain contexts but not in others.

### Table 4.1 Description of influencing behaviours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influencing Behaviour</th>
<th>Description of Influencing Behaviours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Influencing Behaviors</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating</td>
<td>Initiating or taking charge of information exchange processes of the team. Aiming to influence the service and facilitation of team functions, processes and goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>Paying attention to the communication of other team members.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Description of Influencing Behaviours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influencing Behaviour</th>
<th>Secondary Influencing Behaviours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coordinating</td>
<td>Managing team resources (financial and human capital) to complete team tasks and achieving team goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivating</td>
<td>Promoting and sustaining individual performance levels that contribute positively to team outcomes. Seeking to enhance sense of belonging.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Situationally Contingent Behaviours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influencing Behaviour</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Committing</td>
<td>Demonstrating total commitment to team outcomes and all team members. Inspiring other members and being worthy of emulation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risking</td>
<td>Willingness to take actions (collectively for the team) under difficult circumstances. Attempting to produce a positive outcome while facing uncertainty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mediating</td>
<td>Reducing or eliminating conflict between members and restoring relationships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitating</td>
<td>Facilitating the contribution of ideas of characteristically quieter members in a team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exemplifying</td>
<td>Leading by example to other team members. Showing the way clearly to other team members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging</td>
<td>Providing confidence in team members. Being supportive of other team members in their efforts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Chapters 4, 5 and 6 these behaviours are examined in depth, including a discussion on: definition; protocols used to deploy each behaviour in the context of the team; impact of the behaviour on team performance and influencing; and finally, consideration of inter-relationships with other influencing behaviours. All statements are propositions relating to distributed leadership in the substantive field of study.
4.3 Primary influencing behaviours

Communicating and listening emerged as the two most important influencing behaviours; and, during theoretical coding, it became clear that they were primary behaviours upon which all other influencing behaviours and all team processes depended. Team member, R 27, explains that ‘communicating and listening should be thought of as the oil that lubricates the use of the other eight influencing behaviours and also team processes more generally.’

Team member, R11, observes, ‘communicating is a critical thing, and listening is also very important. To get the task done you have to understand what is going on and you have to question people about how it should be done as well.’ This sentiment is confirmed by R16, a senior decision-making team member and designated leader: ‘I think that's probably one of the most important things, you follow. Communicating is vital to all our team processes and is imperative in promoting a clear vision on what needs to be done in order to succeed.’

4.4 Secondary influencing behaviours

Coordinating and motivating emerged as the next most frequently and widely exercised influencing behaviours in teams. Along with communicating and listening, coordinating and motivating were usually among the first examples informants gave when asked for examples of influencing behaviours (e.g. ‘Who was influencing and what were they doing that you consider to be influencing?’).

Chapter 7 discusses the discovery of two primary aims of team members in this study: to be able to collaborate with fellow team members; and to derive a sense of belonging from their contribution to the team and association with other team members. Coordinating facilitated the contribution of team members in pursuit of team goals, while motivating promoted team members’ sense of belonging. Although teams sometimes functioned without coordinating or motivating, they were not effective or efficient and, in the longer term, a lack of coordinating and motivating would probably have made the team unsustainable. Almost all situations required
teams to have coordinating and motivating, and for this reason it is categorised as a secondary influencing behaviour.

### 4.5 Situationally contingent influencing behaviours

Committing, risking, mediating, facilitating, exemplifying, and encouraging, in comparison with primary and secondary behaviours, emerged largely through descriptions than by identifiable labels (i.e. most informants did not readily have a succinct label for the behaviour but were able to describe it). These behaviours were exercised less often (not always present) and, from theoretical coding insights, were more contextually dependent. For example, mediating arose in team conflict situations and, similarly, facilitating was only required if the team had very introverted members who were unwilling to contribute spontaneously.

### 4.6 Team roles and the core category of role fluidity

Influencing behaviours were exercised in the context of the team; and in this study, three team roles were identified. Members occupying a leading role ‘initiated’ or ‘took charge’ of activities to complete team tasks or to maintain or build the team. Members in a following role participated in completing team tasks. A third role, of disengaged member, was also identified in this study. The small number of individuals who sometimes occupied this role in some teams characteristically withdrew themselves from team activities, either periodically or on an ongoing basis. Although disengaged members made little or no contribution, they were nevertheless still notionally a part of the team up until the point they left it. Each of these roles is discussed in greater depth in Chapter 7.

In this study, multiple members in the teams occupied the leading role and, over time, most team members in all teams exercised some influence. Similarly, all team members occupied the following role for some time. Team members engaged in role switching, where they stepped up to exercise influence and subsequently stepped back to a following role. In cases of a leadership struggle, the loser would either step down to a following role or step out to become a detached nominal member. The
basic social process of role fluidity is explored in greater depth in Chapter 7. Overall, teams used distributed leadership, and a number of characteristics of distributed leadership, as it was exercised in the substantive field, emerged. As noted previously, members in the substantive field used one or more of ten influencing behaviours to exercise influence. In the remaining part of this chapter, the two core influencing behaviours, communicating and listening, are discussed.

4.7 Communicating

4.7.1 Overview

Communicating emerged as the most important primary influencing behaviour, acting mostly as a catalyst for other team processes. This section discusses the influencing behaviour that is communicating, and commences by establishing a definition of communicating in the context of this study. This is followed by a discussion of communicating protocols used by team members. Section 4.8 also considers how communicating impacts on influencing; and then examines the impact of communicating on team performance. Finally, a discussion is presented on how communicating is linked to the other nine influencing behaviours.

4.7.2 Definition of communicating

Communication underpinned the ability of team members to collaborate with fellow team members and in doing so contribute to the team, whether influencing team processes or working to complete a team task. Not all communication was aimed at influencing, although most members who exercised influence used the vehicle of communicating to sow and to propagate their influence. For the purposes of achieving clarity, this research uses the term communicating to specifically denote one of the influencing behaviours.

Communicating, a term developed through consideration of the data, is a primary influencing behaviour that involves ‘initiating’ or ‘taking charge’ of information exchange processes of the team. The purpose is to influence the service and
facilitation of team functions, processes and goals. Communicating was at the core of all other influencing behaviours. None of the remaining nine influencing behaviours were possible without communicating taking place, both on the part of the initiator of the communication exchange and on the part of those who communicate in response.

4.7.3 Communicating protocols

Teams in this study were constellations of decision-making team members working together on core projects, with communicating often described by team members as being conversational in nature. R29, a junior female decision-making team member captures the informality of conversational-style communicating exchanges, which engaged (and included) all team members, whose reciprocal obligation was to listen if they are not communicating: ‘I think we just chatted mainly informally about it and, if anyone had anything to add, they spoke up. And everybody listened to what was being said’ (R29). R26, another junior male team member also explains communicating in his team in a similar manner: ‘We'd sit down and have a conversation amongst our team…often thinking how we could improve on our proposals.’ Most informants judged communicating to be very important. Those in more successful teams commented on how communicating, in a give-and-take shared conversational style, had allowed everyone to feel part of the team. When the team fared poorly, members were usually more acutely aware of the value of communicating: ‘We possibly didn't explain clearly enough what's supposed to be done … and this led to our poor performance.’ (R14)

4.8 Communicating and influencing

In the present study two key observations arose from communicating between team members: (1) not all communicating achieves its intended influence; and (2) all influence is linked to communicating.
4.8.1 Communicating not always influential

Not all vocal members in a team were influential, highlighting that at times efforts at communicating are unsuccessful. Some members often talked a lot but said nothing of substance: ‘I mean, with the propositions put forward, it didn't really add any meaning to our tasks, but it was something there.’ (R14) These members possibly lacked confidence (due to inexperience) or ability in the respective tasks and thought that communicating more would possibly increase their chances of acceptance; however, in most instances expressing their ideas were not of value to the team and were simply ignored.

Some would-be influencers possessed a keen sense of when they were not carrying influence, and clearly recognised that communicating is an essential component in the influencing process. Instead of tacitly implying support for ideas of others through participation, they ceased communicating and temporarily withdrew from the team. Sometimes withdrawing their participation, to highlight their lack of willingness to follow ideas superseding their own, moved them from the role of would-be influencer to uninvolved or negative disengaged member. However, when they subsequently perceived even a remote chance of regaining influence, they quickly re-engaged with the team, adopting a style of communicating which sought to gain influence by often limiting the communicating of competitors: ‘R22 would be unhappy about not having her ideas accepted and would be quite negative of other team member’s ideas. But as soon as her ideas were discussed, she would try and speak out over the rest of the team and advocate for an opportunity for the team to proceed with her ideas.’ (R16)

4.8.2 Influence always linked to communicating

While not all communicating was influential, no influence in the team was exercised without communicating. Furthermore, those who exercised most influence were also identified as being highly communicative:
(Member) was by far, possibly the most confident in the team and definitely the most vocal and communicative out of all of the members in the team. And, as a result, (member) seemed to be fairly dominant. (R23)

Members who were communicative, confident and who offered solutions to team challenges were also perceived as being trustworthy and dependable: ‘...(member) also had many great ideas, and was very articulate. (Member) often put forward her thoughts, and many other members also held the perception that the (member) was always extremely dependable.’ (R29)

Constantly communicating ideas that others considered valuable raised the level of personal influence. Additionally, regularly communicating in this way led to a virtuous cycle of increasing influence. Team members came to believe that frequent communicating of ideas also implied raised levels of commitment to the team, often not demonstrated by quieter members who spoke less frequently.

4.8.3 Communicating as a vehicle for influence

Communicating was essential to team functioning – without it, members were unable to establish a shared sense of what was required to progress towards achieving team goals, or to coordinate their personal contributions. In addition to serving an information exchange role, communicating provided the vehicle for individuals’ influence in the team.

One individual member, often recognised by fellow team members as having been highly influential, used the broadcast analogy of ‘talk-time’ (R9) when referring to problem-solving discussions amongst team members. He described competition between more influential members (himself included) for attention, and how he (and other members) sometimes had to often be quite assertive to secure a chance to speak:

You need to get them to stop, before you start talking. And often then a dominant member will still attempt to talk right over you. And you just say, ‘Please, I'm still talking here’, or, you may not get a chance...
have your say. You need to advocate for your talk-time by saying ‘Please listen to what I have to say. I feel you are not listening to me.’ (R9)

This competition for team attention and influence by the more vocal team members contrasts with comments made in a group interview when discussing quieter team members. Quieter members did often have ideas but often did not manage to express them adequately to the whole team; and, consequently, were perceived by many as having less influence:

(Member) did his best to collaborate but he often would not speak up. (R13)

(Member) would not speak out when required. (R3)

(Member) was possibly too shy, she often held back. (R31)

4.9 Communicating and other influencing behaviours

Communicating facilitated the flow of ideas and information around the team, playing a role in all of the influencing behaviours and many team processes. Other than providing some examples at this point for illustration, the role of communicating in each of the influencing behaviours is left until the particular influencing behaviour is discussed in depth. For example, the influencing behaviour of coordinating was particularly reliant on good communicating to identify and schedule team resources. Communicating also played a major role in informing and engaging all members in team activities:

Well, it is certainly logical that communicating falls in with planning. You've got to make certain that everyone in your group understands what's going to happen. (R5)

Another example is feedback, a form of communicating that encouraged the exchange of information between members. Feedback helped members confirm their perceptions of what needed to be done for the team to reach its objectives, and also assisted them ascertain how their efforts contributed overall to team progress:
With regard feedback, by giving people feedback they are going to know what they have done right, what they haven't done so well, and so forth. This will help them to try and improve on what they have done. (R17)

Often negative communicating was avoided or minimised to ensure members felt able to collaborate and to contribute to the team without the fear of rejection or ridicule. Mostly this occurred informally; although most teams would probably have reflected at some point on the unhelpful consequences of such negative behaviour. While part of the reason for giving positive feedback was humanistic in nature, ensuring optimal contributions by avoiding negative feedback was also utilitarian in all instances. Careful provision of negative information or feedback by many team members ensured that a member’s confidence in their own ability was not affected, simultaneously minimising the chance of diminishing the member’s contribution to the team:

You may possibly need their expertise in the future and it is imperative to keep their confidence and allow them to feel that they really belong to the group. A negative outlook will only serve to make the process more complicated and increases the chance of future failure. How could that possibly help? (R10)

These examples show that communicating played a catalytic role in other influencing behaviours and team processes, with this notion being further developed by examining how informants link communicating with team performance.

4.10 Communicating and team performance

Team success in the substantive field in this study was determined on two dimensions. Firstly, teams completed certain core projects and, once these were implemented, were assessed against financial benchmarks set out during the planning process. Constant revision and comparison during the implementation process sought to achieve the best possible outcome for the decision-making teams. The second measure of team success was an assessment by individual team members as to how well the team had been able to work together during the project.
4.10.1 Communicating and team success

Successful teams reported higher levels of communicating by and amongst members than teams performing less well. Many team members noted that, in successful teams, more members engaged in communicating, more frequently. An informant from one successful team, regarded by many of his team as being quiet, commented, ‘Everybody had much to say’ (R25), when asked why the team was successful. R19, a newly recruited junior member from the most successful team, outlined that, from very early on in the project, the team would take the time to engage in clearly communicating what was required of all members: ‘We decided it was important to discuss and map out what needed to be done. This was important for everybody to understand their position in the project.’ (R19) R24, also from a successful team, intimated that quality communicating led to best options being selected: ‘Through good quality communication, we were able to select the best option going forward’. (R24)

Members in successful teams maximised the impact of communicating by reciprocating with listening. While this strategy might appear to be immediately and obviously beneficial in the context of having to complete a challenging project in a limited time, the benefits of this convention were not always evident to some teams all of the time. R17, a female senior decision-making team member, clearly describes how her team generated many ideas through alternating communicating and listening: ‘If someone was going to speak and this was always the case, members would take turns in speaking. There were always ideas flowing.’ (R17)

Communicating was not confined to single team members; and the extent to which it was shared was determined by the situation. Members of successful teams showed discipline in allowing and encouraging others to speak, and the resultant team climate meant that everyone in the team felt able to share ideas without feeling intimidated. In general, communicating became more efficient and effective as teams spent more time together, as they got to know each other better, and also as they learned how critical communicating was to successful team outcomes. However, not all teams improved at the same rate, nor did they all reach the same level of
efficiency and effectiveness. As an influencing behaviour critical and central to team functions and processes, communicating provided individual team members with the most accessible means of influencing other team members, and simultaneously increased the overall sense of inclusion. However, as communicating played such a primary role in team functioning and in building team cohesion, failures in team communication often lead to immediate, and sometimes substantial, negative outcomes.

4.10.2 Communicating and diminished team performance

Communicating played a central role in team processes, and teams with minimal communicating had their effectiveness restricted. As an example, informants report that a lack of communication usually resulted in a lack of effective planning, and without an agreed plan, team communicating was further thwarted. R20 explained how sometimes she was unable to communicate her ideas to the group, leading to intense personal frustration, which then impacted negatively on subsequent communicating, on the task at hand, and probably also on other team functions and processes: ‘There was a breakdown in our communications, and you could see the visible frustration in the team at times’. (R20) There also seemed to be potential for a vicious or virtual communicating cycle to develop: ‘I noticed that when things weren’t going well, communication often got worse before it got better.’ (R32)

Problems with communicating in the team had a direct, negative impact on individuals’ sense of inclusion; which, in turn, impacted on confidence and willingness to contribute ideas, during the planning phase in particular. R24 described the effects of poor communicating, in advocating that: ‘There were many members who did not step up to provide their own input, and this possibly was best understood in that there was no real or effective communication’. (R24) Poor communication also led to increased frustration, as there often appeared to be no understanding at times on communication protocols, with R15 explaining: ‘There were too many ideas being floated at the same time without individual consideration. This lead to unnecessary confusion.’ (R15)
Many teams also reported that time pressure led to reduced and poorer quality communicating; and also, as a direct result of less communicating, poorer performance was imminent. Many projects had strict time constraints, and it was clearly evident that under the circumstances communicating was often done less effectively. Poor communication reduced the opportunity to further team processes, and developed the potential (and tendency) to isolate and exclude team members:

If we couldn't come up with a feasible solution to the problem, then they would start panicking, in a sense, you know. (Member) looked concerned and said ‘We are not going to achieve our targets on this.’ This would lead to raised voices talking over each other and, maybe a bit of belittling in a sense. (R21)

4.11 Communicating and leadership

A strong link emerged between communicating and leadership. Communicating allowed the influencers to express their ideas in a confident manner, deemed essential for leadership. Less confident communicating, by quieter members in the team, tended to minimise their ability to influence while simultaneously enhancing perceptions about the influence of the more communicative members:

Yes, leaders always have a lot of thoughts and know what to say. There's no such thing as a lack of confidence, or shyness, or whatever it may possibly be. When the other quieter members have something to say, they would say it very quietly with less confidence. Members could easily pick up on this. (R8)

Members who engaged in frequent communicating gave the perception of taking charge, and other team members became willing followers: ‘From the outset, (member) was like very talkative, (member) like started taking charge. And we saw that, and we never objected. So we had him as leader’. (R21) Whether by instinct or by intent, those who exercised leadership ensured that they were heard in the team, sometimes against competition. R11 describes one such situation: ‘Too many people were attempting to be the leader. Trying to take control, basically. Trying to be heard.’ (R11)
Leaders also generated and communicated ideas about situations arising within the team. These ideas were more relevant to the state of the team itself than the team project. For example, R23 described a leader’s reframing of the social climate in a team that had grown a little combative:

We had just missed our latest targets and everyone was arguing about that. Tempers were just high and there was great unhappiness from a few, but the (member) just said, ‘Do not worry about it. This is not going to affect the overall project success.’ This seemed to calm everyone down. (R23)

Sometimes members fulfilling a leading role were not communicating their own ideas at all. R33 described a team member as a leader and a conduit for external information. However, this member did not replicate the received information but rather repackaged it to be more easily understood by team members, and also offered suggestions about how the task might be achieved:

(Member) would make it possible for us to understand. If she was given information, she could easily convey this over to us. And she could explain what it meant to the project and what was required from the team to reach our objectives. It appeared very easy or natural for her. (R33)

In similar vein, leader communicating also involved the internal transmission and dissemination of ideas originating from team members. Those seen as leaders did not always have their own problem-solving ideas, and certainly did not always have the best idea. However, they used communicating to marshal the ideas of others: ‘If you are a good leader, you need to have good communicating skills ... you must communicate with your group, and take information, bring together information to the project.’ (R2) Leaders also initiated and facilitated conversation in teams, in search of solutions to the team’s challenges, and recognising the need for communicating to accomplish this: ‘They would like initiate the conversation, but they wouldn’t necessarily provide the ideas.’ (R25)
4.12 Communicating: Summary

In this study, communicating was a primary influencing behaviour. Through ‘initiating’ and ‘taking charge’ of the information exchange processes in the team, communicating was an enabler of all other influencing behaviours and most team processes. While not all attempts of communicating were influential, all influence was linked to communicating – communicating was the vehicle for influence within teams.

Team performance was closely linked to the nature of communicating within the team, and this provided evidence of the impact of communicating on influencing team outcomes. Finally, as leadership involved the exercise of influence and communicating emerged as being inexorably linked with influencing, without communicating leadership would not have been possible. It also emerged that the impact of communicating is closely linked with listening, to the extent that the two core behaviours might be considered as being reciprocal. Listening is accordingly the influencing behaviour that is considered next.

4.13 Listening

4.13.1 Overview

Listening is a primary influencing behavior, which determined the extent to which individual team members were able to exchange their ideas. Section 4.13.2 considers the definition of listening that emerged from this study. The protocols used to exercise listening are discussed next, followed by consideration of how listening impacts on influencing; and then, how listening, in turn, impacts on team performance. Section 4.19 concludes with an examination of the inter-relationship of listening with the other influencing behaviours, and Section 4.20 of how listening relates to leadership.
4.13.2 Definition of listening

In this study, listening involved actively paying attention to the communication of another. Communicating and listening were often described as reciprocal in nature. R35, a senior decision-making team member, describes his perspective on listening:

In listening, you are not only using your own ideas but you are getting a broader view of what other members are thinking and what they are feeling. Listening and communicating work hand in hand. When listening, you get exposed to different ideas, different ways of doing things. This process of idea exchange promotes the process because not everybody thinks the same way. (R35)

R7 outlined the role that listening played in the influencing dynamics of the team. She observes that one of the more dominant members of the team switched between presenting their own ideas and listening to ideas of others. She notes also that the team started to argue when there was insufficient listening and, ultimately, that a lack of listening had caused the team to perform poorly on one of the smaller tasks within a complex project:

(Member) always had a few good ideas and he always listened intently. If I had some proposition about the task and then (member) would listen and think about and then plan it. If other had some input, he would also listen intently to them. The whole team would take turns listening to each other’s ideas. Yeah, and a few times we had a bit of fighting. We didn't listen in this instance and this caused our performance to suffer in the small tasks. Not listening was our downfall in this case. (R7)

I remember one time, (member) had something to say. And he knew what was going on. But we never listened to him. That's why we suffered on that one. (R11)

Some informants felt listening is the most important influencing behaviour: ‘You have to listen. That's the most important one (leadership function) of all’. (R3) Many of the team members highlighted that, although important, the role of listening is often understated: ‘I think listening is underestimated by a lot of our people.’ (R22)
Participants from both successful and less successful teams alluded to a somewhat formalized formal speaking and listening protocol that ensured as many members of the team as possible were able to contribute.

4.14 Listening protocols

Many teams implemented somewhat formalized listening and speaking protocols, which often involved turn taking. Normally, one or two individuals took overall control of this process, determining the turn-taking, length of time allocated to each speaker, and the level of credence attached to the emergent ideas. R11 explains how a small group of team members facilitated the process in his team, similar to that described as occurring in many other teams:

If you had an idea, you would raise your hand or gesture for a turn to speak … and we (small group controlling listening) would then say, ‘Alright, it is your turn to speak now.’ Then we would listen and analyze what was said. Team members would wait their turn until everyone had a chance to speak. (R11)

Many informants often reinforced the systematic nature of listening and communicating, adding further insights about how listening and communicating led to the team developing ideas:

Before each task we brainstormed, it wasn't everybody talking at the same time. Yeah, we had a system where like one person talks at a time and everybody else listens and actually takes into consideration everything about that sort of information. And, if somebody else has got something better, or something with a different view, then they go on and everybody listens to that. (R15)

R4 describes how his team dealt with pressure situations where members were a little tense. One member, from a smaller sub-group in the team, would get the members to sit down, relax, and then adopt a conversational style protocol to promote listening and idea sharing. He also outlined how, in a relatively subtle manner, contributions were put forth (listened to) but discarded in favour of more suitable alternative ideas:
‘Let us consider this clearly! Relax, take a few moments, and see how we can sort this out. There has to be a way to resolve this.’ Then everybody would come up with ideas and we would have sort of like a conversation, and somebody would say, ‘Rather, let’s do that, maybe we can improve a bit on this suggestion.’ (R4)

R26, a junior male decision-making team member, also commented on how certain members in the team used a listening protocol to extract ideas from one of the very quiet but very intellectually capable team members. Instead of sharing ideas with the whole team, the member felt most comfortable telling one or two members, who ‘facilitated’ his ideas to the others. Although a form of listening protocol that needs mentioning at this point, facilitating is identified as sufficiently specialist, influential, and distinct to warrant inclusion and discussion as a separate influencing behaviour in its own right, arising in specific circumstances:

The key members who had taken charge decided to get input from a quieter more reserved member who was an expert in the particular task. They asked him ‘What should we do here?’ And, everyone else kept quiet because he was quite soft-spoken, and no one spoke over him. (R38)

They listened to what he said. And then they took his ideas, the three of them were exercising leadership and kind of discussed the ideas between each other. It was like they facilitated (member’s) ideas. (R11)

4.14.1 Purpose of protocols

Listening and communicating protocols helped ensure that everyone in the team felt they had a fair opportunity to contribute: ‘We had like that system that I outlined earlier, everybody comes up with an idea and we sort of brainstorm and everybody has a fair input.’ (R24) However, even in the most successful teams in the study, this protocol did not always mean that everyone had to be listened to. Often, when the team was under time pressure, the protocol was altered slightly, allowing everyone a chance to speak up if they wished but without canvassing the opinion of every member on a rotational basis.
4.14.2 Lack of listening / lack of protocols

Finally, although the lack of listening is discussed in depth in its own section, R20 describes how the listening-communicating protocol was adapted slightly when members realised that a lack of listening resulted in diminished team performance:

On many occasions, when (member) started to dominate too much, or there was an argument, somebody would step up and resolve the issue by saying, ‘We are not listening again.’ Then they would all step back and let whoever was trying to talk do the talking. (R20)

By adopting listening and communicating protocols, often established through trial and error, members acknowledged one another’s need to be heard and also the need to hear others.

4.15 Listening and influencing

The extent to which a team member is listened to in general, and by the more influential team members in particular, provided that member and others with an informal measure of their ability to influence the team. Being listened too provided individuals with an opportunity to collaborate with and contribute to the team, even if their ideas were ultimately not adopted. R3 explains how being listened to contributed to individual team members feeling valued and comfortable as part of the team:

They feel more part of the team and feel that they are actually playing an important role; that they are contributing valuable information. Otherwise, if you don't really take notice of the people around you, then they are not going to feel too comfortable around you. (R3)

R24 emphasised the importance of every member feeling able to contribute if they wished, even if they were unsure how their contributions might add value:

Everybody was able to collaborate, to contribute effectively, and although we didn't have a dominant leader, everybody was able to take into account what everybody said. From my point of view, I felt that everybody was able to speak and give their opinions, even though
they might not have been experts in that particular task. And everybody, including the quietest of members, wanted to collaborate and contribute positively to the group. (R24)

R30, a senior decision-making team member, also commented how being listened to affects motivation, and increased self-worth and confidence of many team members. Participant, R4, confirms that being listened to is motivating, and describes how he felt empowered and motivated to contribute even more when others listened to him:

Well, I would feel that what I'm contributing, which is actually valuable, and that you are actually taking time out to listen to me. I feel that my contribution is really valued. I can make a real difference on this project. I feel encouraged to offer even more suggestions and collaborate with the team. (R4)

Listening to others in the team as a show of support is particularly important for the more extraverted members, who ordinarily have their own ideas and also exercise leadership. R22 reflects that listening to others helped them to feel included: ‘You must show that their contribution is actually valuable. You are not just brushing it aside’. (R22) Being listened to allowed others to feel they had some stake in influencing the team without needing to challenge for leadership: ‘Yeah, sort of, everyone else had influence in the process’. (R13) One of the followers, who felt he was able to contribute because he was listened to, perceived the leader as balanced: ‘(Member) was a balanced leader towards the team. If anyone had a good idea, we would most certainly use it’. (R36)

Some members were so quiet that they never need to be listened to, creating an impression of themselves as possibly non-influential followers: ‘(Member) was really quiet and he seems to prefer to listen and see what is going on. (Member) maybe only provided at most a few ideas.’ (R16)

This condition of seldom offering an idea, and perhaps not being listened to on the rare occasion of wanting to be heard, sits in stark contrast to team members who did contribute and made sure they were listened to: ‘(Member) is very confident and comes across as a competent team member. (Member) always made sure you knew
what his ideas or contribution was.’ (R8) Some communicative members needed to be conscious of the importance of listening to others, or risk being rejected themselves.

### 4.16 Listening and team performance

Listening, or lack of the influencing behaviour, played a role in determining whether or not teams were successful.

#### 4.16.1 Listening and team success

On one hand, listening provided members with the opportunity of being heard. Listening also afforded team members the opportunity to hear others in the team. Being listened to gave team members the opportunity to influence others and contribute to the team. In addition, listening was used (by some members more than others) to exercise influence even when they themselves were not speaking. Listening to members who were speaking provided the team with the chance of drawing on different ideas and developing a clearer understanding of team-related issues.

#### 4.16.2 Idea dispersal and information exchange

Listening played a key role in facilitating the dispersal of ideas amongst the team. R23 observes how an inclusive listening protocol stimulates the flow of ideas in their team: ‘If someone was going to speak, everyone would keep quiet ... And there would always be ideas flowing in the group’. (R23) R12, in another team, adds that not only was there a flow of ideas in his team, but that members of the team assimilated the ideas of others, attempting to improve them to maximise the benefits for the team: ‘We all would listen to ideas and improve them. When (member) had an idea she just put it in and we'd all work on it.’ (R12)

Many who were identified as leaders in their teams discussed how they used listening to elicit ideas from team members, clarify and check the plans that other members
were proposing, and even to use a lack of listening to reduce the influence of some team members.

### 4.16.3 Idea collection and learning

Perhaps one of the most powerful lessons that influencers needed to learn is that the other remaining team members probably held highly relevant ideas as well. R22 describes how she learned that she needed input from others in the team and would listen to their suggestions:

> I have learnt, you know, that in different situations you can never ever be a hundred percent certain. You must value the input of other members. You have to listen to what everyone has to say. (R22)

This highlights a more general role that interpretation played in determining influencing effectiveness. In the context of idea collection, team members needed to interpret what they were hearing and decide which options were most suitable. Listening improved over time, reinforced largely by the lesson that not listening often led to sub-optimal outcomes. R38 noticed how a quieter yet reasonably influential individual in their team would listen to the ideas of others, and then attempt to progress ideas by experimenting with conceptual solutions through further questioning and listening.

### 4.16.4 Idea shaping and influence

Listening also played an important role in ensuring members knew what was happening, and is particularly relevant for those trying to exercise influence in the team. Commenting on a member of his team he considered to be a leader, R12 pointed out that leaders were more aware of what is happening in the team when they engaged in listening:

> If you are a leader, you need to know what’s going on. You need to be able to listen and not to talk all the time. (Member) had a bit of a problem talking all the time, but sometimes he would listen and then he would know what's going on and be able to tell the rest of the
group what's going on and help clarify it properly. Otherwise you end up communicating the wrong ideas. (R12)

R13, identified as influential by his team, often preferred others to speak first. This allowed them to be heard and gave him the opportunity to assess their ideas. He was also able to decide if he needed to influence the direction of the ideas, in which case he would intervene:

I never spoke first. I would let people speak a bit more and then find out which way it's going and then, if you don't think that's the right way, try and divert it a bit to what you think might be a better way. If everyone is not throwing ideas in, then it leaves a gap for someone else to maybe throw in some ideas. (R13)

R6 used listening as a mechanism to slow down one of the more impulsive members in his team, while simultaneously checking idea quality and ensuring that all team members had an opportunity to hear what was being suggested:

If I knew it was going to fail, I would say to him, ‘(Member), let's just hang on a minute and stop’. I think back that I stopped him a few times, prompting him to provide a clearer explanation of what was going to actually be done. It would only make sense to be clear before we would have to visit the whole task and would definitely save time in instances. (R6)

R19, like many of those who exercised leadership, notes that when members listened frequently to certain individuals, and then followed through on their suggestions, that indicated influence and power: ‘He felt that due to the fact that they were listening, he had them on his side.’ (R19) A senior decision-making member, R21, also provided insights into how an individual team member used a lack of listening in a calculating manner to effectively exclude another member with whom he was having a leadership struggle:

They were talking, and (member) was trying to talk and I think that (another member) just spoke over him and (member) just muttered and he became so upset that he sat back and withdrew from the process. Other members didn’t even seem to notice nor did they appear to side with (the other member). It appeared as though they just accepted the direction. (R21)
R12 expanded on the subtle influence exercised by one member through appearing not to listen. R12 concluded that this was probably a well-considered tactic, similar to others that this individual used at various times. Whether by design or chance, most teams quickly learned that a lack of listening often led to diminished performance and even failure on certain smaller tasks within the project. The consequences for team functioning resulting from a lack of listening are examined more closely in the next section.

4.17 Listening and diminished team performance

A lack of listening impacted on individual team members and also on team performance. When members were not listened to they were likely to suffer from a loss of confidence and/or increased frustration levels. At the team level, non-listening raised inter-member tensions, reduced the scope and quality of ideas, and resulted in information being overlooked. Leaders who experienced a loss of listeners also essentially temporarily lost their ability to influence those particular members.

4.17.1 Comparing outcomes of listening and non-listening

R16 compared his own team experience with previous teams that he had worked in on previous projects. He felt that, overall, his new team had listened far less to members, causing a loss of individual confidence and concomitant willingness to share ideas with the team. On further enquiry from previous colleagues, it was found that R16 was particularly effective at listening to other team members:

> Listening clearly provided our people with more confidence. In contrast to previous occasions people didn't have, as I said, everybody talked at the same time. People didn't have the confidence to put in their input, and I think that this was due to the fact that there was no effective communication. (R16)

4.17.2 Raised level of tension

A raised level of tension in the team was regularly the first symptom of a lack of effective listening in a team. R13 describes an incident where his team experienced
its most substantial argument, commenting that, while they could physically hear each other, they didn’t listen, as each tried to assert his own idea: ‘We had a big argument on a certain task process ... we could hear each other, but everyone had their own ideas.’ (R13) R11 noted that members became embroiled in conflict when they ignored each other’s ideas during a problem solving issue: ‘The group just seemed to be stuck on that problem. Most members were just talking over each other, rather than discussing the matter logically and approaching it methodically.’ (R11)

4.17.3 Reduced scope and quality of ideas

When teams did not engage in effective listening, possible solutions to challenges were often mentioned but overlooked or ignored. Team members more interested in sharing their own ideas than listening to others seemed, suggested R9, to be like a horse with blinkers. This narrow view reduced the team’s capacity to consider more, and possibly better, options: ‘You have to listen to other people, and can't just go ahead with personal ideas, just like a horse with blinkers.’ (R9)

R21 provided similar insights, using the term tunnel vision in the same way R9 used the blinkers metaphor, reiterating that effective listening also involves consciously processing the worth of the ideas presented:

If a member doesn't listen, they've got tunnel vision. They are only chasing one solution, irrespective of whether it is the wrong or right way to go about it. You need to be able to listen effectively, in that you actually paying attention to what the person is saying and actually take into account the sort of pros and cons about it. (R21)

R27 relates how a lack of listening stifled idea generation in his team:

If the leaders paid more attention to the followers, then there would be more ideas coming through. As I told you, there was always someone with stronger ideas that were put forward. (R27)

R31 provided insights into why listening is sometimes sub-standard. She suggested that the pressure of time played a major role in prompting some to select the first proposal offered, rather than listening to a range of ideas and then choosing the best
option. After suffering diminished performance using this approach, her team finally learned that it was better to take a little longer to hear from all who wished to contribute, and then to weigh up the best options. Overall, performance improved over time:

Listening was good at stages. It could have been better from time to time ... sometimes we would want to get the task done over quickly, so listen to one idea. And, not all the time it would be the right idea. We would have to go revisit certain tasks, and I think that was cost us in the long term. We found that, when we did stop and listen to other people’s ideas, it helped. (R31)

Ironically, at times success during previous tasks led to failure after members disregarded and abandoned listening protocols that had previously contributed to successful outcomes. For example, prior success, underpinned by inclusive listening and communicating protocols during planning, led to complacency and less listening during planning:

At times the team appeared to forget about the importance of listening, thinking that the task was simple. By getting ahead of yourself will simply not helpful in the long term. You have to keeping listening to everyone in the team and plan beforehand. (R23)

4.18 Control and dominance

Another reason some people failed to listen is because they wanted to be in control. R3 believed that some tried to exercise influence in the team at the expense of other team members:

They didn't listen to each other, I found excellent ideas being put forward; however, somebody else would talk over that person and say ‘No, but let's try this instead’. Instead of listening and planning there was too many people trying to be the leader, trying to take control; basically trying to be heard to ensure that they are the one to be in control of the group. (R3)

R22 noticed attempts by some members to dominate without any regard for the other members. She provided an example where two dominant individuals tried to
complete the team task by directing others, but did not allow them to participate in solution generation:

It was clearly evident that there were at least two dominant people in our group who were able to just, not as in do everything by themselves, but they were, they were able to know what was going on. I felt that they didn't want to consider other people's inputs. And they just carried on as if they wanted to complete the task without any input from others. (R22)

R8 noted that one team member simply ignored the contribution of others by speaking over them and pushing his own ideas instead. R18 refers to a dominant individual who behaved in a similar way to a dictator, initially mostly ignoring his team:

He was the dominant leader. He didn't really take notice of other people’s points. He spoke over everyone else. He felt that he was in control. (R18)

A number of fellow team members made reference to the same individual after observing him in action. One informant suggested that, although the individual was ordinarily a likeable person and considered a good leader, a lack of listening had played a major role in him being rejected by his team for a period of time: ‘By not listening, then you are going to end up like (member). Really bad, even though he is nice guy. It’s just the wrong way of going about it surely.’ (R15)

Most members wanting to exercise influence came to realise that, despite having good ideas, they needed to allow others a reasonable opportunity to share their ideas too. A key realisation for many wishing to exercise influence in the team was the need to signal and demonstrate that others have equal rights to be heard. Effective influencers often adopted a style that entailed switching between communicating their own ideas and active listening, which encouraged others to participate and contribute. It follows effective leaders need to model or inculcate a culture of listening.
4.19 **Listening and other influencing behaviours**

Listening behaviour was influential from the perspective both of an individual’s own ideas being heard by the rest of the team and also facilitating the same opportunity for the others. Listening and communicating were by far the most frequently used influencing behaviours in teams, and the incidence and consistency with which each was deployed had a major impact on team effectiveness and team performance. As primary influencing behaviours that facilitated normative team behaviour, they provided the foundation upon which all of the other influencing behaviours were built. The reciprocal nature of this pair of influencing behaviours, as exercised by the various individuals in the team, played a major role in determining perceptions of inclusivity. Crucially, these two behaviours also contributed substantively to the ability of individuals in the team to sustain their influence. Successful influencers were able to skilfully switch between the communicating and listening behaviours; just as, at a more macro level, they often switched between leading and following roles.

4.20 **Listening and leadership**

R23 firmly advocates that listening is a leadership function, pointing out that it fostered participation of others and increased influence. R23 also mentions how the leader who listened ‘steps down’ as he hears others, implying that the speaker is then able to step up and exercise a more overt form of influence. This represents a switching of influencing behaviour for both parties: the ‘leader’ switches to listening, and the other party switches either from a non-influencing mode or from a different influencing behaviour to one of communicating:

> Listening is a core leadership function. If you don't listen, you are not going to really perform to the best of your ability and your group isn't really going to want to participate either, because they are not getting their input in the circumstances. If you listen, you show better leadership which encourages fellow members, motivates them to, you know, put forward the ideas and actually see that the leader actually steps down so that they can speak. (R23)
The idea of key influencers switching between listening and communicating was also explained by R31, noting that a couple of key influencers in the team would use switching to get ideas and facilitate action to solve team challenges:

Yeah, I think most of the time they would step back and listen. And then they would say, ‘Sure, that's the right thing to do!’ They may not necessarily provide ideas, but they knew how to use them. (R31)

A team member, R36, amongst the four members identified as most influential, explained how the switching of another influencer in the team contributed to a sense of inclusion:

A leader does not dominate the group but strives to bring oneself down to a group level. In doing this, you can show that everybody is on the same level and can achieve success. Being on the same level is vitally important, and so listening is important, because everyone has ideas. Everybody wants to be heard. (R36)

R38 explained how one of the influencers would make an extra effort to switch to listening when a member who had not had a chance to speak wanted to add something, just as he switched into the communicating role when more stimulation was needed: ‘When other newer members wished to speak, (member) then pulled back, listened to the input, and then joined in with the conversation.’ (R38) R13 described how the three main influencers in their team were able to use switching to encourage other members to participate and yet still maintain overall control of the team. He qualified that switching enabled members to function more as coordinators than autocrats:

They were three coordinators. They weren’t in charge of everything, but when they did something, everyone would be happy to follow. If they stood back to listen everyone else would step back to listen, as well. So they, controlled what was happening. (R13)

Team members identified as leaders exercised influence both through actively listening – stepping back and encouraging others to speak – and also through communicating their ideas. R32 explains how an influential member in his team operated: ‘(Member) was a real leader and was very influential, but at times actually
drew back a little bit, sort of to listen to what everyone had to say.’ (R32) Less influential team members, reluctantly described as followers, were portrayed differently:

Most of the members worked well. They would listen, then put in some advice as well, otherwise they would listen, do what they needed to do. I don't want to say followers, but they worked as a team type of thing. If they had something to say, they put it forward; and then we could use the information, and do the task better. (R32)

4.23 Listening: Summary

Listening, like communicating, emerged in this study as a primary influencing behaviour, which played a role in facilitating the exercise of all other influencing behaviours. In the substantive field, listening involved actively attending to the communicating of others. Being listened to often provided those communicating with an influential platform, which was denied if listening was absent. Being listened to indicated that a member’s contribution was worthy of consideration and contributed to a sense of belonging, even if the ideas were not implemented. Listening to others was closely associated with team performance, in major part due to the role that listening plays in exchanging, developing, and dispersing information and solutions to team challenges.

4.24 Summary of chapter

The initial portion of this chapter provided a summation of the main findings arising from the present, grounded theory study. Sections 4.2 - 4.6 outline the structure the thesis will follow in reporting and providing explanations of these findings, and their theoretical relevance to the substantive theory of distributed leadership in business teams. Sections 4.7 - 4.23 explored two main influencing behaviours, namely communicating and listening, used by designated followers in exercising leadership.

These behaviours were categorized as primary influencing behaviours, as these played a major role in other influencing behaviours and were essential in most if not all team situations. Teams simply could not be sustained without these core
behaviours. The near-core category of primary influencing behaviours provides a partial explanation of how designated followers exercised leadership; however, it was imperative to continue probing the data to find a more complete explanation of the phenomenon. Chapter 5 provides further account of two other influencing behaviours discovered, namely coordinating and motivating, also used by designated followers in exercising leadership. These findings assist in providing additional clarity in the exploration for answers to the research questions.
CHAPTER 5 FINDINGS: SECONDARY INFLUENCING BEHAVIOURS

5.1 Introduction

After further analysis of the data in seeking to provide greater clarity about how designated followers exercise leadership, two influencing behaviours emerged. Those behaviours are coordinating and motivating. They are explained in this chapter. Both of these influencing behaviours were widely exercised in teams. Consequently, they were frequently identified early in interviews, and expressed with a range of different terms, in response to the opening question about who exercised influence in the team and how that was achieved. Interestingly, these two influencing behaviours address the two core concerns of team membership, namely collaborating and belonging (discussed in Chapter 7). Team performance was closely linked with the exercise of these two secondary behaviours, each of which is discussed in subsequent sections of this chapter.

5.2 Coordinating

5.2.1 Overview

As one of the frequently practised influencing behaviours, required most of the time, coordinating was an important secondary influencing behaviour, and a ‘vital leadership skill’. (R28) This importance was further espoused by R12, who described the behaviour as ‘an absolute necessity for team success.’

In Section 5.2.2, a definition of coordinating is provided, following which the protocols for implementation within a team context are examined. Team performance is then examined in relation to the four phases of the team task execution cycle, each with its own component behaviours. The section concludes with an analysis of the inter-relationships between coordinating and the other influencing behaviours, and a consideration of how coordinating and leadership interface.
5.2.2 Definition of coordinating

Coordinating aims to manage team resources - financial and human capital - towards the completion of team tasks and achieving of team goals. In this study, coordinating involved ‘taking charge’ for a period of time, identifying resources available to the group, putting them to best use through a suitable plan of action, and monitoring until task completion.

Coordinating enhanced a sense of inclusion, through involving team members in task planning and execution, a practice which also increased the likelihood of team success. R2 noted that, of all the influencing behaviours, coordinating is central to getting things done in a team: ‘Coordinating is key because you simply need to coordinate your approach. If you don’t, then performance will surely be affected.’ (R2) Although coordinating was identified as a distinct influencing behaviour, exercised to manage team resources to achieve team goals, it comprises a range of behaviours (discussed in Section 5.4) required at different times, depending on the progress of the task.

For example, focusing the team was usually required earlier, but evaluating task progress was only required later. Using this example, coordinating involved ‘initiating’ or ‘taking charge’ of planning in the early stages of task execution and evaluating task progress in the later stages. The component behaviours that manage team resources and apply them to task execution collectively constitute coordinating. R21 demonstrates the complexity of coordinating, and captures many elements of this influencing behaviour:

The person with the expertise in the current situation normally understands what is required and will outline the plan to the other team members. (Member) basically knows how to coordinate the group effort and how to get the most efficient use of the available group resources to get the successful outcome for the team. (R21)

To exercise coordinating effectively, and ensure that appropriate component behaviours occur at the right time, teams developed coordinating protocols.
5.3 Coordinating protocols

All teams adopted somewhat formalised coordinating protocols, heavily reliant on the two primary influencing behaviours, communicating and listening. The primary behaviours function in linking the other component behaviours, like a hub and spokes. Moving to an appropriate physical position (location) within the group was often essential to facilitate effective communicating and listening, and was also a vitally important element in the coordinating protocol.

When team members proposed competing solutions, communicating played a critical role in the coordinating protocols to facilitate the selection from the available alternatives. R11 provides a sense of this competition in their group:

There were often ego clashes, where you had an individual member wanting to be dominant. And most times there would be another member who would also like to be leading … so there was conflict in that situation. (R11)

An essential difference between highly successful and less successful teams was the extent of coordination of available resources, from the planning phase through to task completion and evaluation. R4, a member of a highly successful team, outlines the protocols their team followed to maximise coordination:

When it came to our most challenging sub-tasks, we sat down for 45 minutes and we actually discussed the situation, the resources we have, the time, the amount, time management and so forth. And then we estimated times to finish the task and who we would use going forward. (R4)

From the description provided by many team members, it can be deduced that the overall coordinating process is very team-centered. There are two issues that become evident during interviews: (1) there is a need to allow all members to have their say, within time constraints; and (2) there is a requirement to decide on a solution from a range of options. R21 describes how a member in their team influenced coordinating by strategically timing contributions, particularly when things were not going well:
(Member) was leading the whole time, even though not much was being said … (member) would intervene at critical points when things appeared to be getting off track. Other members would listen to what was being said … (member) did not dominate the conversation, but rather, occasionally would intervene, but only after listening to what the other members had to say. (R21)

Once teams have canvassed various possible approaches to their challenge, a decision needs to be taken about the specific plan of action to follow. R5 provides an account of how their team voted on the preferred option, following the team brainstorm:

(Coordinating) was joined with the planning, in that after each member put forward possible proposals, the group would then informally weigh up and vote with which plan they were going to go with … how it would be implemented and who would be responsible for each sub-task. (R5)

Numerous observations by the researcher suggest that physical position of the would-be coordinator is vital. Those attempting to influence a larger team of people need to assume a position as central as possible to the team or to the members they are trying to influence. R33 highlights this with her explanation when the researcher questioned R33 about how she moved among the group, trying to get into a suitable position:

I couldn't get in enough as everyone wanted to talk at the same time ... I got up and moved a couple of times to see if I could get a better position during the conversations even trying to stand in a more central position. Eventually, I got a position where I felt I could engage correctly within the group. (R33)

R35, along with another of the team members, assumed a coordinating role for the sub-task on a complex project, which had multiple stages that required completion. He explains how he moved between the sub-groups working on various tasks, ensuring that all were doing what was needed to complete the project successfully:

I was run off my feet … just making sure that everyone was doing their allocated job properly … ensuring that all sub-tasks were
completed successfully. Failure in one would have surely meant failure in the project as a whole. (R35)

5.4  Coordinating and team performance

Coordinating was the influencing behaviour that focused most heavily and frequently on task completion, and consequently was crucial to team performance. It emerged in this study that coordinating is a complex, multi-faceted influencing behaviour, comprising a variety of component behaviours linked to the team’s task execution cycle, outlined in Figure 5-1.

![Component behaviours of task execution cycle](image_url)

Figure 5.1  Component behaviours of task execution cycle
Table 5.1  Task execution cycle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage in Execution Cycle</th>
<th>Component Behaviour</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focusing</td>
<td>Focusing</td>
<td>Concentrating efforts of members with diverse capabilities on the work of the team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influencing Planning</td>
<td>Generating ideas</td>
<td>Based on task objectives, providing ideas for a possible plan and listening to the ideas of other as multiple members in the team influence the planning process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Filtering or evaluating ideas</td>
<td>Converging focus from many different ideas to a few likely options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deciding</td>
<td></td>
<td>Choosing a course of action from the variety of options proposed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allocating</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sub-tasks are allocated for member to complete individually or in smaller groups to achieve the best possible outcome overall for the team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing</td>
<td>Initiating</td>
<td>Taking action lead by example, initiating work on the task they undertake to complete. Particular members usually initiate task implementation and others follow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Controlling</td>
<td>Overseeing the task that is being completed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Directing</td>
<td>Telling team members what they need to do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Instructing</td>
<td>Informing others how to achieve a particular task and then completed another sub-task, according to the division of labour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monitoring &amp; Evaluating</td>
<td>Determining whether execution is progressing according to earlier planning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluating</td>
<td>Assessing actual versus expected progress, along with an analysis of how task execution needs to change to achieve the desired outcomes. Determining completion and lessons learned.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Collectively, the component behaviours comprised the coordinating influencing behaviour, which had task fulfilment as its end goal. There are four main stages of the task execution cycle, commencing with: (1) focusing; (2) planning; (3) implementing; and (4) monitoring and evaluating. The four stages are further broken down into eleven individual component behaviours, which are more fully explained in Table 5.1. The next few sections focus on explaining the relationship between the four main stages and how they are linked.

5.4.1 Focusing

Focusing comprised of concentrating efforts of members with diverse capabilities on the work of the team. Focusing was particularly important in the early stage of team problem-solving, where a solution was being sought, and sometimes later in situations where members became excited and risked losing sight of the task focus (objectives). The next stage was influencing planning.

5.4.2 Influencing planning

The need for planning is amongst the more important lessons teams learned during the projects. During planning, members of the team worked out, from their diverse skill sets, who possessed capabilities to address the problem at hand, and then used that knowledge to devise a plan of action and allocate task responsibilities. Planning occurred in four phases: generating ideas; filtering those ideas; deciding on which option to pursue; and then allocating resources according to the plan. The main aim of these four phases were to determine which sub-tasks would be allocated to members individually or in smaller groups to achieve the best possible outcome overall for the team. The next stage was implementing.

5.4.3 Implementing

Implementing plans occurred after initial planning was complete. In addition to initiating the task, implementing also involved controlling, directing, and instructing
if needed. Members with knowledge of particular tasks usually exercised influence in situations where their knowledge was required. These four stages were used to provide the best method to ensure the sub-tasks were completed in the most efficient manner. The next stage was monitoring and evaluating.

5.4.4 Monitoring and evaluating

Monitoring plans (and member contributions) and evaluating progress were also needed for successful outcomes, and both were usually communicated through feedback mechanisms. This final stage was important to ensure that the allocated sub-tasks were completed in the most efficient manner and that there were lessons learned. These lessons would ensure that any future work or challenges encountered would be handled in a more efficient manner facilitating better processes in future task execution. In all groups there is a learning curve that occurs and the task execution cycle is aimed at expediting this process.

5.5 Coordinating and influencing

In the present study, situation played a major role in determining what components of coordinating behaviour emerged as most important, and how members were able to exercise influence through coordinating. Coordinating influenced, and was in turn influenced by, contributions that team members made.

5.5.1 Coordinating, situation and influence

Situation played an important role in determining which members might influence the team through coordinating behaviours. In the context of the complex projects being solved, teams found themselves in conditions of varying certainty or uncertainty. Informants reported that knowledge of a situation was a major reason why some team members stepped up or back from coordinating, and also why other team members chose whether or not to follow.
However, some members stepped up even when they had minimal or no knowledge of the situation and were uncertain what to do. They reportedly possessed an appetite for accepting risks associated with uncertainty, and displayed skills that made sense of a situation, and were able to convey that to the other team members. One of the more influential and astute members in a team posed a rhetorical question about the effect of situational knowledge and having the skillset to exercise coordinating behaviour. He suggested that influencers either possesses an ability to harness talent and influence regardless of the situation, or alternatively influence because they have situational expertise:

Is the leader the person who was able to harness the skills and talents of the people within the team ... or is it the person who has the majority of those skills that then exhibits the most influence over the group? (R9)

5.5.2 Coordinating through situational knowledge

Situational knowledge was the most frequently cited by team members as the reason why a team member might assume some or all of the coordinating functions. R19 commented how, in his team, there were ‘different tasks, different coordinators’. (R19) R15 uses an anecdote to describe how coordination changed according to the task at hand:

All members had a hand in coordinating at certain times ... seeming to take charge out of nowhere ... they understood what was required and would then take charge of the process and articulating this to other members. (R15)

R21 provides a description, similar to accounts by others in different teams, of how the situation typically affected the member’s own coordinating inputs. He assumed coordinating functions in certain situations where he had ideas but would not step up if he didn’t have anything to add:

When I had the situational knowledge, I would coordinate the task at hand ... but when I did not have anything to add, I would just stand back and let others take the lead. (R21)
It would seem, from the previous comments, as if those who willingly coordinated when they felt they had a contribution probably evaluated their own ideas against those already expressed. If they sensed they had something to add, they stepped up. If they had nothing new to add then they contributed as a willing team member.

### 5.5.3 Coordinating through ability to harness skills and talents

Members with little or no idea of what to do in situations were also reported as being involved in coordinating. These members possessed the skill of extracting information from other team members in an orderly and useful manner. R31 explains:

> In order to be a good leader, you ought to have good communicating skills. In communicating with your group, it allows you an opportunity to reflect on the proposals at hand and then aim to ensure they are implemented as best as possible … this is coordinating, best use of human and other resources. (R31)

R14 provides further insights into how three influential members, without specific knowledge, were able to influence through coordinating the input of others: ‘These members didn't necessarily have all the ideas, but they knew how to use them.’ Whether due to situational circumstances, due to personal, or perhaps a combination of both, all teams had multiple members who influenced their team through various elements of coordinating. The next section examines how various team members were able to assume influence.

### 5.5.4 Multiple coordinators and switching

In some cases, members with situation-specific knowledge step up and coordinate while in other cases, contributions are coordinated by members skilled at eliciting and organising ideas and resources. Sometimes individuals have a combination of both situational knowledge, and strong coordinating and influencing skills. In some situations, a single individual will undertake the coordinating; while, at other times, two or more members coordinate simultaneously. Coordinating is thus shared
between team members over time. R14 noted that three members in their team were most influential and they willingly allowed other members to influence as long as they felt those members were able to make a positive contribution to team outcomes:

The team had three coordinators … although they were not in charge of everything, all the time … when they were, everything went very smoothly and the whole team seemed happy. When they paused to listen to possible suggestions, other members would follow their lead … cognizant of their ability to influence proceedings. (R14)

R14 went on to describe how the three most influential members interacted with one another:

Each member seemed very comfortable with each other. There was no conflict … they seemed to understand inherently the ability they had to coordinate matters … even when they stepped back they still keep control of the group. (R14)

These descriptions of multiple coordinators and the dynamic switching of who exercised coordinating, were echoed by many informants. Although there were sporadic accounts of single individuals adopting an autocratic style of coordinating (which did not endure), there are many more accounts of coordinating being exercised in a much less assertive, even subtle manner.

5.6 Coordinating and other influencing behaviours

Coordinating does not exist in isolation. It is closely linked with other influencing behaviours, including communicating, listening, motivating, and sometimes facilitating (described later). Through setting a personal example while coordinating, there is also a link to exemplifying; and, when there is conflict, the astute coordinator may need to engage mediating. R12 points out the link between coordinating and other influencing behaviours:

All of those influencing behaviours would actually be linked. Because, if you think about the planning (an element of coordinating), you've got to listen, you've got to mediate, you've got to facilitate. (R12)
R33 demonstrates how coordinating related to the communicating:

(Member) was coordinating the subtasks very well, allocating them to the individuals who had the situational knowledge … all along (the member) would encourage open communications between the different subgroups to see everything was being completed on schedule … coordinating the whole process. (R33)

Commenting on his team’s failure to complete a subtask on time, R27 notes that initially there was good team communication and coordination. However, under time pressure and faced with a very challenging and complex task, coordinating ceased: ‘It just became too difficult … everyone had different ideas … everyone wanted to do it their own way … things got out of control.’

Coordinating plays a major role in consistent team success by marshalling and maximising available resources. The researcher, based on numerous observations, noted in a field note that coordinating is closely related to the notion of management, further highlighting that listening and other influencing behaviours are also essential for good management (not just leadership):

Coordinating seems closely linked to the concept of management. It is apparent that listening and many of the other influencing behaviours are vital to successful management of the group. (Field note, 17.09.2014)

### 5.7 Coordinating and leadership

In this study, it emerged that taking a subtle approach was a key means by which members were able to exercise influence and therefore leadership, within the team, particularly with regard to achieving task outcomes through coordinating. Furthermore, team processes were also enhanced when coordinating was exercised in such a way that helped members feel included.
5.7.1 Coordinating is subtle

In addition to having multiple team members exercise elements of coordinating, many informants also noted that influencing is often rather subtle, as compared with the traditional hero leader. R22 comments how a quieter member in their team would influence each team member individually: ‘Subtle, and one-on-one … subtle and very personal.’ Team member R26 describes how, in their team, a member approached team problem solving in a more indirect style, using questioning:

(Member) would outline the possible solutions and would then pose possible questions to see if the solutions were feasible … this experimental approach was a less overt way of trying to influence the group than a forceful direct approach. (R26)

R26 also provides a more detailed account of how one team member coordinated other team members in a direct though rather subtle manner. The member had situational knowledge but, rather than instructing other members what to do, made suggestions in the form of questions. Having repeated this process a couple of times, the rest of the team soon willingly followed his suggestions.

R16 observed similar instances of a subtle style of influencing, commenting that this stems possibly from the less hierarchical, less domineering style of Australians in general: ‘Generally Australians are pretty laid back … we are more or less all equal, no matter your position. It is less hierarchical and more egalitarian.’ R9 outlines how a quiet-natured team member used humour to give his approach a softer edge:

(Member) was fairly witty and jovial in nature … even though the member was normally quiet, this approach was endearing. The humour was sporadic but the approach was very influential, with the member’s proposals often accepted. (R9)

R13 also mentions how any one of a group of three influencers in the team might subtly influence the team, by initiating the task needing completion after the team had decided on a course of action. Team members usually followed that lead and also start working on the task: ‘(Member) would just get on with the task, then the others would follow the lead … assist in completing the task.’ Many informants were
Chapter 5: Secondary Influencing Behaviours

quite deliberate in wishing to avoid the label of being a forceful or dictatorial-type leader. R29 points out that she did not want to appear as if she was forcing issues: ‘I was only coordinating, just ensuring that we get the job done as a team … not in a forceful way.’ Another, more subtle method that influencers adopted involves waiting for the appropriate moment to exercise influence:

(Member) would never speak out at first preferring to see which direction the team was heading. If (the member) felt that things weren’t going the right way, would then attempt to divert the effort to get it back on track. (R23)

The subtle approach is often consciously adopted in preference to a more autocratic style, to increase the likelihood that other team members experience a greater sense of inclusion.

5.7.2 Coordinating and inclusion

It emerged that all the coordinating sub-functions contain influencing behaviours that promote a sense of inclusivity. R14 suggests that influencers adopt a style that helps members feel more confident through feeling part of the team: ‘You have to clearly articulate yourself and in turn listen to other members, to ensure a secure and confident environment with the process aimed at promoting inclusion.’

On a few occasions, members tried to influence the team to carry out activities using a dictatorial style, and every informant who discussed this commented that a dictatorial manner was not conducive to a productive team environment. In contrast, informants regularly praised coordinating behaviour that helped members to feel they were contributing to the success of the team. R17 explains how she saw a member in her team as a balanced leader because, while coordinating input, she listened to and included the ideas of others: ‘(Member) was well balanced in influencing the team … in this approach, if anyone had a good idea, the team would use it.’ The researcher also noted that the maximum contribution by team members could be attributed to members who coordinated and motivated others to feel included and become fully involved in the team:
Everyone contributed as much as they could and this was due to the approach of the coordinator and other motivators in the group. All were engaged in the process, there were simply no passengers, everyone put in their suggestions and helped out as much as they could. (Field note, 11.03.2015)

5.8 Coordinating: Summary

Coordinating is a secondary influencing behaviour that impacts heavily on execution of the team tasks. Coordinating behaviour varies according to a four-phase task execution cycle, commencing with focusing of the team, and followed by task planning, implementing of plans, and concluding with monitoring and evaluating of progress. Situation or context thus plays a vital role in determining which coordinating behaviour is required and the manner in which it is exercised. Overall, coordinating is more subtle than autocratic in nature, and is closely related to situation specific knowledge or process skills.

5.9 Motivating

5.9.1 Overview

Motivating is the other secondary influencing behaviour. Motivation was required by teams in this study because of differences in levels of ability, volition, and resilience amongst team members who needed to work together to achieve a shared outcome. This section commences with a definition of the motivating influencing behaviour, examines motivating protocols and how motivating is linked to influencing. A discussion of motivating and team performance follows, and the section concludes with an examination of how motivating relates to leadership.

5.9.2 Definition of motivating

Motivating aims to raise or sustain individual performance levels, which contributes positively to team outcomes. Motivating was something that one team member did in relation to another or others, and was achieved through a variety of techniques, some
of which were aimed at the team as a whole and some aimed at particular individuals. R40 points out that motivating, in a team context, led to individuals feeling they were worthy team members:

Motivating is one of the key things to do. Make sure that you motivate, and make sure that each person feels that they are worthy of being in the group. Everyone should be equal … this will encourage everyone to participate and provide maximum input. (R40)

R14, who was repeatedly acclaimed as a skilled and successful motivator by team members, indicated that motivating is an important influencing behaviour. Continuous motivating, regardless of whether circumstances were favourable or adverse, is valuable:

Everyone needs to be motivated even if they are struggling … motivation is key to ensure you get the best out of each individual member … this ongoing process is vital to ensure that even poorly performing team members are encouraged to make a valuable contribution … getting the best out of the member. (R14)

### 5.10 Motivating protocols

Motivating served two purposes in teams in the substantive field: it either raised, or sustained levels of performance. Protocols for motivating, as identified in this research, often comprised the use of humour as well as verbal reframing to attempt to influence the motivation levels of fellow team members.

### 5.10.1 Reframing

Reframing aimed to alter perceptions of the situation from negative to neutral or, ideally, positive. A shift in frame of reference was achieved through verbal suggestion and exhortation, or by using humour.
5.10.2 Verbal reframing

Members in the teams found themselves in very similar circumstances; yet some engaged in motivating others while others did little or no motivating. Those engaged in motivating were characterized by having and sharing a can-do, positive frame of mind. Team member R9 describes his experience of a motivator: ‘(Member) was always encouraging and just keep the group in the right frame of mind … always motivating.’ Another of the team members captured both the can-do attitude and the positive frame of mind:

(Member) was a real motivator, always telling us what to do to get the best out of the group … positive encouragement even if things were difficult … always pushing the group forward (R24)

Team member R11 detected this type of can-do, affirming approach in their team:

(Member) would just say, ‘Come on, we can do this.’ You know, a real motivator, persistent with a can-do attitude. Very affable, very lively in nature, it seemed to just lift us. (R11)

5.10.3 Humour

Perhaps the most commonly recognised, or certainly remembered form of motivating was the use of humour. Informants relayed accounts of humour being used to lighten the mood. R15 describes the humorous approach of one of the motivators in their team, and its effects:

(Member) would keep up the team’s morale with his light-hearted humour. At times it was very tough but the positive rapport changed the outlook to positive … this approach seemed to lift the group. (R15)

Injecting humour into a team, particularly when under pressure, also helped re-frame the situation. R23 comments that one motivator would make left-of-field comments, which had the effect, momentarily at least, of placing the focus on the humour, shifting it from the challenging task at hand. In another team, R13 explains how
motivating the member had found a team member’s unexpected but humorous
comments, including the allocation of nicknames:

(Member) was just so pleasant and nice to talk to and was always
cracking little jokes with the aim to make you smile. (The member)
had funny names for everybody … like nicknames … it just provided
a pleasant mood, everybody was happy and motivated. (R13)

R4 observes the effect of a member’s humorous motivating on the team. The
motivator distracted members from thinking about their tight deadline, even though
the group was under tremendous pressure:

(The member) still laughed about the deadline … we thought we
weren’t going to make it. We seemed doomed to fail, but this pleasant
and humorous attitude seemed to distract us enough to just complete
the task on time. It seemed to just carry us through. (R4)

5.11 Motivating and influencing

Influencing was achieved through two distinct types of motivating observed in this
study. The first, a more generic, broadcast-style type of motivating, focused towards
the whole team. The other type of motivating was individual-focused, and
significantly more personalized: some doing the motivating favoured a team focus;
while others focused predominantly on individuals.

5.11.1 Team focus

Team-focused motivating involved general comments aimed at all team members.
Adopting a team focus raised the sense of common destiny that members shared.
R19 explains his preference for focusing on the team. He notes that, ultimately,
individuals are motivated through a sense of belonging derived through collaboration
and contribution to a cause greater than themselves:

You can't just motivate the individual. Where you can find something
common and motivating within the group … then they are all working
towards the same goal at the end. It is not individual motivating, but
more of a team motivation … being a motivated team always gets the
job done … everyone has a shared interest in seeing a successful outcome. (R19)

In the context of this study, informants noted how motivators issued comments like ‘Come on mate’, or other positive affirmations of the team’s ability to achieve a particular outcome, while working towards completion of that task. Sometimes members simply used clapping or similar gesturing with the intention of raising energy levels and effort in the team. Humour and positive rapport were additional techniques particularly well suited to a broadcast style of motivating more than one member. R31 describes how humour boosted team morale:

(Member) used subtle humour to keep the team moral up … always there with a pleasant outlook … always seeing the positive side. Well, it just seemed to reframe the situation … a real morale booster. (R31)

R16 observes how an entire team became motivated after individuals started using positive rapport to motivate their team mates: ‘It was, almost like, a combination of positive motivating language that just seemed to reframe the situation … it seemed to have lifted the group … just providing a positive mindset … it felt like the whole group was lifted.’ R30, like other members in the same team, mentioned that many of his team members were motivators for other members at various times. Members reminded individuals and the team as a whole how well they had all performed up to that point, and team expectations of future success were raised:

There was never any negative feedback, with moments of reflection particularly focused on the positive outcomes that had occurred. This cycle of positive feedback and motivation seemed to be the driving force for members to lift their performance, and seemed to raise the team expectations of future success. (R30)

R6 explains how members in the team motivated the team as a whole during a complex subtask. The member emphasised that there was always someone saying something that was motivating to the other members. To maintain an elevated mood, there was never silence:
When we were working on (complex subtask), it was just so confronting at first … some members were new and seemed daunted … but there was never a moment of silence. There was just this positive tone from all collaborating members … it could only be described as an elevated mood in the group. Positive encouragement seemed to lift team morale … just motivating. (R6)

5.11.2 Individual focus

Although team motivation played an important role in raising the general level of motivation, in part due to an increased sense of common destiny, informants report that some circumstances required a more individual-oriented motivating approach. This usually occurred in situations where individuals felt under greater pressure than usual. In these instances, a general positive comment or encouraging remark did not provide the level of personal support some individuals needed to be able to positively reframe an intensely challenging scenario.

However, not all individually-oriented motivating emanated from severe conditions. Some individuals preferred a more personal style of motivating, irrespective of level of personal or team pressure. R12 provides a sense of this personalised focus, describing how one team member always seemed to be motivating other members individually, particularly when they were under pressure:

(Member) was always encouraging individual members, motivating them … it was inherently personal, not at a team level … targeting members when they were struggling … trying to uplift the individual, particularly when they were under pressure. (R12)

One participant recalls how she received personal motivation from a team member, who not only motivated her to be more confident in presenting ideas but also, as a result, helped her to become a more confident collaborator in the team:

(Motivating member) just gave me the confidence to step up and the initial fears have almost gone … I still get a bit scared but it is just much easier to get over it … help out the team … get a better result … it has really helped me become a more positive member. (R23)
When teams were doing well, members were usually fairly motivated. However, during the meetings, teams quickly learned that demotivated members can easily move from being useful leaders or followers to becoming disengaging members who exert a drag on the effort of the team, and even affect overall team morale. R15 describes how two members in their team worked with one demotivated individual:

During the meeting (member) seemed to be a bit distant … not making an effort … it seemed to be holding the team effort back. We quickly realized that something was amiss and moved to engage the (demotivated member) … reconnect and focus on getting a positive contribution. (R15)

Informants in this study noted that motivating raised levels of energy or commitment by helping members to feel a worthy part of the team. Feeling valued and respected after giving one’s best, even if that isn’t actually enough to meet the requirements of the challenging situation, was nevertheless a powerful motivator. R28 described this type of unconditional positive regard as inspirational:

(Senior member) only expected that you give of your best … that was all that was required … this honest and candid approach provided you with motivation to just do your utmost … this feeling of being valued and worthy raised the level of effort and team commitment on the part of the individual member. (R28)

Finally, although individual motivating played an important role in supporting individuals at and through challenging times, its value in general team building ought not to be overlooked. R21 explains the value of individual motivation to him as a team member:

It was very personal … always aimed at you as an individual. The tone and expressions, use of humour in the conversation … it was always tailored at getting the best out of you: aimed at engaging with you on the personal level, aimed at working with you to get the best results for the team. (R21)
5.11.3 Motivating both individual and team

Some individuals employed both team- and individual-focused motivating, possessing a keen awareness of the techniques and impacts associated with each style. The researcher observed a particular meeting when one female influencer stood out as switching between motivating the team as a whole, and, separately, individuals as they completed the individual components of the subtask. In addition, the motivator positioned herself almost in the middle of the team, between those completing group tasks and those completing individual tasks. In both situations the style of motivating was of a very supportive nature:

(Member) also seems to make general team support type of comments, which appears to evoke a positive reaction from others. They seem encouraged, supported, energised for those moments which follow. This individual is in the middle of the team, strategically positioned between the various team members, aimed at getting the best out of everyone. (Field note, 23.5 2015)

5.11.4 Motivation contagion

Motivation contagion describes how motivation took hold in the highly enthused teams, and indicates that, in those teams, multiple members played an active role in motivating others in a virtuous cycle. Motivation played an important role in energising and sustaining behaviour that allowed teams to complete their subtasks. Although important to team outcomes, team members described how motivation levels varied quite widely between team members.

A few teams reached high levels of motivation, which they sustained almost continuously over the project: all, or almost all, members were committed and involved. Most teams, on the other hand, exhibited variable levels of motivation: at times they were buoyant and enthused; although, less frequently, there were times when most members were fairly negative and pessimistic about their current situation. Finally, one team reported they were unmotivated fairly often, with overall performance reflecting the low levels of collective enthusiasm. R11 explains contagion, noting that motivating is often initiated through a motivating ‘outburst’
from one individual which is quickly mirrored by others in the team. The initial motivating is like a spark which spreads and grows in energy and reach, much like a bushfire:

Essentially (initial member) would start with a motivating outburst, and the (another member) would also say something, then (third member) would pick up and run with it … and this continued, someone else would pick up from there … just about everyone was involved. (R11)

R9 felt that many team members participated in motivating: ‘We all had a part in motivating … did our fair share of motivating’. R13 also describes how various members engaged in motivating, with the function moving from one person to another, like a chain-reaction, to keep the overall level of motivation high:

It could probably explain why we were so successful, because (member) would motivate me and I would in turn motivate (second member) and so on. And everyone gets motivated, and we stayed motivated for the whole task. (R13)

R21 described the general mood and levels of motivation in their team, mentioning how under-performing individuals were motivated and how, in general, members fed off an atmosphere of enthusiasm that was maintained at high levels. He used words like ‘happy’, ‘positive’, ‘excited’, and ‘enjoyment’ to describe team mood, and also pointed out that the team used a war-cry ritual:

Any member who wasn’t really positive would be motivated and positive reinforcement was aimed at the individual member. The team was always excited … we were always happy … moving from one subtask to the next. There was a growing motivation that success was near … motivation lead to enjoyment of the completing the project. We had a little war-cry after every single task got completed … it was a verbal positive affirmation of success … very primal but it was easily understood by all. (R21)

5.12 Motivating and team performance

In the section above, many examples have been provided that show that motivating plays an important role in contributing to positive team performance. However, it is
useful also to consider the impact of a lack of motivating on teams. A useful way of achieving this is to contrast the effects of motivating with the effect of limited or no motivating in a team. A few teams were reported as having a lack of motivating during many subtasks. These teams performed most poorly in various subtasks – their poorer performance was sustained throughout the project. Although many members reported that they found joining the decision-making teams personally worthwhile, they often had little enthusiasm for their team and its performance on many occasions.

Further exploration of this type of outcome revealed an absence or short supply of a number of influencing behaviours, including motivating, in affected teams. Team spirit proved a useful indicator of the extent to which motivating behaviours were present within a team. R16 explains how his team, which he felt performed adequately but might have done a lot better, lacked anybody who could be identified as a motivator. Compared with other teams he had previously worked in, he felt the team had simply drifted along, often not realising its full potential:

There was no real motivator in our group … we just couldn’t get going at full pace … we just seemed to be floating. It was not bad but it certainly wasn’t great like the other times. I put it down to not having a motivator because (team) motivation is the key to team performance. (R16)

R28 was certain that, amongst other influencing behaviours that were absent, a lack of motivating played a major role in the lack-lustre performance of his team. Instead of seeking to maximise their efforts, the team collectively sought out options requiring the least effort:

Surely we could have done better if we had more motivation. It was just like doing the bare minimum to get through, just enough to complete the task. It certainly was pretty ordinary … more motivation would have really made the difference. (R28)
5.13 Motivating and leadership

At a meta-level, motivating conveyed to the individual that they are a valued part of the team and also reinforced that sentiment. Helping members feel a sense of belonging was an important team-oriented responsibility for those playing a leading role in teams. Even if purely utilitarian, members willingly sustained or increased efforts if they knew that others benefitted from their contribution. In the early stages of team development, particularly where members did not know each other well, or even at all, motivating revolved around getting members to do what the team needed doing. As the team developed, and interpersonal bonds formed between individuals, motivating switched from being purely utilitarian to being more personal, in a genuine effort to help each member experience a sense of achievement and personal triumph, not only, but particularly, in the face of adversity and challenge.

From an individual perspective, some members who were regarded as leading motivational efforts in teams reported drawing personal strength from their acts of motivating when the response from other members was positive. This often led to a virtuous motivating cycle. R18 believes that one of the major contributions to his team was motivating fellow team members, and the researcher observations corroborated that view. R14 described how the act of motivating others, and their responses, motivated him personally:

Motivating was one of my core functions in the group, always trying to encourage others and get the best out of the group. When I see the positive effect I am having, it helps me to draw inspiration and also lift my contribution. This cycle of helping others to contribute also helps me to lift and sustain my own performance. It’s just like a cycle that works. (R14)

R12 also described how he derived motivation from motivating other team members: ‘I felt that there was a reciprocal process in that the other member motivated me and I in turn did the same to others.’
5.14 Motivating: Summary

Motivating was a secondary influencing behaviour aimed at raising or sustaining member contributions, ultimately through increasing members’ sense of belonging. Motivating was achieved through a variety of techniques that focused on individuals, the team, or both simultaneously. A key benefit for an influencer doing the motivating was personal motivation derived through the positive impact on other team members. Benefits for those being motivated included an increased sense of belonging, a core purpose for being part of a team. Teams exhibiting motivating increased performance, while teams where motivating was scarce or absent performed less well and, ultimately, would have been unsustainable.

5.15 Summary of chapter

This chapter has outlined and explored the two influencing behaviours of coordinating and motivating, used by designated followers in exercising leadership. These influencing behaviours were categorized as secondary influencing behaviours, as these were important in most team situations and, in their absence, teams functioned less efficiently or effectively. This near-core category does build on the previous findings outlined in Chapter 4, however, it also only provides a partial explanation to the research question. Therefore, it was imperative to continue probing the data to find a more complete explanation of the type of influencing behaviours used to exercise leadership as well as how the designated followers switched roles between following and leading.

Chapter 6 provides further explanation of other influencing behaviours discovered, and outlines how they relate to the other reported behaviours. Chapter 7 outlines the basic social process of role fluidity which emerged as the core category. This basic social process was found to be central to articulating how designated followers exercise influence and move between the team roles of leading and following, as well as the newly discovered role of disengaging. This dynamic mechanism also provides an explanation as to concurrent leadership, and a number newly discovered properties of distributed leadership are outlined.
CHAPTER 6 FINDINGS: SITUATIONALLY CONTINGENT INFLUENCING BEHAVIOURS

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, a number of additional influencing behaviours used by designated followers in exercising leadership are discussed. So far, the data explored in Chapter 5 has yet to provide a complete explanation of how designated followers exercise leadership. The identification of a further six influencing behaviours, categorized as situationally contingent behaviours, provide the final clarification being sought. These influencing behaviours were used less often in teams, depending on the situation or context. Committing is discussed first, followed by risking, mediating, facilitating, exemplifying, and finally, encouraging.

6.2 Committing

6.2.1 Overview

Motivating played a major role in increasing individual and team output; but it was not always the only source of influence. Another driver of increased output was inspiration, derived from the influencing behaviour committing, which is discussed in this section. A definition of committing is followed by a discussion of how this was exercised in teams. This is followed by an examination of how committing influences, and its inter-relationship with the other influencing behaviours. Finally, committing’s role in team performance and leadership in this study is reviewed.

6.2.2 Definition of committing

During the present research, inspiration arising from total dedication and personal sacrifice emerged as source of influence that was different from that of motivation. Drawing on terminology supplied by an informant, this influencing behaviour is labelled as committing (R14). Committing is an influencing behaviour affected through total commitment to team members and team outcomes.
6.2.3 Origins of the term committing

R14 identified and labelled the behaviour of committing during an informal interview early in the research; and the idea drew general acceptance as a form of influencing from the other decision-making teams’ members in subsequent follow-up interviews. In addition, the researcher noted, through observation, that one particular member was both totally committed to the team tasks and challenges, and also offered members enormous support through genuine concern and positive regard.

A fellow team member, R15, drew a parallel with this behaviour from a former team member he had worked with in a previous project. Alerted to the idea of committing as an influencing behaviour early in the research, it was possible to examine the concept and its relevance through direct observation in the field and also in subsequent interviews with many informants. Data supported the notion that committing was indeed a behaviour used to exercise influence in teams. In the present research, team members who exercised committing often undertook a larger portion of the workload, despite being tired and already doing more than their fair share. Many became their team’s uncomplaining packhorse or tireless worker bee, carrying their loads cheerfully. However, the key element was not their physical sacrifices, but rather the total commitment to the tasks of the team which the sacrifices manifested. Despite their own load, they also made time to interact with other members, encouraging and motivating them through difficult periods. Here committing was aimed at inspiring other members and worthy of emulation.

It soon emerged, through subsequent theoretical sampling in the field and from the interviews, that, like motivating, committing is a very powerful influencing behaviour. Committing is also quite different from motivating. Informants note that motivating is practised on others; whereas committing, which has the effect of inspiring team members, is exemplary in nature. Those who are committing do not urge others to follow their example or to be like them; yet their example inspires others to raise levels of contribution and even to feel they are partially emulating the admirable efforts of the team member committing. Usually only one member in a
team was identified as committing, although occasionally two might have used the behaviour. In a number of teams no one was identified as engaging in committing.

Although informants immediately recognised the behaviour of committing when asked whether it or not it had been present in their team, they often found it very difficult to describe. They recognised that committing is a powerful influence but had never taken time to consider exactly how the team member had achieved the committing effect. When asked to try and explain the influence of a committing member he had identified, like others, R16 battled to describe the behaviour: ‘It is difficult to explain…(member) was so…committed towards the team’.

In attempting to describe the effect that committing had on her, R17 rather awkwardly expresses the deep sense of attachment that it elicited in her as similar to being in love in terms of what it represented:

> I was emotionally connected to … almost in love, figuratively, with (member) because of the total commitment to team outcomes and all team members. There was this personal bond when (member) had something to say, you would listen. (R17)

### 6.2.4 Personal example and sacrifice

When some of these individuals demonstrated committing by taking on additional loads unexpectedly, usually without complaint and even with good cheer, this proved to be a powerful influence on the rest of the team. Committing was particularly inspirational in relation to completing the physical demands of the project. Most participants realised that elements of the projects were very challenging for everyone, even if some members showed less evidence of stress or fatigue, perhaps due to better prior physical conditioning or previous experience of difficult conditions. One participant, for example, decided to voluntarily participate in subtasks that were previously allocated to other team members. This unrequested help motivated the team by willingly sharing and lightening the load of others, to her own discomfort:
(Member) just stepped in and helped … she was taking on responsibilities that seemed to make things more bearable for her team members … it was more work for her but it really did help the other members. (R40)

During a group interview, R19 shared with some of his team members, also in the interview, that he found the experience personally beneficial because it helped him form bonds with team members: ‘Helping out forged a close bond with other team members … I enjoyed this process of helping it … making a difference … being a success.’ Other teams also provided accounts of members influencing through personal examples of courage and determination. While members generally expressed feelings of discomfort or tiredness, some members pressed ahead without complaining, and often with only encouragement for others.

(Member) was simply determined … really pushed and motivated despite being tired. Following the example of (member) was inspirational and motivational that if (member) could do it, then we all could … it was the motivational aspect of the whole leadership. (R25)

6.2.5 Committing as an influencing behaviour

Those to whom the committing behaviour was attributed not only continuously worked hard to complete the team task but also continually demonstrated a strong and sincere concern for team members. The net effect of this behaviour is the portrayal of total team commitment, to which other members could aspire. In the research context, committing behaviour associates with strongly physical elements, such as working long and difficult hours to complete certain subtasks. R32, discussing the term, captures the gist of committing in his description of how he experienced it both as a team member in a current team as well as having the experience in another team he previously worked with. He also portrays the sense of enigma associated with the behaviour: committing is easy to detect, but much less easy to describe:

The dedication, long hours and perseverance in getting the job done was amazing … others could see this and it seemed to inspire them, even if they were struggling, how could you not be motivated … it
bonded the team together. This personal commitment with extraordinary dedication was easy to see during the team tasks, but trying to describe what is going on is not easy to articulate … the team seemed to be bound by this effort. (R32)

Informants reported two major forms of influence. The first relates to exemplary hard work, which inspires increased personal levels of commitment to the work of the team. The second influence relates to perceptions around psychological bonds with the team and its members: put simply, the behaviour of committing inspires other team members to feel and want to feel a greater affinity or association with their team.

6.3 Protocols of committing

It emerged from the study that committing consists of two major elements: total commitment to team task; and total commitment to team members, demonstrated through positive regard for members.

6.3.1 Total commitment to team task

When describing committing behaviour, informants noted how the member commits totally to the tasks and challenges of the team, usually expending enormous amounts of energy. This extraordinary commitment is often first noticed as an example others wish to emulate:

(Member) was just really committed … bearing the team load … (member) was our inspiration right from the start it was amazing … so strong, so inspiring. (R29)

R33 explains how the committing member set the example for others to follow. The member did not ask anything of members that she would not have willingly undertaken herself, and usually committed herself to far higher levels than she expected of others. Contributing to the task and challenges of the team was also an important element of committing behaviour:
(Member) was totally committed ... always driving others along the way ... always contributing to team work ... showing real leadership ... this commitment was inspiring. (R33)

6.3.2 Total commitment to the team

R25 provides additional information about committing. He notes that the member committing steps up to influence the team, always relating in a positive manner. The member also demonstrates humility, rather than seeking glory, even though his or her actions might entitle a claim of personal success and status. Finally, R25 highlights the dependable nature of the team member committing, both in carrying the workload and in addressing interpersonal issues within the team:

(Member) would be just getting on with the job ... never saying anything negative ... never trying to take the credit personally. (Member) never gave up and always tried to stay positive ... this approach and attitude was motivating for the team ... (member) was so humble and so dependable. (R25)

6.4 Committing and influencing

While it is beyond the scope of this study to link personal traits with particular influencing behaviours, it is helpful to examine these with respect to committing, because the influence of committing is affected through personal example. Another key reason for looking at personality characteristics of the person exercising influence through committing is because this is how informants made sense of committing. Finally, although reference is made to personality characteristics, these are no more than informant perceptions of observable behaviour.

Committing members exercised influence through attributes and actions that can be grouped into three categories. These categories reflect, to some degree, the increasing and changing nature of committing influence. Firstly, members maintained maximum effort in extremely trying conditions, making time also to encourage others. Secondly, members exuded trustworthiness and dependability through their reliable and caring contributions and commitment. Finally, sustained perceptions of trustworthiness and dependability transcended members to a higher
state, inspiration. In sufficient volume, as a shared experience, this inspiration served as a type of glue that bonded teams together, imbuing a form of individual and team resilience.

6.4.1 Resilient, enduring and perseverant

Committing members showed resilience through sustaining high levels of contribution under challenging conditions. R27 explains how, through his persistent efforts, a team member showed tremendous commitment to the team, often bearing the workload of others. He suggests also that the member, in a way, became like a father figure to the team:

(Member) took over most of the task from (a struggling member) and this process did much to assist the general team effort. This pretty much continued during the whole project and (the member) did a lot to help the team succeed. Right from the very beginning, (the member) was much like a father figure to the group, always helping, motivating … right from the outset … (the member) was shining … total commitment to the team … inspiring. (R27)

R26, also in the team and in the same group interview, sums up the efforts and effect of the committing member, commenting that he had demonstrated endurance, perseverance and resilience:

(Member) showed endurance and gave the team strength. Even when under pressure, there was this constant desire to do something for the team … determined not to let anybody down. (R26)

6.4.2 Dependable

Following sustained commitment to team members and team tasks, members came to trust and rely upon the member committing for support. R15 describes this trust:

The team showed real perseverance in just focusing on the task … they put their trust in (committing member), believing that her ideas were right and just getting on with what was to be done. (R15)
R30 outlines how his team came to rely on a member’s endurance and sustained commitment. The manner used to express those sentiments implies a deep trust in the member committing: ‘I feel (member) was the strength of the team as in dedication and sustained commitment … always carrying the load to the end.’ R13, in a different team, notes how a committing member consistently contributed: ‘(Member) was involved in each and every task … there was a large reliance on (the member) … to get us through the task.’ Finally, R2, a member who performed some committing in his team, explains how he took the load from others when he felt they were unable to continue: ‘It was clear that other members just couldn’t cope … it was just too much, so we just helped out to make the load more bearable … get the task done.’

6.4.3 Foundation of the team

Eventually, the one or two individuals committing came to be seen as the ‘rock’, or foundation, of the team. Members felt that these members played a role in holding the team together. Team member R18 captures sentiments felt by many informants, who also had difficulty conceptualising and verbalising their feelings around committing:

(Member) held the group together … was like the glue that bonded the team. In that way, (the member) was the driving force behind the effort, so solid … a real rock. (R18)

6.5 Committing and other influencing behaviours

As with all the other influencing behaviours, communication and listening are at the core of the committing influencing behaviour. Listening and communicating particularly affected the individual level, motivational exchanges between committing member and other team members. As these exchanges were also often motivational in nature, the motivating influencing behaviour is also associated with committing. Finally, committing also involved elements of coordinating, as the member also influenced how the load was shared, usually taking on a heavier personal burden on behalf of others and the team.
6.6 Committing and team performance

Interestingly, teams that readily identified having members committing were also noted to be generally more successful than teams where the behaviour was not identified. All of the high performing teams had at least one member who engaged in the committing behaviour, while the lowest performing teams had no identified committing that occurred in those teams. The committing member’s contribution to the team was always far greater than the average performance, and this contributed to enhanced team performance. Additionally, the committing member inspired others to contribute at levels and in ways they might not have if it were not for the member’s inspirational example. Committing lifted team performance well above levels that would have been reached if they had not been inspired.

R7 described the type of impact this had on team performance. In addition to his mental strength and fortitude to complete tasks, the committing team member also contributed ideas and showed enthusiasm for taking action:

The whole team was depended on (member) because of their mental fortitude … so strong and dedicated … always contributing … always knowing the best way forward. (Member) wanted to try everything … just always enthusiastic. (R7)

R21 provides a sense of how the committing member inspired him and other members in the team to enhanced performance through dependability and humility. A key source of that inspiration to extra effort came from the realisation that the committing member exceeded what was expected of him or her:

(Member) was the pack mule in the group, always carrying the greatest load … but also providing effective input which seemed to just boost the team. This motivated other members to lift their own performance. (Member) was so strong, humble. (R21)

6.7 Committing and leadership

From the examples provided in this section, it is clear that committing contributed to influencing others towards a common goal, the basic definition of leadership. With a
focus on the team, team task, and team members as individuals in the team, this particular influencing behaviour is possibly the most encompassing team leadership behaviour of all, which is perhaps why informants felt that it has such a powerful influencing effect. However, the influencing behaviour was not observed in all teams. Although committing occurred under all conditions, it was particularly noticeable and eminently more valuable in adverse or trying conditions, which is why it is considered a situationally contingent influencing behaviour.

6.8 Committing: Summary

Committing is an influencing behaviour that has its effect through total commitment to both the team task and to the team itself. Committing is a driver of team performance; but, unlike motivating, which is carried out on team members, committing is exemplary in nature – team members draw inspiration from the commitment of the member performing this behaviour. These members are characterised as resilient, perseverant, enduring, trustworthy and dependable. They are considered the foundation or rock of the team and the bond which binds the team together. The next situationally contingent influencing behaviour to be discussed is risking.

6.9 Risking

6.9.1 Overview

In the context of challenging and complex projects, filled with uncertainty and risk, risking behaviour emerged as an important influencing behaviour. During field observation and interviews, it became apparent that individual appetites for risk varied widely. To understand more about risking, this section commences with a definition of risking, and then considers the link between risk and failure, followed by closer scrutiny of those who undertake risking behaviour. Finally, there is an examination of how risking behaviour promotes inclusion.
6.9.2 Definition of risking

In this study, risking involved a willingness to take actions, on behalf of the team, under conditions of uncertainty where failure is possible; and, sometimes, in more extreme cases, a likely outcome; and where the consequences could have a detrimental, even harmful, effect on the team or team members. Although individual action might eventually be required, risking was often team-centered. The risk, borne on behalf of the team, was only undertaken after team agreement, ordinarily following due consideration of options and likely outcomes. Risky behaviour, by contrast, was individual-centered. Members were either prepared to take risks or were more risk adverse. Most teams had only one or two members willing to take calculated but necessary risks. Team member R31 describes how two members in their team stood out as individuals willing to take risks and confront failure, in contrast to other members who were notably risk adverse:

It was clear from the outset that the majority of the team were risk adverse, cautious and concerned about performing poorly … even failing. But there were two members who seemed more willing to take calculated risks, willing to accept the consequences personally if they did not come off. (R31)

6.10 Risk and team performance

Failure was a key consideration as the worst-case scenario that all teams tried to avoid. Failure varied according to context. At its most extreme, it may have involved personal resignation or loss of reputation; and psychological pressure arises from responsibility for harm to others or to the research institution if an action failed. Most uncertainty in the context of the banking projects revolved around whether or not the team would complete the set tasks, with occasional elements of physical and mental duress. Teams needed to perform in uncertain, and at times extremely demanding conditions within a competitive and challenging environment in the banking industry. The researcher observed risking behaviour in many teams, often noting that, under many challenging circumstances, this required members to move beyond their comfort zones, where task failure was a distinct possibility. In order to succeed,
the team had to engage in some risk, and the risking influencing behaviour was crucial to progress:

(Member) took the risk for the group to ensure the task was completed on time. This was ongoing and (member) seemed to clearly show she was taking these chances for the group and the group seemed quite pleased with the risk she took. There was positive feedback from others with the general feeling that the group could generally complete the task with more ease and possibly quicker. (Field note, 28.10.2015)

6.11 Risking protocols

Two forms of risk-oriented influencing behaviour were uncovered from observations in the field and from interviews. One type is team-oriented and the other is individual-focused.

6.11.1 Risking behaviour

Risking occurred when teams took action in the face of uncertainty. Risking behaviour increased in importance as the risk level increased, given that teams need to often take high-risk action in order to progress. Although many members realised that some action was needed to move forward, few demonstrated a willingness to assume all of the risk for the team. At that point, risking behaviour, from one or two members at least, was essential if the team was to progress. R26 explains how, as a whole, teams were generally not willing to risk failure, but were willing for a mandated individual to assume that risk personally:

It was almost like the group wouldn’t risk itself but would allow a member to risk on their behalf. If the group risked itself then the whole group would fail, but an individual member willing to take that risk, if (member) succeeded, the group would succeed. However, if that member failed, it would be an individual failure … not a team failure … (member) would risk for the team and its success. (R26)

R26 discusses further the importance of group mandate, and also how he felt when he needed to engage in some risking behaviour to move the team forward. In that
instance, there was a reasonable risk of task failure, and some personal loss of reputation a likely outcome:

I was nervous at first thinking about the consequences but decided to just make the important decision … the group needed this in order to continue … if I hadn’t done it we (group) would not have been able to carry on … I did it because it was what the group wanted to do. (R26)

6.12 Risking and influencing

Risking provided individuals with an opportunity to increase their influence in the team and also derive a sense of personal achievement and motivation. Teams were usually appreciative and supportive when individuals undertook risking on behalf of the team, and this enhanced their capacity to influence the team. R17 comments that she was happy to take risks for the team: ‘I was happy in doing the risk-taking.’ She elaborates further, noting that risk is sometimes the only way in which to achieve change, and is therefore necessary. She also mentions that she is able to tolerate pressure if unsuccessful, including additional pressure from the team:

I didn't mind having the pressure of failing, with the whole team upset with you. Surely, when things did go wrong, the whole team got pretty upset, but they seemed to get over it … we were just a good team. (R17)

In contrasting to those willing to take risks for the group are other members who are more risk averse and unwilling to risk. R36 explains how he is able to absorb criticism attached to failure, whereas other members would feel quite dejected:

If there was a task that could see you as costing the group, I wouldn't mind taking it up and taking the blame if things did go wrong ... some members would really be down afterwards. (R36)

R19 observed in their team where there were two members who engaged in risking behaviour for the team, and the team actually relied on those members to take the risks when they presented:

(Member) is sort of one of those people who will cope well under pressure, with the team just following … I would say (member)
definitely fulfilled the (risking) role … just moving forward without hesitation. (R19)

A deduction that can be drawn from R19’s account is that those who were risking were self-confident and resilient, possibly derived from previous experience. However, R19 also highlights that members ought to make more effort in the future to draw on the talents of others and share the risking:

I tried to be too much of a member that others relied upon, always trying to be the best all the time because I know, from experience now, that I can't do everything. That is the one thing that I learned. I can't do everything, myself. (R19)

### 6.13 Risking and leadership

Members who engaged in risking behaviour were definitely considered to be exercising leadership through those actions, as R25 illustrates: ‘Leaders then coordinated, and they turned to the other members and allocated tasks … usually the most onerous or high-risk tasks.’ Although risking was often only exercised by one or two members, it is definitely a team-oriented behaviour that impacts on influencing others towards a common goal. R16 comments that members risking in their team did it for the greater good of the team: ‘The risks were always taken for the benefit of the team.’

Risking behaviour delivered all team members a sense of satisfaction and an increased sense of team identity when completed successfully, which addressed both collaborating and belonging needs. R7 notes that their team seemed generally risk averse and became reliant on only two members to engage in risking behaviour. Undertaking many of the risk-laden tasks, and assuming personal responsibility for any failure, helped others to realise that they were not being asked to engage in high-risk behaviour, so they were able to participate and contribute without risking personal failure. The consequences of any failure were attributed only to the two who were risking. On the other hand, successes were celebrated as team successes, and this contributed to an enhanced team experience.
R11 was one of two who shared most of the risk-taking in his team. He notes how he went in to help the other team member who had failed on previous attempts, to avoid him developing a sense of failure. His primary motive was a wish to keep team members productive:

> Failure inhibits your confidence to try again, and other members would be reluctant to support (the member) again if (the member) messed up again, so I stepped in to ensure (the member) wouldn’t try and fail again … it was about balancing the team effort … keeping the team productive and effective. (R11)

The researcher, during observation, noted how other team members needed to respect the commitment of those who were risk-taking for the team. Some teams were quite critical of members who were risk-taking, and this had a negative effect:

> (Member) would take the risk and something would go wrong, and the other members would be quick to point out the failure. The team didn’t want anything to go wrong, they wanted everything to be perfect. But in other groups (4, 5), members would rather try and motivate other members to do better. (Field note, 28.11.2015)

### 6.14 Risk-taking: Summary

Team members exhibited different degrees of risk adversity and, particularly under conditions where uncertainty and risk prevailed, the situational influencing behaviour risk-taking played an important role in successful team outcomes. Risk-taking is a team-oriented behaviour that was exercised on mandate from the team. Members who undertook the risk-taking behaviour on behalf of the team were more resilient than other members who coped less well when confronted by setback or failure. Risk-taking increased the sense of collaborating and belonging as key challenges were confronted by those members better able to tolerate failure: if they failed they accepted the failure as an individual; but, when they succeeded, their success was attributed to, and enjoyed by, the team.
6.15 Mediating

6.15.1 Overview

Mediating is a situationally contingent influencing behaviour that was required by team members in this study only when conflict arose between team members. A definition of mediating is provided here first; followed by an examination of the root causes of conflict in a team, which include self-centred behaviour and a breakdown in communicating and listening. A discussion of mediating protocols, which incorporate reframing and avoiding alternatives, concludes this section.

6.15.2 Definition of mediating

In the substantive field, mediating was aimed at influencing team members who were in conflict in order to reduce or eliminate the conflict between them and restore the relationship. Ongoing conflict that related to a struggle for personal power in a team, as compared with trying to ensure the team had the best solution to a problem, had a negative effect and was counterproductive. Some members attempted to influence the resolution of inter-personal conflict; and R30 describes how mediating contributed to sustaining team cohesion in times of conflict, but was not needed when the team did not experience conflict:

> There is always a need to mediate when conflict arises, to sustain a unified group mood. But if you have a really cohesive and fantastic group, you probably would need to mediate anyway. If the group is working towards a common goal there should be very little conflict and hence, no need to mediate between groups of people. (R30)

As teams experienced different levels of conflict, there were different levels of requirement for mediating. R14 points out that, even though it may not have been a frequently used influencing behaviour, mediating was nevertheless essential in the event of a conflict:

> Although it’s not commonly used (referring to mediating), it is essential and certainly a natural reaction to try and sort out problems that arise … you don’t want members arguing between themselves.
You try and stop it straight away … it only hampers productivity. (R14)

6.16 Mediating and team performance

Some types of conflict, such as finding a best option from alternate solutions, were helpful and even necessary for teams to effect change. This type of conflict enhanced rather than impeded team performance. However, person-focused rather than solution-focused conflict was unhelpful, often destructive, and always impacted negatively on team performance. Mediating was required in teams to help overcome negative conflict occurring within the team, which originated from two primary sources: self-centered behaviour; and increased pressure (resulting in a breakdown of communicating and listening).

6.16.1 Self-centered behaviour

Self-centered behaviour was a major cause of conflict. Informants recounted instances where individuals held onto positions differing from other team members, becoming increasingly defensive of their perspective. They often also simultaneously became less willing to consider other positions or views, even when most or all of the remaining team members had settled on an agreed alternative. This conflict was more about views than ideas. R12 recounts how a member engaged in conflict on various occasions, and how another member tried to resolve the conflict each time:

During the meeting, discussing the best way forward, (member) would fight with (another member) and (third member) would try and stop them and this just seemed to continue; (fourth member) also got involved and had an argument with (third member) and then (another member) tried to stop this. And so on. (R12)

R27 provides more detail, highlighting the self-centered and negative nature of the member’s behaviour:

(Member) had a negative focus on the whole atmosphere in the team. And, I don’t know if (member) was against the team? Maybe (member) just liked the attention, you know? (Member) was always
arguing and trying to get his own way. It was difficult to explain. (R27)

6.16.2 Breakdown of communicating and listening

Another common source of conflict, precipitated by increased pressure on the team, arose from deficient communicating and listening behaviours. Under pressure, some team members who ordinarily displayed supportive and inclusive-oriented behaviours either expressed themselves poorly or failed to listen to other members. If others responded in a similar manner, a vicious downward spiral took hold as the quality of exchange deteriorated in successive iterations. This type of conflict had the potential to be divisive and reduce individual collaboration, and also to affect the sense of belonging. Once the team context deteriorated, standard communicating and listening behaviours were inadequate for resolving the situation, and mediating was needed. Mediating behaviour attempted to influence the parties to alter their negative style of engagement to one that was more inclusive and encouraging of contribution. R18 team member recounts how some individuals responded aggressively when under pressure:

Under pressure, the team seemed to break down at times … the frustration was clearly visible and there were sporadic outbursts … it wasn’t really a good thing … other members were reluctant to approach the aggressive member(s), especially when under some pressure. (R18)

6.17 Protocols for mediating

Including, reframing, and avoiding, were three different mediating protocols or techniques that informants in the study used to deal with conflict.

6.17.1 Inclusion of members

One approach to mediating conflict that members in this study used was an increased effort to include affected members. Members feeling included were less likely to perpetuate divisiveness than those feeling they didn’t belong. R8 explains how a
team member tried to include one member, angry with the team: (member) tried to bring (angry member) back into the group, and re-engage in the conversation. R22, in a situation similar to R8, describes how she felt about an argumentative team member, and how she would happily have left him excluded. However, another team member attempted to reduce the conflict by including the argumentative member:

Just about all members were over (angry member), however (another member) still perceived (angry member) as a vital team member and attempted to still involve and engage the (angry member). Most other members would have been happy to exclude and distance themselves from the (argumentative member). (R22)

R29 highlights how a sense of inclusion reduced the potential for conflict:

Our team was more inclusive and there was hardly any conflict … we really worked as a team and nobody was left out because everybody wanted to engage and do their best. (R29)

6.17.2 Reframing the situation

Some members approached mediating by attempting to reframe volatile situations, shifting the focus away from the conflict. R13 explains how a member utilized an expression that acted as a trigger to other members to reframe their thinking and behaviour of the moment:

(Member) was an excellent mediator, using the saying ‘hold your horses’. When there was any argument or debate, (member) would use the expression to calm things down … and it really was effective, it just seemed to work. (R13)

6.17.3 Avoiding the conflict

Sometimes teams were unable to resolve the conflict immediately, and members tried to minimise its effects through avoidance. R16 explains how one member encouraged another to avoid arguing with a third member who was in an argumentative frame of mind, having argued with all who had tried to engage him:
(Member) just put it to the group that (sulking member) is sulking … just let him be and he will get over it. Other members did not engage (sulking member), preferring to just allow him to regain his composure. (R16)

6.18 Mediating and influencing

In some teams there was very limited conflict, and in those situations there was a limited requirement for influencing through the use of mediating behaviour. Teams with minimal conflict reported that communicating and listening were hallmarks of their success. The researcher, through observation, made the following comments on one of the teams:

Following all meetings, there was no situation that arose where it was apparent that there was a need for mediation. (Field note, 28.7.2015)

Many teams experienced some conflict, and most teams also reported that a number of members stepped up at different times to mediate. In a number of instances, the conflict occurred over whose views would prevail. Some non-involved members stepped up to exercise mediating in order to resolve the conflict.

6.19 Mediating and leadership

Team members exercised leadership through mediating usually by ‘initiating’ or ‘taking charge’ of the mediating process when conflict surfaced in the team. R7 refers to an instance where she and another member mediated between one team member and a few others:

He sort of lost his temper and (member) and I attempted to calm everyone down, with the end result being that the matter was easily resolved. (R7)

Usually this form of leadership behaviour also involved making decisions about the best course of action to follow, including choosing between options if there was a dispute between members, or deciding which protocol should be used. For example, the mediator would decide whether to try and include a conflicted party, reframe the
situation, or avoid the conflict at the time, particularly if there were higher team priorities. Members who exercised influence in situations where conflict arose through the mediating behaviour sought to avoid reduced team contributions by individuals and also lost synergies of team-work. Furthermore, conflict also impacted negatively on at least some of the members’ sense of belonging, and mediating ensured that any damage was minimised or even reversed.

6.20 Mediating: Summary

Mediating is a situationally contingent influencing behaviour, and is only required when conflict arises in the team. Two primary causes of negative conflict are self-centred behavior, and a breakdown in communicating and listening. Members who exercise mediating use various protocols, according to the situation and their own capabilities, which include involving members, reframing the situation, or avoiding the conflict. They engage in leadership through mediating conflict, to minimise any negative impact on the team through a loss of member contribution or sense of belonging. The situationally influencing behaviour, facilitating, is discussed in the next section.

6.21 Facilitating

6.21.1 Overview

Facilitating provides a mechanism for increasing the contribution of team members less willing to spontaneously share their ideas in front of the team. The term facilitating is defined, after which the characteristics of the facilitator and facilitated member are discussed in relation to the influencing behaviour. This is followed by a consideration of individual and team facilitating, the two facilitating protocols used in a team context. Finally, the leadership role of facilitating is considered in terms of the influence facilitating has on collaboration and belonging.
6.21.2 Definition of facilitating

Facilitating is an influencing behaviour that was usually exercised by the more communicative team members in this study. Facilitating combines communicating and listening behaviours to facilitate the contribution of ideas of characteristically quieter members in a team. R11 described how facilitating occurred in his team:

(Member) would be sitting there and (other member) would ask, ‘What’s your take on this?’ and (member) would say, ‘Let’s do it like this’ and then the (other member) would put forth the suggestion of what the (member) suggested. This suggestion was successfully implemented … (member) just had a great idea but didn’t put it forward however (other member) had to facilitate the communication of (member)’s ideas … in order to get team participation. (R11)

Members who were facilitating became the conduit or catalyst for contributions of those being facilitated, either by actually passing the ideas of another to the team, or by taking responsibility for repeatedly motivating an individual – above and beyond the usual communicating and motivating protocols – to personally share their ideas. In almost all instances the ideas facilitated related to the work of the team (team challenges) rather than to team processes.

6.22 Facilitating and influencing

Facilitating combined two different forms of expertise and influence. Members being facilitated were usually regarded as having relevant knowledge. The facilitator possessed good communicating skills and, after influencing a contribution from the facilitated member, was able extend influence by broadcasting the ideas of the member being facilitated. The personality characteristics of both parties, as displayed in the team, play an important role in the facilitating occurring.

6.22.1 The target of facilitating

Facilitating occurred when a team member, usually more communicative than other members, acted as a conduit or catalyst for the sharing of ideas of a quieter
individual. In every instance where informants offered a descriptor of the person being facilitated, it was of more reserved members noted for their quality of ideas and an apparent reluctance to share them without prompting. Some individuals literally only passed their ideas through a facilitator. In other cases, members shared their ideas personally, but only did so after prompting from a particular facilitator in the team who repeatedly interfaced with the facilitated person in an interaction different from ordinary communicating and motivating. There seemed to be a special facilitating relationship between the parties.

Some members in R14’s team noted that he was facilitated quite often, particularly in the early stages of team development. However, R14, amongst the most academically qualified members, was not aware of the extent to which he had been facilitated. He provided insights into why he might have been perceived as quieter: he generally spent time thinking about the team projects; but, because he believed the team expected him to have high quality ideas as a result of his academic prowess, he offered the ideas only if he considered them to be of value. Furthermore, he also wanted to ensure that others could contribute so they did not feel he was the only person who could deliver solutions:

There wasn’t really a need for me to express my opinion too often, even though I could have done the task myself. But that was not what it was about, the team was functioning really well and everybody was doing what needed to be done, so why complicate matters? Perhaps had the team been inept or didn’t know what to do, I would have felt a greater need to say something. Simply, if there was something to be said, I would say it, but I did feel that my contribution was correctly measured. (R14)

R36 explains that members who are facilitated are quiet and avoid the spotlight:

Facilitating means that you are channeling the ideas of a quieter member, who is often afraid to speak out directly. It is like they are trying to avoid being the center of attention. (R36)
R29 notes that, if it were not for repeated facilitating by a particular team member, the ideas of one of the most talented members would not have been heard, because that member was ordinarily very quiet.

### 6.22.2 Facilitator

For facilitating to take place, a more communicative team member, also able to recognise a facilitating opportunity, was needed. R6 described the person facilitating as a confident member who was also a good communicator: ‘The member facilitating is somebody who is highly articulate, self-confident in communicating with others.’ R13 approached specific individuals to allow them to facilitate his ideas, because he recognised that they were competent communicators, effective in disseminating ideas:

> I would approach members who were vocal and liked to put out ideas in the team, to provide my thoughts, because these members were good at spreading ideas in the group. (R13)

Members who are facilitating need to recognise when quieter members have ideas to contribute.

### 6.23 Protocols of facilitating

Facilitating, from the perspective of the member being facilitated, took one of two forms in this study: team-facilitation, or individual-facilitation.

#### 6.23.1 Team facilitation

In some cases, members being facilitated were encouraged by the facilitator to present ideas directly to the team. Many who were facilitated in this way required personal invitation and prompting each time, usually by the same facilitator or set of facilitators, before they shared their ideas. R17 explains how the team would listen quietly while the member being facilitated shared her ideas once invited:
The team would be silent because she was soft-spoken, nobody would talk over her, rather just listened to what she had to say. There were four members who took her ideas and discussed them between each other. (R17)

### 6.23.2 Individual facilitation

In some instances, members being facilitated only provided ideas to their facilitator(s), who, in turn, shared them with the team. R11 explained how he and another team member were the facilitators for some team members. He mentions how those wishing to share an idea with the team made the approach:

> Coming to either (member) or (other member), they would outline their ideas and expect us to get them out. Getting this contribution out there was vital, and these quieter members had a lot to contribute. (R11)

### 6.24 Facilitating and leadership

Facilitating contributed to increased inclusion and also impacted on contribution to the team task. It involved recognition by the more gregarious members in the team of the contribution quieter members in the team might make. Those who engaged in facilitating assumed a leading role by ‘initiating’ or ‘taking charge’ of facilitating the contribution of the quieter members. Facilitating was important because time pressures of the situation militated against contribution, particularly by quieter members. R13 explains how time pressures reduced opportunities for quieter members to contribute:

> There wasn’t a lot of, ‘What are your thoughts?’ Often it was, you either speak out, or the process moves forward, because there wasn’t much time. And we were trying to save time … had there been more time, we could have advocated for more engagement. (R13)

However, some facilitating type behaviour did not result in greater inclusion for the members being facilitated. By way of example, R14 explained how one of the facilitators would individually facilitate a member and then use those ideas as his own, without giving due credit to their source: ‘(Member) would facilitate ideas
through himself and would often not give due credit to the person who put forward the ideas.’ R18 also commented that this behaviour was resented by the member(s) being facilitated, who felt cheated. As a result, it affected the facilitator’s capability to exercise influence over the affected members in the future, and in some instances, these members being facilitated did not attribute leadership to those members again.

### 6.25 Facilitating: Summary

Facilitating is a situationally contingent influencing behaviour that used a combination of listening and communicating behaviours to maximise the contribution of ideas by the characteristically quieter team members. The person facilitated was usually a more reserved team member, while the facilitator was outgoing and a confident communicator. Team facilitation resulted in individuals sharing their ideas directly with the team, while individual facilitation involved the facilitator conveying ideas to the team. In terms of leadership, facilitating increased team members’ sense of belonging through collaboration, provided credit for the ideas was given to the person whose ideas were facilitated.

### 6.26 Exemplifying

#### 6.26.1 Overview

Exemplifying provides a mechanism for increasing the contribution of team members by clearly showing the way forward to other team members. The term exemplifying is defined; after which the characteristics of this type of team member are discussed in relation to the influencing behaviour. This is followed by a consideration of exemplifying protocols used in a team context. Finally, the leadership role of exemplifying is considered in terms of the influence exemplifying has on collaboration and belonging.
6.26.2 Definition of exemplifying

Exemplifying is a situationally contingent influencing behaviour, which was usually exercised by the most dedicated and progressive team members in this study. Exemplifying includes leading by example, and was described by team member, R12 as:

Clearly showing the best way forward to other team members. This was done by taking the initiative and leading from the front. This showed others what was required and set the tone for the rest of the project. These members were progressive in nature and allowed less confident members to follow suit. (R12)

Although exemplifying was essentially an individual action, it was aimed at influencing team behaviour in a positive manner. This behaviour was often visibly evident by the researcher, through observation, and also in subsequent interviews with many informants. Data supported the notion that exemplifying was indeed a behaviour used to exercise influence in teams. In the substantive field, team members who exercised exemplifying often undertook the largest portion of the workload. These progressive members seemed to almost intuitively understand what was required of them during the project and in doing so provided a clear example to other team members of what the task was at hand.

It soon emerged, through subsequent theoretical sampling in the field and from the interviews, that, like committing, exemplifying is often a very powerful influencing behaviour. Exemplifying, as described by informants, is different from committing in that it is more exemplary in nature, often implicitly urging others to follow their example. In doing this, other members were more engaged to lift their respective collaboration, leading to a more successful outcome for the team. R28 outlines how this boosted their group performance:

(Member) led by example from the start. Others soon saw what was required and a few members definitely were positively influenced to make a more substantive contribution. (R28)
Although this context-sensitive behavior was only evident on a few occasions, it was clear that it had not occurred in all teams during the study. On further enquiry it appears that the members involved in exemplifying were more senior members who had previously been involved in decision-making teams in the past. It was generally held that this previously gained experience had helped increase team collaboration and ultimately the team performance, on both the work-related level as well as the process level. Those to whom the exemplifying behaviour is attributed not only continuously strived to set an example but also continued to provide mentorship for fellow team members. The effect of this behaviour is aimed at increasing the total level of team effort and ultimately performance.

### 6.27 Exemplifying and influencing

Members involved in exemplifying were usually more senior members who had previous expertise and experience in dealing with similar projects. Providing an example to other less experienced members, they were able to extend influence by providing a clear example of what was required within the substantive context. These progressive members increased the collaboration of less experienced team members by showing them the best way to participate and make a valuable contribution, and in doing so ultimately lifted the team performance. The exemplar would influence on two levels; with the first relating to exemplary hard work which inspires increased personal levels of commitment to the work of the team. The second influence relates to perceptions around psychological bonds with the team and its members – put simply, exemplifying behaviour inspires other team members to feel, and to want to feel, a greater affinity or association with their team.

Exemplifying members exercised influence through attributes and actions that can be grouped into three categories. These categories reflect, to some degree, the increasing and changing nature of exemplifying influence. Firstly, members provided exemplary effort often in extremely trying conditions, making time also to encourage others. Secondly, members exuded trustworthiness and dependability through their influencing abilities and caring contributions. Finally, sustained perceptions of
trustworthiness and dependability transcended to a higher state, inspiration. In sufficient volume, as a shared experience, this inspiration served the purpose of bonding teams together, in a similar way that committing behaviour does.

### 6.28 Protocols of exemplifying

It emerged from the study that exemplifying consists of two major elements: leading by example; and showing the way clearly to other team members.

#### 6.28.1 Leading by example

When describing exemplifying behaviour, informants noted how the member commits totally to the tasks and challenges of the team, usually expending enormous amounts of effort. This extraordinary commitment is often first noticed as an example others wish to emulate: ‘(Member) was just a committed work horse … just bearing the team load … (member) was our inspiration due to the personal example she set.’ (R8) R31 explains how the exemplifying member set the example for others to follow. The member willingly undertook tasks in an exemplary manner, and usually committed herself to far higher levels than she expected of others. Contributing to the task and challenges of the team was an important element of exemplifying behaviour:

> It can only be described as leading by example … leading the way, encouraging other along the way … showing you are the leader … constantly contributing to team work. Total commitment by (member) drove others to be inspired and step in as well … not giving instructions but provide motivation to uplift your personal contribution … to help the member, to do more. (R31)

#### 6.28.2 Showing the way clearly

R11 provides additional information about exemplifying. He notes that the member exemplifying steps up to influence the team, always relating in a positive manner. The member also demonstrates humility, rather than seeking glory, even though his actions might entitle him or her to a claim of personal success and status. Finally,
R14 highlights the dependable nature of the exemplar, both in carrying the workload and in addressing interpersonal issues within the team:

(Member) would be just getting on with the job … never saying anything negative … never trying to take the credit personally. (Member) never gave up and always tried to stay positive … this approach and attitude was motivating for the team … (member) was so humble and so dependable. The whole group felt bound by this positive affirmation. (R14)

### 6.29 Exemplifying and leadership

Exemplifying contributed to increased inclusion and also impacted on contribution to the team task. It involved recognition by the more experienced members in the team that they needed to set an example for newer and less experienced team members. They did this by leading by example and showing the way clearly. Although exemplifying was essentially an individual action, it was aimed at influencing team behaviour in a positive manner. At a meta-level, exemplifying assisted the individual team member to positively influence team performance and in doing so helping members feel a sense of belonging. Exemplifying revolved around getting the best out of team members and increase the likelihood of getting team members to do what the team needs in order to be successful.

### 6.30 Exemplifying: Summary

Exemplifying is a context sensitive influencing behaviour that is implemented by example to other team members. This behaviour was a driver of team performance, in that less experienced team members drew inspiration from the exemplar, promoting increased collaboration, and ultimately this increased team performance. Although exemplifying occurred under all conditions, it was particularly noticeable and eminently more valuable in adverse or trying conditions, which is why it is considered situationally contingent. The final situationally contingent influencing behaviour, to be discussed next, is encouraging.
6.31 Encouraging

6.31.1 Overview

Encouraging provides a mechanism for increasing the contribution of team members by being supportive and providing confidence in the efforts of other team members. The term encouraging is defined, after which the characteristics of this type of team member are discussed in relation to the influencing behaviour. This is followed by a consideration of encouraging protocols used in a team context. Finally, the leadership role of encouraging is considered in terms of the influence encouraging has on collaboration and belonging.

6.31.2 Definition of encouraging

Encouraging is a situationally contingent influencing behaviour, which was usually exercised in conjunction with exemplifying, with the two behaviours often going hand in hand. Encouraging includes leading by being supportive of other team members, and when necessary providing confidence in other team members, as described by R16:

Encouraging and being supportive is different from motivating in that it provides confidence for less experienced team members. It essentially allows the team member to feel valued, supported and encourages them to collaborate without fear of reprisal. It was the confidence boost quieter members needed to make a greater contribution. (R16)

Although encouraging was essentially an individual action, it was aimed at influencing team behaviour in a positive manner. This behaviour was often visibly evident to the researcher, through observation, and also in subsequent interviews with many informants. Data supported the notion that encouraging, alongside exemplifying, was also an influencing behaviour used in teams. Team members who exercised exemplifying often undertook encouraging to engage less experienced and quieter members to lift their respective collaboration, leading to a more successful outcome for the team. R12 outlines how this boosted their group performance:
(Member) set an example from the outset. Others were supported and encouraged by (member) to collaborate and make a positive contribution, boosting our performance. (R12)

This behaviour was evident on only a few occasions, and was particularly context sensitive, often depending on the individual team members involved. This behaviour was aimed at raising the level of collaboration of quieter and often less experienced team members, which helped increase team performance on both the work-related level as well as the process level. This behaviour is aimed at increasing the total level of team commitment to which other members aspire.

6.32 Encouraging and influencing

Members involved in encouraging, as also in exemplifying, were usually more senior members in the teams. They sought to encourage the efforts and hence contribution to team by other less experienced members when required. The aim was to increase the collaboration of less experienced team members by providing moral support and future direction especially when members seemed hesitant to collaborate. As with exemplifying, this had a positive impact on the psychological bonds with the team and its members, essentially encouraging inspired team members to feel, and to want to feel, a greater association with their team.

6.33 Protocols of encouraging

It emerged from the study that encouraging consisted of a total commitment to team members demonstrated through positive regard for members.

6.33.1 Commitment to the team

R32 outlines how encouraging worked in their team. He notes that two senior members were encouraging a newer, less experienced team member, always relating in a positive manner. This personal influence went a long way in securing a more dedicated and committed effort from the team member being targeted:
(Member) spoke to (the newest member) to provide confidence in her efforts, encouraging her to collaborate with the team. (Another member) was equally supportive and often offered some quiet advice at the project was proceeding. This positive regard for less experienced members enhanced the total team contribution. (R32)

R26 describes the dependable nature of the more senior members in addressing interpersonal issues within the team:

(Senior member) would be just getting on with the job … always a positive attitude … always assisting newer members. This effort was aimed at getting the most collaboration from all members. The whole group felt bound by this positive affirmation … there was a real feeling of trust, commitment and dedication to team success … it was a comfortable environment, which just brought out the best in you. (R26)

6.34 Encouraging and leadership

Encouraging contributed to increased inclusion and also impacted on collaboration and contribution to the team task. It involved recognition by the more experienced members in the team of the contribution newer and less experienced members in the team might make. Those who engaged in encouraging assumed a leading role by initiating or taking charge of encouraging the contribution of the newer less experienced members. This was important because time pressure of the situation often detracted the collaboration of inexperienced or less confident members.

6.35 Encouraging: Summary

Encouraging is a situationally contingent influencing behaviour, which was usually exercised in conjunction with exemplifying, with the two behaviours often going hand in hand. Encouraging includes leading by being supportive of other team members and when necessary providing confidence in other team members. Although encouraging was essentially an individual action, as was exemplifying, it was aimed at influencing team behaviour in a positive manner.
6.36 **Summary of chapter**

This chapter has outlined and explored the six influencing behaviours used by designated followers in exercising leadership. These influencing behaviours were categorized as situationally contingent influencing behaviours, as these were situation dependent, emerging as important in certain contexts but not in others. This near-core category did provide further explanation of how designated followers exercised leadership in conjunction with the other reported influencing behaviours. The hierarchy of influencing behaviours outlined in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 provides an important explanation of how designated followers exercise leadership. However, a number of questions outlined below still remain unanswered, and thus the data were further probed as a result of these:

1. How designated followers emerge to become leaders?
2. How do they switch between roles?
3. Can there be concurrent leadership?
4. What happens to a designated leader when a designated follower assumes leadership?

Chapter 7 provides answers to these remaining questions, and outlines the fundamental tenets of team membership, different team roles, and the basic social process of role fluidity that emerged as the **core category**.
CHAPTER 7 FINDINGS: TEAM ROLES AND THE CORE CATEGORY OF ROLE FLUIDITY

7.1 Introduction

Given that the near-core categories outlined in previous chapters only provide partial explanation of the phenomenon, it was necessary to probe the data using further theoretical sampling and coding. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 comprehensively layout the types of influencing behaviours used in exercising leadership. Chapter 7 provides answers to the questions (posed in Section 6.36) of how designated followers emerge to become leaders; how they switch between roles; how leadership is undertaken concurrently; and what happens to a designated leader when a designated follower exercises leadership.

A basic social process of role fluidity emerged as the core category that provided detailed explanation to these remaining questions. This basic social process was found to be central to articulating how designated followers exercise influence and move between the team roles of leading and following, as well as the newly discovered role of disengaging. In a leading role, designated followers directly influence both task and team processes using one or more of the ten influencing behaviours identified, depending on context and their own expertise.

In a following role, designated followers have mostly a direct influence on the task of the team, and an indirect influence on team processes in general. Finally, in a disengaging role, designated followers have little or no influence on the team. Moreover, the present program of study revealed that leadership was often undertaken in a concurrent manner, and that most team members exercised leadership. This chapter examines the nature and effect of influencing upon each of the three identified team roles and the cyclical relationship of team membership in relation to designated followers. Then the core category of role fluidity is outlined along with newly discovered properties of distributed leadership within the substantive context.
7.2 Team roles in context

The context of the present research was six autonomous decision-making teams, generally comprised of between three to eleven members, working together to undertake and complete various banking projects with the aim of implementing these in the most effective and efficient manner, so as to provide solutions to the problems the teams were tasked to solve. To this end, a wide variety of task process- and team process-focused behaviours were required; and the extent to which members could deliver the necessary behaviours determined the degree of success of the team.

R13 explains that each member contributed differently: ‘I think all members are specialists in their respective field, so the main aim was in utilizing individuals’ strengths to the best of the group’s ability.’ Noticing that different members in a team appeared to exercise influence, in particular, provided the initial stimulus for this research, and was also a key focus in the early stages of the study.

7.3 Collaborating and belonging

Informants repeatedly highlighted that individual team members had a primary aim of collaborating with other team members in some way that was valued by other team members, in order also to derive a sense of belonging. Team members expected members to contribute, which in turn fostered a sense of belonging. This cycle is outlined in Figure 7.1. Influence was one contribution that team members could make to the team.

![Collaborating-belonging cycle](image)

Figure 7.1 Collaborating-belonging cycle
R35 demonstrated that contributing was an important driver for team members: ‘all want to contribute’. R27 noted in his team that ‘everybody, including the most reserved members, wished to collaborate and contribute positively to the group’. Many informants, often informally, gauged the level of collaboration of other decision-making team members to assess whether they were doing their necessary share in order to successfully complete the tasks. R9 equated collaboration to team and wages: ‘(member) worked their wage. Collaboration was vital all along the way.’

R11 uncovered, to some extent, how collaborating turned into a sense of connection and belonging: ‘Mentally and spiritually, all members collaborated to achieve the best possible outcome. This bound the group in a common cause.’ Constantly contributing in an interdependent manner led to members developing an enhanced sense of belonging. One member suggested that close teamwork in his team seemed almost family-like, with a strong bond developing between members: ‘Our team was successful because we all collaborated. It felt more like a family than a team, we were all bound by a common purpose.’ R7 observed interdependence between team members as tasks were being completed: ‘There was a bound interdependence and exceptional reliance on all. Collaboration was always positive in nature.’ In a very successful team, R26 outlines how behaviours seemed to fit together ‘smoothly’ and ‘fluidly’ to deliver the final team outputs: ‘The group functioned really smoothly and really fluidly and everybody was involved, and everybody was doing what they needed to do.’

To be successful, teams required two types of collaborating: (1) collaborating with regard to team tasks (such as implementing a new designed strategy), and (2) collaborating with regards to team processes (such as coordinating the use of team resources). This distinction between the two types of collaborating determined the type of role that an individual in the team filled at any particular time. Members exercised influence according to the roles they were fulfilling at the time (see Table 7.1). Each of the three roles is now discussed in greater detail.
### Table 7.1 Collaborating and belonging according to team role

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Collaborating</th>
<th>Belonging</th>
<th>Type of Influence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leading</td>
<td>Influences team processes and team tasks. Contributes to team tasks.</td>
<td>Derived from members responding to influence</td>
<td>Initiating or taking charge, using one or more of the influencing behaviours. Direct influence on team tasks through influencing processes and own contribution to tasks directly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Following</td>
<td>Contributes to team tasks.</td>
<td>Derived from being able to contribute positively to team outcomes.</td>
<td>Willingness to be influenced (indirect influence). Direct influence on team tasks through contribution of effort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disengaged Member</td>
<td>Withdraws contribution.</td>
<td>Diminished/ no sense of belonging</td>
<td>Not willing to be influenced. Not willing to contribute to team task.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 7.4 Team Role: Leading

The first team role is that of leading. From the definition selected for this research, leading is ‘intentionally influencing others towards a common goal’ (Parry, 2008; Yukl, 2012). This study identified ten influencing behaviours used when leading. Exercising influence through ‘initiating action’ or ‘taking charge’ was the particular team contribution of those occupying the leading role at the time. Because the role did not imply or confer any hierarchy, leaders also contributed to the task work of their teams. Leaders emerged within teams to fulfill particular team needs determined by context and, once the situational requirements had been met, often became followers again as other members assumed leading roles. Thus, leadership within teams was distributed amongst team members, usually according to followers’ perceptions of leader expertise (either task knowledge or team process skills), rather than being vested in a single leader. At times, multiple leaders operated simultaneously in a single team to complete a variety of sub-tasks.
7.5 **Contribution of the role of leading**

Leaders, like followers, wanted to contribute to the team. Whereas follower contributions were mostly directed at assisting with the completion of elements of team tasks, leaders were additionally concerned with ‘initiating’ and/or ‘taking charge’ of team processes that facilitate the completion of team tasks. Leaders were also involved in ‘initiating’ and/or ‘taking charge’ of team processes to sustain and strengthen the team as a unit. When ‘initiating’ or ‘taking charge’, leaders used one or more influencing behaviours, for example communicating, coordinating, or motivating, to engage the support of team members.

7.5.1 **Initiating action**

One of the major differentiators to emerge between leading and following was the willingness to initiate action. R32, a team member, said of a leader: ‘(member) has to take initiative and get the task done’. R14 provided an example of a situation where there was an obvious need for someone to take action, but only a few who recognised that need for action. In contrast, R5 comments that one of the members in their team was only ever a follower (and never a leader) because he never took the initiative: ‘(member) wouldn’t take the initiative and step into a role.’

7.5.2 **Taking charge**

The second major differentiator between leading and following was willingness to take charge. Team member R9 describes how a member who took charge of the team was seen as leading at that time: ‘(member) took charge and the remaining members accepted that without objection, so we had (member) as leader in that time.’ R15 suggests that taking charge was linked to having particular expertise: ‘understanding complex financial derivatives, was what was required. That of course, is my field. So, naturally, I took charge of that one’.

R9 reinforces the idea that expertise in a situation played a role in someone taking charge. His account suggested that no one member was always in charge:
There is always somebody willing to take charge. Team members were constantly coming up with new ideas on how to derive the best possible solution. There was never only a single member in charge at any point in time. It was always so fluid, with this constant back and forth of members willing to take charge. (R9)

Once a member was seen as being a leader in a situation, others expected them to take charge, as R21 experienced: ‘Others look up to you for direction, once you have taken charge and have been identified as leading.’ R26 provided insights as to how followers responded to someone that was seen as being in charge of a task in a team: ‘(follower) would actually ask (member), “How would you like this done?” and it was clear that the member was in charge and would have influence in what to do.’

7.6 Emergence of leadership

Popular conceptualisations of leadership, along with literature in the field, embrace the notion that teams usually have a single person that is ‘the leader’. R1 captures this commonly held view: ‘When you are asked to think of a leader, you normally think of one person.’ R21, a very experienced decision-making team member, notes how, contrary to his own expectations that a single individual would assume a position of authority, none did:

I could not understand what had occurred in the group. The problem we were facing was complex and our time deadline was tight. I was expected a hero leader to step up, somebody with charisma, who would take charge. Somebody to lead us, but it never happened. (R21)

In the context of this study, a negative case would have comprised a single individual exercising leadership in a team for the entire project. This was not found; and, on the contrary, all informants identified more than one team member they considered to have exercised influence. In fact, it is extremely likely that all members exercised leadership in their team, even if for only a fleeting moment. R19 explains: ‘If my memory serves me correctly, certainly all team members exercised leadership in some instance.’ Leading was thus not confined to single members but was rather exercised by different team members, some featuring more frequently than others.
Scrutiny of the social processes of exercising influence uncovered that most influencing behaviours are exercised by un-appointed, emergent leaders. The emergent leaders initiated or took charge using one or more of the ten influencing behaviours identified.

### 7.6.1 Appointed and emergent leaders

In some teams, there were designated leaders; however, not all teams had a designated leader. Upon formation of the autonomous decision-making business teams, it was important to note that these were formed to provide solutions to complex problems, and team members joined voluntarily because they felt they had the necessary expertise to contribute to the respective solutions. There was no real impetus placed on formal leadership as being important and providing direction when required. However, interviews and observation revealed that some team members simply appeared to ignore the formal hierarchy in the organization. R18 outlines how members of their team ignored the formally designated leader:

> The team members did not cover any special attention to the formally appointed leader and the (member) never insisted on receiving special treatment or advocating for a larger platform to drive (members’) agenda. Formal leadership did not appear to be important at all. Generally, everybody seemed to be equally important when it came to solving the related problems. (R18)

Even where teams had designated leaders, non-appointed members often still exercised influence. Influence usually stemmed from expert knowledge about the task or a capability to influence the team into action (R17). Team member R25 pointed out that, in his team, members did not feel precluded from also assuming leadership as required, even if there was an appointed leader: ‘If (member) had the necessary skillset that was required in the particular circumstances, (member) would coordinate efforts even though there was a designated leader.’

On many observations by the researcher, it was apparent that the team appeared to seek out specific leaders in situations of increased uncertainty, whereas a greater
number of members influenced the team when tasks were less challenging. R21 confirms this finding:

When the task became complex, the group reached out to the two identified leaders. There were three in particular, (member one) (member two) and (member three). When the task became less challenging, more members would have their input when they say where things were going. (R21)

7.6.2 Situational expertise and emergence of leadership

Situation emerged repeatedly as a core factor determining who exercised influence and the nature of that influence, particularly impacting on which influencing behaviours were required. R11 notes that leadership changes according to situation: ‘There were a few leaders in the team but who was in control depended upon what situation we were facing.’ A change in situation frequently precipitated the need for different expertise (often possessed by a different team member) and resulted in a change of leader or a change in the combination in which members influenced. For example, one member might influence the team through advice on technical options, another might exercise influence by keeping the communication flowing, and yet another by facilitating listening in the team, or drawing in a less involved team member. R21 comments on the role that expertise or knowledge plays in determining who might assume leadership in his team: ‘If you had the core skillset, you would be the leader for that smaller task.’

R19 provides further insights, pointing out that members each had their own specialist expertise:

All team members are core specialist in their field, you surely need to use that. Having the necessary know how determined how influential you were in the decision-making process. (R19)

Theoretical coding highlighted that expert knowledge or expertise was the primary determinant of why team members chose to follow, even though leaders and followers were seldom conscious of this process. For example, R12 notes how he engaged in influencing, although this was not necessarily a front-of-mind decision at
the time it was being exercised: ‘When you are influencing the team, you don't actually feel that you have provided leadership.’ Successful teams very quickly realised that members possessed different skills and that, from a purely utilitarian perspective, all members were potentially valuable to the team. R4 explains how team responsibilities (and influence) were allocated by matching capabilities needed in the moment with perceived member capabilities:

The situation determines which member will be leading … it is purely a matter of matching capabilities. If you have the knowledge, then you need to take charge. If you don’t, then somebody else needs to step up and provide the required leadership. (R4)

In a group interview, team members R12 and R13 reinforced that influence was often situational, with R12 also highlighting how differences in skillset and time availability impact the teams, as both factors are important considerations in the team tasks:

I think most of the people in the team were situational leaders depending on the required skills and time availability. The context determined who would take charge but it was always a group effort. (R12)

Depending on the task at hand. (R13)

### 7.7 Team role of following

The second team role that members occupied is that of following. The major requirement to be a follower was a willingness to make a contribution to the tasks of the team. In the substantive context, this contribution was ordinarily in the form of providing possible solutions to the problems facing the team, followed by completing specific or general task-oriented duties. R4 describes a follower in his team, and then how he behaved as a follower. As a follower, there is an element of doing as asked, and also making any on-the-fly decisions required in relation to small, allocated parts of the task:
(Member) was always dependable, consistent and hard-working, willing to contribute to all tasks … when I was uncertain, I would listen to what was required and would do what I was told to. I would do what I considered to be the correct option, when I was faced with a choice. (R4)

7.8 Following and influence

The key difference that emerged between the leading and following roles during theoretical coding revolved around influencing the social processes of the team. The leading role influences team social processes, while the following role focuses specifically and directly on task completion.

7.8.1 Indirect influence

Members occupying the following role exerted very limited, if any, direct influence on other members. However, through their contribution to the completion of the team tasks they exercised indirect influence. In an observation, the researcher recounts in a memo how three followers made a contribution to the team task but had little influence over team processes:

There are three followers in the group from repeated observation. They do not really influence the group but they are always contributing. There is no actual attempt to actively lead, but are always willing to contribute to any task required to ensure the job gets finished. (Memo 21.3.2014)

Being a leader or follower does not, however, imply differences in either relative value to the team or hierarchical status. To be successful, teams needed members to perform different roles. R16 explained how leading and following roles are both important:

The role of following is just as important as the person in the leading role. This influence reciprocity is vitally important, as you need it to be working effectively to ensure the effectiveness of the person in the leading role. (R16)
An egalitarian view of team roles prevailed in most teams, arising from a general view that the team had tasks to perform and, within the team, had a diverse range of skills that could be applied to the tasks. Who fulfilled certain functions was much less important than whether or not the team completed its projects successfully. Notwithstanding the common view that values all team member contributions, there was sometimes a sense that the term follower is not a preferred, or even positive, term. R8 was wary of using ‘follower’ to describe well-balanced team members who were not leaders:

All members worked well ... I don't like to express the term follower as this implies lesser standing ... the whole team worked well together to achieve the successful outcome. (R8)

R30, an influential member in a successful team, devised a plan to minimise chances that any single individual assumed sole-leader status, seeking to avoid the negative impact associated with leadership struggles. The member successfully persuaded their team that they should all see themselves as leaders, rather than referring to an appointed single leader. Initially, when asked about team leadership, all members reported that everyone in the team had been a leader, even though during interviewing they identified up to four members as exercising leadership roles most frequently. The tactic effectively implied that nobody was in the follower role: if all were leaders, then all have responsibility for both the team tasks and the team processes:

We worked as a team. (Member) didn't want someone to be the designated leader because he was simply appointed. This tactic was simple in ensuring that everyone bought into the project and that not a single leader would get all the credit. All members seemed to accept the concept and it went off well. (R30)

Comments by R30, who identified one other team members as a follower, reflected common perception that there was little difference between members in terms of leadership influence. The comments also demonstrate that the members felt good, as he suggested they would, when this tactic was employed:
The whole team was excellent and just made a success of the project as hand. It is difficult to rank people as leaders and followers because it just doesn’t seem right … the whole team functioned effectively and that was what mattered in the end. (R30)

After further probing during the semi-structured interview, R30 acknowledged that some members played more of a leading role than others. However, the member believed that a lesser leadership contribution did not imply a diminished or less valuable overall contribution to the team. It is possible that R30’s perceptions relating to totally and equally shared leadership arose from a lack of awareness relating to influence and team processes.

7.8.2 Followers are important

Successful teams needed both good leading and good following. R6 notes the importance of followers: ‘My role as a follower is just as important as the person leading the team. I am valuable to the team as a good follower.’

7.9 Types of followers

Two major categories of follower emerged during theoretical coding. The first type was typically more reserved or introverted in temperament, while the second was seen as being extraverted, outgoing and communicative.

7.9.1 Quieter followers

Every team had quieter or more introverted members who were followers who, nevertheless, played an important role by focusing mostly or entirely on the completion of specific task-related duties. Quiet but dependable, they were usually content taking direction from members in leading roles, or alternatively finding themselves a task that needed attention. R23 and R29 both describe these quiet and dependable members:

(Member) was very dependable in nature and was often more reserved. He was often quiet during dialogue and would just listen …
(member) would also put forward a few good proposals but (member) seemed to be happy with the more subdued approach, maybe it was just a time constraint issue. (R23)

(Member) continued on the path set out and just worked quietly at (member’s) own pace. It was always sufficient in completing what was set out, which was just fine under the circumstances. (R29)

Having a quiet disposition was the most frequently cited difference between members who sometimes assumed leading roles and members who were only followers.

Quieter followers were nevertheless proud of their contributions, perceiving their following role as complementary to the leading role, and equally important in team outcomes. Even followers who contributed ideas rather infrequently felt that their presence and commitment to the tasks of the team constituted a solid contribution. While some quieter followers labelled themselves as shy, and other followers were considered lacking in confidence, this was not always the case. A number of quieter members fulfilling the following role preferred space and time to reflect on the suggestions of other team members and information available to the team to solve the problems the group faced. Although contributing less frequently, their input was often more substantial, sometimes injected at pivotal moments in team deliberations. Despite their ideas having a major impact on the task, they did not seek to influence the related social processes. R23 described how a quiet ideas person would pass over leadership once they had relayed his idea: ‘The (quiet member) would put forth a proposal and when it was accepted, (member) appeared to withdraw back onto a follower role.’

Quieter followers largely avoided initiating or taking charge of the team. Members wanting to exercise leadership needed to act in a more extraverted manner when they wished to exercise direct influence, although extraversion alone was not a sufficient guarantee of exerting influence. Sometimes situations presented themselves where quieter followers were able to exercise influence through one of the influencing behaviours, though this happened quite infrequently.
7.9.2 Extraverted followers

Each team had a number of members who were communicative and outgoing. Overall, these extraverted individuals tended to speak a lot more than the quieter members, approaching their following role in a much more engaging and energetic manner than their reserved, more pensive counterparts. Extraverted followers put forward more ideas to team problem solving, even if they were not always the best ideas – sometimes a case of ‘the empty vessel making the most noise’. However, compared with quieter followers who carefully mulled over their own and others’ ideas, commenting only if they feel their remarks would add value, extraverted followers did their own thinking through verbalising their ideas to the team, and modifying or rejecting the ideas on-the-fly based on feedback.

Extraverted team members were much more adept at using the communicating influencing behaviour than their quieter counterparts. Regular contributing of ideas by these communicative members allowed other team members to assess their expertise as it related to a particular challenge. Quieter members, on the other hand, often did not express sufficient ideas to showcase their expertise, yet others in the team decided whom they would follow on the basis of perceived expertise pertaining to the situation. Because they were more comfortable communicating, the extraverted followers also tended to feel more comfortable stepping up and exercising other influencing behaviours that were reliant on communicating, for example, coordinating, motivating, mediating and facilitating. Members who exercised leadership at times tended to come from amongst the ranks of extraverted followers.

In all teams it was noted that leading for some of the time did not preclude members from becoming followers again at other times. R11 explains that leaders were also followers: ‘… those two were leaders, because they did influence the direction of the group but they were also team members (followers).’ Following when appropriate, when others were leading to the satisfaction of the team, was a necessary requirement to be accepted in the leading role on other occasions. R14 explains that this role switching, between leading and following, reinforced the importance of the
team and equality of membership: ‘… my interpretation of the leader is not one that shows that (member) is dominating the group. It’s one that brings (member) down to our level (by seeking member inputs when leading and becoming a follower when not leading.).’ Leaders who were unwilling to step back as leader and step up as followers all experienced a loss of influence.

7.10 Reasoning to followership

The primary reason members chose to follow someone is because they believed that those team members would help the team achieve its goals. Following is a means to the end goal of team success. Members could only decide whether or not to follow if another member took the initiative or attempted to take charge of a situation. The extent to which a potential leader showed commitment to the team, including its objectives and other team members, was a key consideration that followers used when deciding whether or not to follow. Having trust in a leader, and feeling comfortable with their leadership, were also important determinants of willingness to follow.

7.10.1 Taking the initiative and/or taking charge

When following, members allowed others to take the initiative, take charge, and make decisions for the team at a particular point. Some followers felt comfortable mostly following the lead of trusted others and accepting, rather than assigning, tasks. Others chose to oscillate between following and leading, sometimes initiating and taking charge and at other times following those leading. Leaders who switch to a following role, allowing others to step up into a leading role, often continued to influence by supporting and motivating members despite their predominantly follower-oriented role of the moment. When this type of non-hierarchical climate prevailed in teams, and there were enough leaders and followers for the context, then there was also very little conflict, and team performance increased.
7.10.2 Importance of trust to followers

Would-be leaders attempted to influence fellow team members in a variety of contexts through initiating or taking charge of one or more of the ten influencing behaviours. Trust played an important role in follower decisions about who might be acceptable team leaders at any particular time. In the early stages of problem solving, when members did not know each other very well, it was difficult to know whom to trust. Prior reputation, relating either to perceived leadership capability or perceived academic ability, played an important part in influencing followers’ early decisions about who to trust. Some teams followed members who had leadership credentials, while other teams choose to follow the suggestions of those considered to be most prominent in the research field. Where reputation did not play a role in initially determining trust, team members made intuitive judgements based on first impressions. Regardless of how early leadership is attributed, decisions about who to trust in a leading role were based on recurring personal judgements, as outlined by Kramer (2011), of member performance during the problem solving tasks.

Some members who influenced the team early on in the process did not continue to exercise the same degree of influence throughout the project, mostly because others also became recognised as being capable. R22 recounts how a member assumed a much greater leadership role in the final stage of the project:

It followed that the (member) exhibited the most leadership during the final and most important stage of the project. (Member) really took charge of the process and lead the way to success. I remember he was pretty reserved at first but (member) certainly surprised us. (R22)

7.10.3 Importance of feeling comfortable to followers

Some followers commented that trust was enhanced when the actions of the person they were following, or who was attempting to exercise influence, made them feel more comfortable. Comfort was associated with reduction of uncertainty, a condition that was always present to varying degree through the problem solving tasks. R30 provides insights into the type of environment the member responded to as a
follower, preferring one which was supportive and inclusive: ‘… everyone must feel comfortable and they must be able to feel that they can express their views, without being considered harshly.’

R11 describes how, initially, members did not know one another but, after a while, they started building relationships and became more comfortable with one another. The member notes that conflict was replaced by a sense of trust, which led to a greater willingness to participate without fear of condemnation, and leading ultimately to a lot more satisfaction in the completion of the project:

At first things were a bit tense as not everyone knew each other. Once things got underway, you could clearly see the relationships forming. This period of storming was soon followed by norming where members felt comfortable in making a contribution … nobody seemed intimidated anymore. (R11)

Being comfortable also related, in the context of a complex problem-solving task, to making new members feeling safe. R22 provides clarity:

The team tried to make the new member feel safe and comfortable. You could see the (member), was clearly overwhelmed at first. It is hard to be productive and make a valuable contribution when the person is out of their comfort zone. Always try to make the member feel safe. (R22)

R31 explains that, when leading, the member needed to support people to achieve new limits by moving them beyond their comfort zones: ‘Take them out of the comfort zones ... make them see that they are actually capable of doing a whole lot more than they expected capable of themselves.’ That being said, R13 found comfort in a leader who recognised limits and never expected more of any individual than they could actually give: ‘(member) never expected more from you than what you could actually give’. (R13)
7.11 Disengaged Members

Various teams, it was discovered, had some members who, despite their voluntary participation in the problem solving projects, were disengaged from several of the tasks of their team. At times, these members were neither leading nor following. These disengaged members, although still part of their team, hardly participated in some of the team tasks. Although membership of decision-making teams was voluntarily in nature, disengaged members contributed little more to their team than making up numbers. Disengaged members often preferred to stand aside, taking any opportunity to disengage from team tasks:

(Member) at times did not wish to be included, preferring to not participate in certain tasks. (Member) showed no real interest and when assigned to assist with the completion of certain tasks, would readily stand aside for any other members who was willing to complete the work, citing work pressure as a reason for non-completion of their portion. (R23)

Often disengaging members’ contribution to the team was negligible, and they were effectively net consumers of team resources (such as receiving assistance to complete activities), taking and not giving much in return. One informant (R4) refers to these disengaged members as passengers or non-contributors, often being carried by the team. Informants generally commented that disengaged members were not really members at all. Negative perceptions of these members were exacerbated when teams fared poorly on certain tasks, because a particular problem the teams were facing was complex and required a reasonable contribution from every team member for success, and this was not forthcoming.

Informants noted, with frustration, that the disengagers mostly knew what needed to be done, realised that their lack of support was having a negative impact on the team, and yet were often simply disinterested, rather than lazy or incapable. Engaged members, understandably, felt that the team would have been better off without nominal team members, who would not have been missed even if they had not been included in the team:
(Member) did not expressly iterate that they did not wish to collaborate but appeared as if they didn’t fit in or had underestimated what was required of them. (R13)

Passive in nature and did not fit in … but never asked to leave the team. (R21)

Maybe (member) did not understood what was required … just kept a low profile. (R4)

7.11.1 Disengaged members who were negative

Amongst the handful of the disengaged members were a few who were described as having a negative impact on the team. They attempted to influence members to abandon the team focus on completing tasks associated with the projects, for various personal reasons, including inter-team conflict. Two members of a team, R12 and R13, described a nominal member who was being negative and also not making any contribution to the team:

(Member) was so negative and seemed determined to see other team members struggle on … (member) looked as if they were pulling the team down … it appeared to be an inter-team conflict of members. (R12)

(Member) did not wish to collaborate … no contribution to mention. (R12)

(Member) did put a negative outlook on completion of the more complex tasks, saying ‘Maybe we won’t get this one, it’s too hard’. (R13)

A number of negative behaviors are identified in Table 7.2 below. It would be of future benefit to team members to recognize and be aware of these behaviours; in doing so they could avoid negative or damaging contributions; with the aim being to re-engage these members back into the positive collaborating and belonging cycle. Disengaged members do not make any positive contribution and should be actively encouraged to rejoin effective task and team processes.
Table 7.2  Negative follower behaviours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstaining</td>
<td>Refraining temporarily from collaborating. Wait and see approach on where team is heading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawing</td>
<td>Refraining permanently from consideration or participation. Loss of sense of belonging.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resisting</td>
<td>Remaining firm against the actions, effects, or force of the group when holding opposing views.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposing</td>
<td>Remaining in contention or conflict with the group when holding opposing views.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abrogating</td>
<td>Refraining permanently and attempting to abolish, do away with, or annul any authority.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.11.2 Periodically disengaged members

Some teams reported instances where members chose to disengage from the team for a period of time only, rather than continuously. Periodic disengagement usually occurred as a result of frustration stemming from the team’s disregard of the member’s input – essentially a loss of influence. Quite often these periodically nominal members were the losers of a leadership struggle. After a period of time they re-engaged with their teams, fulfilling either following or leading roles again. Team members usually helped with re-engagement, first by allowing the affected member (and to an extent also the team) time to cool-off, and then slowly finding ways in which they could involve them in team tasks. R25 provided an example of how a member stepped out and then stepped up again a short while later:

(Member) had excommunicated himself and then they were talking and he couldn't resist passing comments and contributing. And then, before (member) knew where he was, he was in the group. You know, cooperating, collaborating again. (R25)
7.12 Distributed leadership

In this study it emerged that in every single team more than one member exercised leadership and all members occupied the follower role for at least a period of time. In many teams, every single member exercised some leadership during problem solving projects. Team member R5 confirms this assertion: ‘Yes, everyone was influential at times … all did lead at some point … we all influenced the group in the different tasks.’

This section examines how the leadership that was both observed and reported to have been shared and distributed is notably different from notions of the single leader that predominate in the literature and in popular thinking. Furthermore, distributed leadership discussed in the present research is not the same as the distributed perspective of school management, which originally used the term distributed leadership.

7.12.1 Most team members exercised influence at some time

Observations by the researcher and numerous team members all point to the fact that most if not all of the team members exercised some influence during meetings. R6 and R24 notes that most of their team members took charge at some time:

\[
\text{Just about every team member took charge, depending on the situation, except for the two or three followers. (R6)}
\]

\[
\text{We were all leaders … influence reciprocity was apparent depending on context. (R24)}
\]

R35, discussing influencing in their team during a group interview that included four other team members, noted that up to five of his team were regular influencers and that all members had some influence: ‘If you actually think about it, there were like, four of us and maybe another member who were leading.’ Thus, far from having a single leader, teams had numerous leaders.
7.12.2 Influencing is not shared evenly

Overall, the nature of the influencing was not a sequential passing of the mantle or symbol of control from one influencer who had total control to another who assumed total control. Rather, influencing was shared, not necessarily equally, amongst some or all of the team members. Team member R11 points out:

Although everybody exhibited influence during the project, there were three or four members who mainly led, depending on what was required. (R11)

At some moments, sole members exercised a single influencing behaviour. At other times, multiple members influenced the team simultaneously. Sometimes more than one member engaged in the same type of influencing behaviour as other members. At other times, multiple members simultaneously exercised different influencing behaviours. Team member R37 provides more detail on how the influencing was shared in their team, and also raises the point that, while they considered the sharing of influence fair, it was not necessarily evenly distributed amongst all members:

There was no one dominant leader but rather a group of leaders who all stepped up to make a contribution when the situation determined. Some members exercised more leadership than others … the group was successful because all members felt they had a fair opportunity to collaborate and make a contribution. (R37)

The needs of the situation played a major role in determining how many team members were required to exercise influence at any one time. There were times when single individuals were in charge, and other times when multiple team members simultaneously engaged in a range of influencing behaviours.

Most teams seemed to have a core, even a sub-group, of members who exercised (and shared) influence in the team most frequently. In the examples immediately above, R36 refers to four or five members sharing the influencing; R11 mentions that there were two or three (different) main influencers for every task; and R18 recalls at least three main influencers in their team.
7.13 Leadership distributed

Various members often exercised different, rather than similar, influencing behaviours, effectively dispersing leadership among multiple members. Leadership was thus not only shared but, perhaps more importantly, it was also distributed amongst team members. There were differences in both the repertoire of influencing behaviours each individual adopted and also the frequency with which they were exercised. Some members regularly used only a couple of the identified influencing behaviours, while others employed a much wider range. Furthermore, some members engaged in influencing much more frequently than others. Where different influencing behaviours were exercised by different members (rather than one leader), leadership was, in effect, distributed.

Team member R15 recounts how four members in the team played a major role in influencing the team. Her description of the team’s typical approach to a team challenge captured how leadership was distributed amongst multiple influencers:

Two members were in control of the task and then assigned individual sub-components to everybody. (Another member) was definitely the motivator to all the related team members during the process. (A fourth member) was also providing additional input and attempting to tie all the ideas together. It was apparent that leadership distribution was uneven but seemed fair. This process appeared to be informal and emergent with everything just falling into place without any real consideration. (R15)

One reason that leading was distributed and shared may be because it was too complex an undertaking for only one individual. The whole process was described as informal and emergent, with team members finding synergy within the team to complete the project.

The researcher observed and recorded in a memo that, in one instance during a group meeting, a combination of attributes of two members in the team being observed would have produced the ideal single leader:
If the two members were combined, they would make the perfect leader. One has the necessary skillset in the task and the other has the ability to get the team to be completely engaged in the process. (Memo, 25.6.2014)

7.14 Distributed leadership leads to an enhanced sense of ‘team’

Allowing multiple members to influence the team and feel they are contributing to its leadership enhanced each member’s sense of belonging. In a group interview, team members R11, R12 and R13 explained how leadership was shared amongst team members, and outlined the impact that this had on their team. They recognised leadership as quite individual; but nevertheless noted that it felt almost like team work, because there was so much leadership from different individuals and it was all quite inter-connected, congruent, and aligned. Their group interview, where members filled in and finished off statements for one another, probably provided a window into how the team seamlessly switched between leading and following roles during the group project:

Yes, our team was most successful because there was a large amount of leadership during the project … from just about all members, some at the same time … but it felt like a concerted team effort. (R11)

I agree that it felt like team work, although everyone was influencing in a different way … there were many moving parts but the machine (group) moved as a unit toward the common goal. (R12)

Yeah, there was no individual leader in control … it was a group effort … all played their part … like an orchestra. (R13)

R12, who was part of a successful team, described how leadership was intentionally shared, usually according to situation, with the aim of assisting members to feel part of the team and optimising the use of team expertise:

We wanted everyone to be part of it, because when we got to different tasks, different people became leaders. Because (member) and I weren’t the leaders in every situation. At different times, other members’ needed to step up and influence as they had the situational expertise. (R12)
Team member R11 explained that leadership in their team had been distributed in a manner that avoided making members feeling inferior:

> Our intention was never to force or place pressure on any team member, or act in a superior manner to avoid making the rest of the group, especially newer members, feel inferior. (R11)

### 7.15 Distributed leadership is not oppressive, domineering or autocratic in nature

As noted earlier, leadership was found to have been distributed unevenly, with a core of dominant members in each team. However, although dominant in terms of frequency or magnitude of influence, members exercising distributed leadership were never described as oppressive, domineering or autocratic. R13 observes that a number of different individuals made major contributions to leadership, but other team members still had abundant opportunity to influence the team:

> There were three really dominant members ... They tended to take responsibility for the majority of the tasks ... There were numerous other opportunities for the rest of the team to get involved and have the opportunity to be heard. (R13)

Another experienced team member, R16, commenting on their highly successful team, noted that no single individual leader dominated the team: ‘There wasn’t any dominant leader … the leadership role was shifting all the time.’ R1 mentioned that in their team no one was seeking to be a domineering or autocratic leader: ‘No member ever demanded to be in charge.’ R23 was identified as being the dominant but not sole leader in her team. When discussing her leadership, she did not associate with the label dominant, confusing the term with domineering. After some clarification she agreed she was one of a few dominant leaders, but reiterated that she was not domineering, a style more akin to an authoritarian mode of operating.

### 7.16 Distributed leadership is not forceful in nature

A member in one of the teams adopted a forceful, domineering style that proved both difficult and unpleasant for the team, and also unpopular and widely criticised by
many of the other informants who had been subjected to this behaviour. R12, a member from the team who had worked alongside and observed the domineering member, offered his understanding of the situation:

(Member) was like a dictator … (member) was insisting on only doing it the way they wanted … it did not go down well … (member) was forceful in their approach … difficult and unpleasant. (R12)

The domineering leader was challenged by another dominant - but not domineering - team member, who often tried to counter-balance the effects of this autocratic style with a more caring and supportive approach. This led to arguments between these two strong characters: ‘Both members had an argument … there was intense competition before the conflict was resolved.’ (R12) When the domineering member decided to give up his attempts to dominate, the conflict in the team abated immediately and the individual and the team reported that the project was completed in a more amicable fashion.

7.17 Distributed leadership promotes sharing of leadership

In contrast to having a single domineering leader, some teams attempted to avoid potential conflict associated with leadership struggles by agreeing that there would be no individual formal leader in charge. The process was aimed at ensuring that all team members felt they were able to make a contribution and offer leadership in the team. R23, a formally designated leader in a successful decision-making team, outlines why their team decided to regard everyone as a leader:

Even though I had the title of designated leader, it was clear to myself and other team members that an egalitarian approach would be more useful in the complex task than a single person issuing directions. I did not have the necessary expertise to direct the whole affair and I knew that following a hierarchical approach would be counter-productive to having all members equally engaged in the process.

Every person had something valuable to contribute and we wanted the inclusive process to drive our team moral. Every member felt encouraged by this approach and would share in the successful outcome, not just a single leader. (R23)
R16 indirectly reflects a similar belief that a leadership grab by single individuals would lead to conflict. He commented that his team had not experienced conflict because no individual tried to be domineering. Instead, all team members were able to contribute to influencing team outcomes by sharing leadership in a distributed fashion:

I think we blended well as a group, because there was no power struggle. No single member attempted to be the sole leader. Basically everyone put a hand in it and everyone helped everyone else. (R16)

### 7.18 Properties of distributed leadership: subtle, emergent and informal in nature

One reason why all members in some teams felt as if they were sharing leadership is because distributed leadership was quite subtle. ‘Subtle’ and various other synonyms were used fairly regularly by informants to describe the nature of influencing within teams. R7 describes the influence as ‘subtle’ or ‘understated’. ‘Understated’ implies an inherent awareness that a more forceful style is less effective in the substantive context:

The process of influence reciprocity was best described as subtle in nature. There was a clear tone of posing possible solutions and waiting for feedback, there was no attempt to have their individual ideas put forward without regards. There had to be a group process of deciding of which was the best way forward. It could best be described as inherently understated. (R7)

R21 described how a certain member would quietly go about influencing members through one-on-one exchanges: ‘A quiet coordinator, you know, the member would approach other individual members and quietly put forward certain proposals to attempt to influence and coordinate the task at hand … (member) was subtle.’ In another team, R27 describes one of his influencer members as being ‘an undercover leader.’ R4 captures how one of these subtle leaders in their team tried to influence certain members: ‘(Member) was inspiring in their approach … always putting forth ideas in a subtle manner … the approach was gentle and quiet.’
Another perspective on this subtle and less overt style is provided by members who were themselves regarded as influencers. R17 was aware of the need to avoid being too assertive; that she couldn’t be so subtle that she lost influence; and that it was important to share credit for any success with the whole team: ‘You must be subtle, but not too subtle so people don't notice you. You need to push the other members, but you mustn't want to take the credit.’ (R17)

R22 reinforces the importance of being a subtle leader:

The best type of leader that is needed is a subtle leader, and informal leader. Leadership must be understated … it just happens without any formal consideration. (R22)

The researcher observed this approach taken on many occasions, and highlighted the informality and subtleness of the leadership approach in a field note:

The leadership process is so subtle and understated in nature. Leadership is informally assumed, emergent in nature, driven by situational expertise and is unevenly distributed. (Field note, 19.08.2014)

The researcher also noted that many team members could not clearly articulate why this approach was taken and was so successful in the present research:

It is apparent that many members are able to explain their interactions within the substantive context but do not have an inherent understanding of why the group is using this approach and why it is so successful. The whole process is unarticulated within the group. (Field note, 20.08.2014)

7.19 Core category: Basic social process of role fluidity

Having discovered that teams have multiple leaders who vary from time to time, the focus of the research turned to uncovering the protocols of how individuals changed team roles – from leader to follower and vice versa. Consideration was also given to how some leaders at times adopted a disengaged or nominal member role, or became a leader after having been a disengaged member. R16 and R 18 explain how members in their team moved, fairly quickly, between leading and following roles:
(Member) realized that other team members had skills that were more suitable for the completion of the task … so (member) consciously took a step back to allow the others to step up into the role. (R16)

In our team, we had members who were coordinators or facilitators … they wouldn’t be in charge, but as soon as they saw another member was better suited for the task they would take a step back along with other members to allow that person to do what needed to be done. This role fluidity was almost seamless in nature … back and forth to get the task done. (R18)

In the present research it was discovered that, in most teams, there were between two and five members who assumed a leading role; however, this did not result in the team being left with only two or three followers. All of the team members who exercised influence at some time also become followers when they were not exercising influence. The highest level of abstraction of the data led to the emergence of the substantive basic social process of role fluidity. This core category explained the social process by which designated followers were able to assume leadership under certain conditions and become followers at other times. This dynamic mechanism provided an explanation as to how designated followers exercised leadership (Antonakis, 2006) and switched between roles (Bligh, 2011) in the substantive context.

This fluidity of team roles was the main finding of the research, and emerged following theoretical sampling of informants (Glaser, 1978), during Phase 3 interviews, who, when probed, elaborated on specific emerging concepts such as teams with disengaged and negative members. Using chain sampling (Glaser, 1978) and opportunistic sampling (Glaser, 1978) allowed the researcher to follow emerging leads in a flexible manner and probe the data for clarity on the phenomenon. Post data-collection, a lot of work was done on refining substantive coding (Glaser, 1992) and then on integrating patterns and connection between those codes using theoretical coding (Glaser, 1998), until the basic social of role fluidity emerged.

Team member R26 explains how role switching between leading and following roles occurred. The member leading appeared to recognise that the team needs a skill that
the leader does not have, and, in a metaphorical sense steps back to allow someone else to step up. In some cases, R26 notes, the leader actually took a physical step back to create this space. R26, explains that the leader stepping up doesn’t really think about stepping up, it happens far more spontaneously:

When discussing a smaller sub-component of the task at hand, which was critical in the team success, (member) who was leading appeared to have completed their contribution and seemed to take a step back. I then felt that it was suitable for me to come forward and do my part. This unarticulated process was spontaneous in nature … the roles were just so very fluid. It seemed very natural. (R26)

R23 also described role switching as very fluid and effortless:

The whole process was so fluid and natural when the team was discussing a task and planning. The leadership seemed to effortlessly flow around the group … it seemed as nearly all members had a moment in this influencing process. (R23)

In a few teams one or two members did not step up at all and were only followers. R29 describes a member who did not assume an influencing role at all during the project:

(Member) was a definitely a follower and did not have any real input … (member) seemed to only complete the tasks allocated … (member) simply did not take the initiative and step into a role. (R29)

A good example of this was R26, who preferred to mainly adopt a follower role, choosing to only influence occasionally; but when doing so was very influential. R15 explains that she was more comfortable in a following role and felt that being a follower was also important:

I felt more comfortable being reserved, quiet and pensive in the team … being a follower was equally as important as being the leader … all teams need a successful combination of both. (R15)

Even when members did have the capacity to influence, R14 notes that it may not have been prudent to do so at that particular time because there were enough members already making the required contribution and fulfilling team needs. R14
draws on an old adage to make his point: ‘You can't have everyone leading the process … like too many cooks spoil the broth.’ It follows that it was not always necessary to step up providing that others in the team were exercising the influencing skills required by the situation. R26 outlines that, owing to the constant role switching between leading and following, the member had the opportunity to improve both their leading and following skills:

This did help me because I was given the opportunity to be a leader at some stages and allowed others to take the leadership as well … in doing this I learned to not only be a leader but a good follower as well. (R26)

Informants describe voluntarily stepping up to exercise an influencing behaviour, and later stepping back from influencing to become a follower of other influencers, as shown in Figure 7-2. Sometimes, however, there was competition for the influencer role, in a win-lose sense. When this occurred, the loser stepped down rather than back, and some conflict was usually associated with this type of switching, or even switching out.
7.19.1 Stepping up

Many informants used the term ‘stepping’ to indicate role switching. When a member exercised one of the influencing behaviours, they were described variously as ‘stepping up’ (R5, R23, R38), ‘stepping in’ (R20, R32), or ‘coming forward’ (R7, R29). R23 described how various members exercised influence by ‘stepping up’ when they had a contribution to make to team leadership:

It was apparent that for each different task, there would be a specialist member that would step up and take control. The rest of the group would then allow the member to assume leadership and attempted to collaborate as best as we could. (R23)

Team member R19 was explicit about the purpose of ‘stepping up’ to exercise various influencing functions, which the member more closely associated with leadership:
(Member) stepped up and assumed leadership most successfully … planning, listening to what other’s had to say and by taking control of the process. (R19)

7.19.2 Stepping back

All members who influenced team members for some of the time often chose to follow other team members in the leading role or become disengaged members periodically. When switching between leading and following was uncontested and accepted members often spoke of ‘stepping back’ (R2, R14), ‘drawing back’ (R13, R27), or ‘pulling back’ (R23). In ‘stepping back’ willingly, there was demonstrated support for the member who had ‘stepped up’ and the outcome was described as a win-win for both parties. The subsequent influencer was encouraged by the opportunity to exercise influence, while the former influencer was able to model the type of following behaviour they would prefer when influencing:

In the context of the task (the member) stood back to allow others to assume the leading role … this action would prompt another member to step up and take the leading position. The member’s actions would be inferred to mean it was now the turn for another member to take charge. This process of stepping down or back into a followership role was done with great fluidity … the whole process seemed very smooth … it happened all the time. (R2)

On many occasions, the researcher also noticed the role fluidity, and clearly articulated the description of the basic social process as it became apparent:

The whole process is subtle yet pervasive in nature, it seems to happen all the time. (Field note 10.09.2014)

R17 explains how one influencer inherently recognised that it was in the team’s best interest if she ‘stepped back’ from the influencer role and into a follower role:

(Member) was dedicated and although (the member) wanted to be influential and for the group to succeed, (the member) needed to step back on occasions and let other members also make a contribution. It was clear that others in the team encouraged (the member) to step back when needed. (R17)
Dominant influencers often needed to resist being in control all the time and allow other willing members an opportunity to ‘step up’. Many astute influencers just seemed to understand the impact of collaboration on the team’s overall performance and also on team cohesion. R18 explains:

> When the member realized others wanted to collaborate and step up to make a contribution, (the member) would pull back and listen. This was contextual in nature, allowing others an opportunity. (R18)

### 7.19.3 Stepping down

Although the term ‘stepping down’ (R25, R38) was often used to describe the term that has previously been labelled as ‘stepping back’, in many instances ‘stepping down’ described what a displaced influencer might do after losing a win-lose exchange. Hypothesising how a leader in a hierarchical culture would act, R25 describes how a win-lose showdown might result in the loser ‘stepping down’, rather than ‘stepping back’:

> I think that amongst the group, there would be that one member, who would be dictatorial in approach advocating for some members to step down as (the member) would say, ‘Listen, I am right on this one … step down because I know what is going on here.’ (R25)

R17, who ‘stepped down’ as team leader, describes how she changed her behaviour once she had lost the capability to influence her team. Her reference to ‘stepping down’ to the level of other team members gives some suggestion of hierarchy associated with her leadership:

> On the final sub-task, when (member) took charge, I preferred to simply act like the other members … this process of returning to the level of other members. I did not try and influence proceeding but decided to rather blend in with the others. (R17)
7.19.4 Stepping out

In very isolated incidents, a member engaged in conflict with either the dominant influencers or the team as a whole and lost. Instead of becoming a follower by ‘stepping back’, or even ‘stepping down’, a very small minority of members actually ‘stepped out’, withdrawing from influencing and following roles to become a disengaged member:

They were talking, and (the member) was trying to talk, and it seemed that (another member) just spoke over her. She seemed perplexed and angry and said, ‘Why are you not listening to my proposal.’ She was so angry that she actually sat back and withdrew from the whole process … the rest of them didn’t even seem to pay attention to what was going on. (R29)

7.20 Summary

Designated followers played any one of three roles, namely following, leading, or disengaging. In a following role they contributed to the team by working directly on the tasks of the team. In a leading role they contributed to the team by exercising influence on the social processes of the team, and achieved this by initiating or taking charge using one or more of the ten influencing behaviours. In the third team role of disengaging they contributed little or nothing to the tasks or processes of the team, but often remained associated with the team rather than exiting it.

Designated followers often switched between roles, most commonly between leading and following roles. It emerged from analysis that designated followers were able, and indeed expected, to contribute to the tasks of the team; and furthermore, it was possible for any designated follower to attempt to exercise influence over team social processes and occupy a leading role if they chose to engage in influencing behaviours. They did this through initiating or taking charge, even if momentarily, by using one or more of the ten influencing behaviours. Because leadership was emergent, based on attribution by other members’ assessment of situational expertise (task- and/or process- related), not all who attempted to influence were successful.
Designated followers thus exercised leadership by engaging in **role switching**, and stepping up to a leading role by initiating or taking charge using one or more of the ten influencing behaviours identified in this study. This basic social process of role fluidity emerged as the **core category**. The **main contribution** of the present methodology is in illuminating the **fluidity of team roles** and possible contribution non-designated leaders/followers can make in their teams. The present findings outline the differing roles that team members can and do readily espouse in their team interactions and identification of a hierarchy of influencing behaviours used by designated followers in exercising influence. These propositions are discussed in the context of the extant literature, in the next chapter.
8.1 Introduction

In response to the research question, ‘How do designated followers exercise leadership in business teams?’, this chapter presents the substantive theory of distributed leadership in business teams. Key elements of the theory are discussed in the context of extant literature, from relevant fields including emergent leadership, distributed leadership, followership and teams, which were reviewed after the research was substantially complete in accordance with the traditional grounded theory approach followed. The chapter concludes with properties of distributed leadership that emerged during the research study, which are also discussed in the context of the existing literature.

8.2 An overview of the research study

The grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) of distributed leadership in business teams proceeded from a definition of leadership as ‘intentionally influencing others towards a common goal’ (Parry, 2008; Yukl, 2012), with the assumption that the influence is non-coercive in nature. The substantive focus of the present research comprised six autonomous decision-making business teams in the field, operating within a major competitor in the Australian Financial Services Industry, tasked with providing solutions to complex financial problems. Team participation was voluntary. Team size varied between three and eleven members. The study was longitudinal in nature, with data collected over a two-year period. A traditional grounded theory methodology (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was employed.

Collaborating and belonging emerged as the two primary purposes team members have for being in a team. Collaborating related either to efforts to complete the team task, or to efforts to facilitate team processes aimed at making the team an effective form of organizing. The nature of projects in which the members engaged
determined the nature of their contribution and the team role that they played at any
particular time.

In a few instances, teams did have an appointed individual(s) (designated leaders); however, in most teams this was not the case. Instead, influencing behaviours (which constituted leading) emerged largely according to the requirements of the context and expertise of individuals, regardless of any formal appointment. The theoretical framework of distributed leadership in business teams concerns leaders emerging and influencing others in the team towards a common goal. The ‘others’ in the team become followers when they choose to be influenced by and attribute leadership to team members who are exercising influence to move the team towards achieving common goals.

All leaders in this study became followers at some point; and, in fact, most team members were more often in following than in leading roles. Even members who were most often in the leading role spent a substantial amount of time following others. Followers became leaders as they exercised leadership through role switching. Depending on the context, various elements of the leadership role were distributed among different members of the team through the variation of one or more of ten influencing behaviours. Leadership was found to be extremely fluid and concurrent in nature. The grounded theory of distributed leadership in business teams is a theory of how decision-making team members exercised leadership, and is a notable contribution of this research study.

8.3 Collaborating, belonging and the collaborating-belonging cycle

In the present study, the fundamental tenets of team membership were collaborating and belonging. It further emerged that collaboration and belonging are highly interdependent, leading to either virtuous or vicious cycles and corresponding increases or decreases in both elements. In this cyclical relationship, as outlined in Figure 8.1 below, team members who felt they were making a valued contribution through collaboration with other team members experienced an enhanced sense of belonging and an increased willingness to collaborate.
On the other hand, members who felt they were not contributing, or perceived their contribution to be inappropriately valued, were likely to experience a diminished sense of belonging, and consequently their contribution waned.

Figure 8.1  The collaborating-belonging cycle: Virtuous or vicious

It was further found that, to function effectively, teams need contributions to task (allowing for collaborating) and contributions to team process (broadly promoting belonging). Cohen and Bradford (2005, p. 62) highlight that all influencing attempts within organisations ‘simultaneously contain’ task and relationship components. During the present research study, it emerged that team members expect, and are expected, to directly influence the team tasks. Such task contribution directly influences the state of completion of the task. On the other hand, not all members expect, or are expected, to directly influence team processes; although they nevertheless indirectly influence these processes through willingness to follow members attempting to exercise influence on team processes.

Jing and Avery (2008) raise the question of exactly how leadership is linked to performance; and stimulating a virtuous collaborating-belonging cycle provides one concrete example and explanation. Bolden (2013) poses the question of how team performance is enhanced by distributing leadership. This virtuous cycle explains the tenets of enhanced as well as diminished performance within the context of a distributed leadership setting. This cyclical relationship within a team context,
focusing at individual member level, has never been expressly enunciated in the extant literature, and is a contribution of the present thesis.

The concepts of collaboration and sense of belonging do feature separately in the literature on teams and teamwork (Callanan, 2004; Day et al., 2004; Sheard & Kakabadse, 2002; Burke et al., 2011), usually among lists of characteristics relating to teams. McGinn et al.,’s (2005) qualitative account of contributing and belonging in a research team places particular emphasis on the experience of individual belonging and contributing; and although not expressly stated, it can be inferred that contributing must also have been positively affected as a result of the belonging that was experienced and described. A plausible explanation for why the cyclical relationship has never been explored at the individual level is because researchers have traditionally approached the field from a leader- and team-centric perspective, as intimated in Chapter 2.

Prior research has negated the focus on the individual team member. From a leader-centric perspective, Yukl (2008) advocates that a leader should focus on instrumental (task-oriented) or expressive (relations-oriented) leader skills. From a team-centric perspective, Salas et al., (2007) advocate for a focus on teamwork and team performance. From an individual-centric perspective, the tenets of collaborating (Amabile et al., 2004) and belonging (Burke et al., 2006) are valued. Each of the three perspectives, outlined in Figure 8.2 below, focus on very similar concepts relating to collaboration and belonging, only through a different theoretical lens.

![Figure 8.2: Alternate perspectives on collaborating and belonging](image)

This is a critical observation when considering the output from the present study, as, unlike much of the extant literature on leadership, which has focused either at a single-leader or whole-team level, the present research examined leadership as it was
exercised by multiple individuals within the team, heavily influenced by context or situation.

### 8.4 Overview of the substantive theory

Key elements of the grounded theory of distributed leadership in business teams are presented in this section, and Figure 8.3 provides an illustrative overview of the substantive theory. A detailed discussion, including positioning of the key theoretical components (propositions) in the extant literature, follows. Five key elements of the grounded theory of distributed leadership emerged, namely: (1) initiating and taking charge, (2) team roles, (3) role switching, (4) influencing behaviours, and (5) context.

![Diagram of Distributed Leadership in Business Teams]

**Figure 8.3** Key elements of the grounded theory of distributed leadership in business teams
Team roles, namely leading, following and disengaging, were identified from the research and comprised a key element of the substantive theory. A vital characteristic of the roles is that multiple (more than one) members in the team can occupy the roles at any time, sometimes only very briefly and sometimes for extended periods. Furthermore, multiple (more than one) members can occupy a role simultaneously. In the leading role, members collaborate with and contribute to the team by initiating or taking charge of both team-oriented and task-oriented processes, and experience a sense of belonging when they successfully influence others.

Initiating and taking charge was also identified as a key element of the substantive theory. Members who occupy a following role choose to be influenced by one or more members in the leading role, to whom they attribute leadership. In the following role, a member’s contribution is to the task of the team, and their sense of belonging is derived from having their contributions accepted and valued. Disengaged members are members by association only. Disengaged and detached, their contribution is extremely limited, or even negative, and they do not feel a sense of belonging. In the present study, designated followers exercised leadership by role switching from a following role to a leading role.

Role switching is the third key element of the substantive theory. Followers or disengaged members stepped up to a leading role and, when they finished leading, usually stepped back into a following role. In the event of a contest for leadership, the loser would either step down into a follower role if they wished to follow, or stepped out of the team into a disengaged member role, making little or no contribution to the team at that point. If a disengaged member wished to re-engage, they would step up into either a following or a leading role. Multiple members (more than one) in the team who were in the following role assumed a leading role by stepping up to a leading role through initiating or taking charge of one of ten influencing behaviours that were identified in this study.

Influencing behaviours, the fourth key element of the substantive theory, themselves fall into one of three categories: (1) communicating and listening are primary influencing behaviours, most frequently used, and without which none of the other
influencing behaviours would be possible; (2) coordinating, which is largely contribution focused, and motivating, which is closely aligned with belonging, are two secondary influencing behaviours that were present in most situations, as they impacted directly on task and team performance; (3) finally, six behaviours, namely committing, risking, mediating, facilitating, exemplifying, and encouraging, were found to be used only in some contexts and not by all teams, and, for this reason, were categorized as situationally contingent influencing behaviours.

Situation or context emerged as the final key element of the substantive theory, playing a major role in determining which influencing behaviours were most important. Examples of contextual elements include the nature and complexity of team projects, applicable time restraints, and specific resources available to the team. This impacted on how team members contributed in general, and particularly who felt capable of initiating or taking charge. It emerged that team members, sometimes without conscious thought, followed others with perceived expertise. Expertise related to knowledge of the task and/or team process capabilities relating to the influencing behaviours, such as communicating, coordinating or mediating. Having discussed elements of the theory in depth in the findings chapters, the discussion which follows examines elements of the substantive theory in the context of the extant literature.

8.5 A grounded theory of distributed leadership in business teams

This substantive theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) proceeded from a definition of leadership as ‘intentionally influencing others towards a common goal’ (Parry, 2008; Yukl, 2012). Parry et al., (2014) argue that followership influence is an important topic, and is a real and key problem driving leadership research. In answering the question, ‘How do designated followers exercise leadership in business teams?’, informants and emerging data were continuously probed using constant comparison for insights as to how influencing occurred. Each of the five key elements of the grounded theory of distributed leadership in business teams that emerged is discussed in turn.
8.6 Key element #1: Initiating and taking charge

Team members exercise leadership directly by influencing others in the team through influencing team processes. This is achieved by initiating or taking charge of an aspect of team processes, with the end goal of either progressing the team’s task or enhancing the team’s effectiveness. Some key insights that emerged during the research include: that initiating and taking charge are vehicles for leadership; that multiple members (more than one) engage in initiating and taking charge; and also that, over time, almost all team members exercise some influence. Each is discussed briefly in this section.

8.6.1 Initiating and taking charge are vehicles for leadership

The primary vehicle for exercising leadership is by either initiating (Kotter, 1990; Yukl, 2012) or taking charge of team processes (Komives et al., 2005; Burke et al., 2011). Both of these mechanisms are widely documented in the literature, and provide confirmation that participants’ experiences about what constitutes leadership match generally held perspectives. What informants in this study highlighted differently, however, is that initiating or taking charge of a process did not imply that the leader should complete that particular process independently, to the exclusion of others.

Yukl (2012) lists short-term planning as one of the fifteen core leadership behaviours; however, it emerged that many team members in this study actually contributed to the work of planning, in conjunction with those who initiated or took charge of planning, via the exercise of the coordinating influencing behaviour. Therefore, the behaviour of planning was not exclusive to leaders. Coordinating was identified as the influencing (leadership) behaviour; but the component planning itself was essentially a task function.
8.6.2 Multiple influencers equate to multiple leaders

For the period of time that initiating or taking charge occurs, no matter how brief, influencers exercise leadership. The comprehension of multiple leaders in a team contrasts profoundly with the opposing leader-centric or team-centric approaches found in the extant literature. In present leader-centric studies, even though different individuals are noted as exercising influence, only the individual who exercised the most influence, i.e. leadership behaviour(s), is seen as the leader (Taggar et al., 1999; Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2011). In contrast, informants in this study considered members exercising influence as occupying a leading role for the period they were exercising influence, regardless of how long that lasted.

8.6.3 Most team members exercise influence at some time

In addition to all members being followers at some time, in most teams in the study every member exercised some influence during the life of the team. Therefore, all members also had some share of overall team leadership. The best performing teams, analogously, were found to have distributed leadership more often and more widely than most other teams. Conversely, teams that had fared really poorly or failed at certain subtasks did not display much distributed leadership and, at times, seemed to have no leadership being exercised at all.

This supports the findings of Taggar et al., (1999) and Cope et al., (2011) that teams with higher aggregate levels of leadership behaviour definitely fare better than teams with lower levels of leadership behaviour. These studies and the present study further demonstrate that teams perform poorly when the cumulative level of leadership behaviour is low. Three important insights arise from this finding. First, leadership is not necessarily continually present in a team (i.e. there is no guarantee that any team members will be willing to exercise any leadership). Second, teams fare best (assessed by aspects of task completion and team cohesion) when multiple members exercise leadership, with more being better than less. Mehra et al., (2006) found that, when teams of sales people had multiple leaders who recognised one another, they did better than teams with individual leaders. Their study also found the converse, in
that, when teams with multiple leaders didn’t recognise the leadership of others, there was no apparent benefit from leadership distribution.

Third, members exercising influence did not do so continuously, and did so in some situations but not in others. In the present study, multiple (more than one) leaders often emerged when the task of the team was complex. Simply put, there was more leadership needed in a short time than could be managed by a single individual. Although the concept itself is relatively under-researched in the literature, complexity has been provided as a reason why a leader-centric approach is no longer sufficient (Senge, 1997; Salas et al., 2000; Day et al., 2004; Pearce et al., 2007). Parry et al., (2014) argue that the contemporary environment facing organisations today, often with tremendous uncertainty and complexity, is a possible reason for the need of additional leadership, often in the form of informal leadership.

8.7 Key element # 2: Team roles

Another key point of difference from much of the extant literature is that the team roles of leading and following in the study were non-hierarchical and mutually symbiotic. In particular, this contrasts with manager and subordinate roles, which are mutually symbiotic but hierarchical by design (Fitzsimons et al., 2011). When the team roles function appropriately, leading and following each contribute differently in helping members individually achieve a sense of collaborating and belonging. The team’s output is also higher than might be achieved if members work individually. This fits well with the notion suggested by Chaleff (2003) and further enunciated by Dixon (2008, p. 175), that leaders and followers are bound by a common purpose where, ‘followers and leaders both orbit around the purpose and values of the organization; followers do not orbit around the leader’.

Members who exercise influence, by initiating or taking charge, need other members to make the attribution of leadership and follow. When following, members need to know how they might contribute collaboratively and also have their contribution appreciated in some form to experience a sense of belonging. The two primary team roles of leading and following are crucial to team functioning (Sorenson et al., 2011)
A grounded theory study of distributed leadership in business teams

— one cannot succeed without the other, and the team will not be sustained without both roles being fulfilled.

Arising from an orientation towards appointmentship rather than leadership (Baruch, 1998; Bedeian & Hunt, 2006), much of the literature establishes team members as either ‘the leader’ or as followers. However, in this study a third role, of disengaging, was identified, where members did not collaborate nor make a contribution to the team and often did not feel a sense of belonging while occupying the role. Having this third role acknowledges that team members might occupy a different role from leading or following, so it cannot be assumed that when a member is not leading they are following and vice versa. The role of disengaged member equates closely with the role of isolate described by Holmes (1980), who found in an empirical study that some members in small groups detached themselves from their team, occupying an isolate role. Isolates did not seem to have potential for leadership, due to their lack of participation or antagonism.

In Holmes’ (1980) study all team roles were considered personality-based (based, for example, on personality traits such as introversion), rather than behaviour-based. However, in the present research, roles were behaviour- rather than personality-based; and it emerged that a few members did move from leading or following roles to a disengaging role and often subsequently back into following or leading roles. It also emerged that a small number of members were also identified as adopting a disengaging role for most of the project, and never assumed leadership, and were seldom in the following role. The low number of members who did this is not surprising, as participants self-selected to be on the decision-making teams in the first instance. It is apparent these disengaged members had probably not anticipated the nature or complexity of the projects.

8.7.1 Leading

Individuals who exercised influence in the team occupied the role of leading only as long as they were influencing. This view, which focuses on the exercise of leadership behaviours, is substantially different from one which assigns the title of leader to a
member, as outlined by Gronn (2003) and many others. In the latter view, which is really appointmentship (Baruch, 1998; Bedian & Hunt, 2006), the focus is on title rather than behaviour. An appointed ‘leader’ will continue to be the titular leader, regardless of whether or not they are exercising influence.

The present study had a focus on influencing behaviours (Parry, 2014) and not on member title, to determine which members were exercising leadership. As indicated, it was discovered that influencing was exercised through initiating or taking charge of processes within the team through the use of influencing behaviours. Furthermore, influencing is the contribution of the leading role in the team, and the influencer’s sense of belonging is derived when others are influenced, attribute leadership and follow, and team-level outcomes are successful.

The concepts of initiating and taking charge are similar to Hackman and Walton’s (1986) taking action to ensure team effectiveness, and also to many fundamentally similar but differently labelled notions identified by other researchers such as Lord and Brown (2004) in the field. The present research study highlights how leaders might take action, that initiating and taking charge are particular contributions of those in the leading role, and how a sense of belonging is derived by others following them.

8.7.2 Emergence of leadership

A key theme that surfaced continually during the research was that team members emerged to occupy a leading role, and this emergence related strongly to team context at the time. While some teams did have appointed leader(s) (leaders in title), most teams did not have any designated leaders nor did they seek to appoint one at any time. In the absence of any formal leader appointments, coupled with members in the team sharing the same ‘participant’ status, the only way members became leaders was through emergence. Having identified emergence as the mechanism for members to assume leadership, the concept was probed more deeply in this research using theoretical sampling. It emerged that members came to occupy a leading role as a result of attributed (perceived) expertise.
In its most direct form, attributed expertise included either technical expertise that contributed to completion of team tasks, or capabilities that contributed to team processes, or both. Attributed expertise corresponds closely with Bennett et al.’s (2003) and Burke et al.’s (2011) association of leadership with expertise and with Martinez et al.’s (2005, p. 15) idea of distributed leadership constituting ‘contours’ of organisational expertise. French (1956) saw expertise as a source of indirect power, with formal authority (equating to management) as another. Interestingly, his suggestion in that paper, that leadership might be distributed in a team (among the earliest found in the literature), gained no traction, while the ideas on power he developed further with Raven (French & Raven, 1959) are among ‘the most popular and widely accepted conceptualizations of social power’ (Podsakoff & Schriesheim 1985, p. 387).

Kets de Vries (2001) also reported on the use of expertise as an indirect power, and made reference to the use of the corporate mind. Gordon (2011) furthers this argument on power and leadership relations, citing situational expertise as the reason for the distribution of power in a contemporary environment. Karakowsky and McBey (2001) found that members with imputed expertise relating to team tasks contributed more than members with less imputed expertise, and also returned higher self-perceptions of contribution. Sinclair (2011) corroborates this argument on post leadership research, citing imputed expertise as one of the main reasons for team participation.

In the present study, informants reported that a sense of being able to complete a task, where others did not have that same expertise, did provide confidence in self, and allowed the member to assume a leading role as a result of expertise. This is a practical example of emergent leadership where a non-appointed team member assumes leadership. In the case of where there were teams with a designated leader, designated followers either exercised leadership in support of the appointee, or essentially replaced the appointee, who was often regarded as not delivering leadership the team needed and not recognised as a leader. This evidence supports Baruch’s (1998) and Bedeian and Hunt’s (2006) concerns that leadership and
appointmentship are quite different, and also Hackman’s (2004) assertion that when appointees exercise leadership they are simultaneously occupying the two different roles of leader and appointee. van Vugt (2006) also makes this valid distinction when discussing the origins of leadership and followership.

8.7.3 Following

Team members who are willingly influenced by other members assume the team role of following. In this study, following was perceived as complementary to the role of leading. This contrasts with the literature and popular conceptualisations that cast followers in a largely negative light (Chaleff, 1995; Brown & Thornborrow, 1996), and the role of following as less favourable than the role of leading (Fairholm, 2003; Carsten et al., 2010). While the present study did not directly measure the amount of time members spent in different roles, there appears to be support for Quinn’s (2004) assertion that team members generally spend more time in non-leader roles.

Cope et al., (2011) point out that leadership behaviour is interpersonal in nature, and different from non-interpersonal behaviour associated with completing primary tasks; however, Gordon (2011) highlights that leaders also need to play their part in completing the primary tasks of the team. In the present study, members who tried to exert influence but were themselves unwilling to follow others were not well regarded; and, where this persisted, diminished and even lost their ability to influence. Thus, there does appear to be some truth in the popular notion that, generally, good leaders also need to be good followers (Hudson, 2002; Riggio et al., 2008).

8.7.4 Disengaged members

In some teams in this study, one, or at most two, individuals either contributed little or, for some period of time, chose to withdraw their contribution altogether. Individuals not collaborating or belonging were effectively disengaged members, the third primary team role identified in some, but not all, teams.
Other research has identified a similar third primary role as that of the isolate. Holmes (1980) found isolates were introverted team members who generally excluded themselves from the team. It is possible, however, that some of these members chose to opt out because they felt they lacked capabilities.

Karakowsky and McBey (2001) found that team members with low imputed expertise participated much less than those with higher imputed expertise and displayed more passive behaviour than other members. Muenjohn et al., (2015) found that situational expertise was vital in the performance of research and design teams, with much consideration needing to be given in the design process of these teams to ensure team participation.

8.8 Key element # 3: Role switching

A major issue that researchers have suggested needs an explanation is how members become leaders (Antonakis, 2006; Game, 2011; Parry et al., 2014). A wide variety of suggestions have been offered, including: Johnson and Bechler’s (1998) finding that listening played a role; Atwater et al.,’s (1999) suggestion that cognitive ability is important; Eby et al.,’s (2003) examination of why highly self-monitoring individuals became leaders; and Malakyan’s (2015) organic leader-follower exchange. One of the two key findings of the present research is the basic social process of role fluidity, the dynamic mechanism whereby multiple team members change between leading, following, and occasionally disengaging roles. To influence team processes, team leaders engage in one or more of ten influencing behaviours, discussed in detail in the next section. Members exercise influence by stepping up to effect a particular influencing behaviour, and relinquish their position of influence by stepping back, stepping down, or stepping out (see Figure 7.2).

In their study of sales teams, Mehra et al., (2006) found that, when multiple leaders in a team recognised one another, the net impact of distributed leadership was greater than single-leader leadership, but that when they were in conflict, distributed leadership diminished team performance. Game (2011), in looking at interpersonal dynamics in leader-follower relations, came to the same conclusion. Researching
group size and spatial orientation of groups, Cummings et al., (1974) found that small groups arranged with members sitting equidistant (neutrally oriented) significantly outperformed, both in terms of decision quality and speed of decision, teams where one member was set apart as the leader (leader oriented).

Sy et al., (2005) found that neutrally oriented teams with multiple leaders experienced noticeably less conflict than leader-centric oriented teams. Although informants in the current study were not static, their ability to move into and out of a central position, rather than having that position dominated by one member, created a neutrally-oriented environment. Teams where many members stepped up, as needed, outperformed teams where fewer members stepped up, and those teams also reported less conflict, although this was not specifically measured. In more recent research of project teams, Carson et al., (2007, p. 1229) also noted that teams that had multiple leaders outperformed teams where ‘internal leadership was relatively scare’.

In a study of leadership in an activist collective, Dutfield (2005, p. 36-38) found that it was not vital for the group to hold a formally consistent view ‘of who was leading and how’, but rather that meaning was negotiated, leadership tasks fulfilled, and leadership was attributed ‘by and to group members’ as required. Informants in the present grounded theory study held similar perceptions, and role switching provided the means of distributing leadership according to the context. Reeves, Malone and O’Driscoll (2008) observed that leadership was temporary in online gaming scenarios, commenting that leaders switched rapidly between giving orders and taking orders. Boje et al., (2011) also note this fluidity of distributed leadership in the online context.

The role-switching mechanism developed in the present study could explain how the activists in Dutfield’s (2005) study shared leadership and, in respect of the online gaming research, more specifically how and why leaders actually exercised and then switched leadership. This particular finding, that many team members ‘switch’ their contributions between team processes and team task, provides insights into the question by Conger and Pearce (2003) and Grant and Ashford (2008), as to whether leadership competence and task competence are perceived as different. In the present
study, members acknowledged a distinction and responded differently to perceived expertise in team processes and perceived expertise in team tasks.

8.9 Key element # 4: Influencing behaviours

Having established the mechanism whereby members are able to switch roles, from following to leading and back to following again, another major discovery of the present research is the hierarchy of influencing behaviours used in the team to exercise influence during the banking projects. Informants identified ten influencing behaviours exercised by members occupying the leading role in a team context (outlined in Table 4.1); however, not all influencing behaviours are exercised in equal measure, neither are they all exhibited in every team context. The influencing behaviours are an aggregation of influencing behaviours exhibited by the variety of team members who occupy the leading role, rather than behaviours that are exercised by the sole leader.

In the extant literature, research from a leader-centric paradigm has essentially measured manager-subordinate or appointee-member role pairings (Baruch, 1998; Bedian & Hunt, 2006). For example, Yukl et al., (2002) and Yukl’s (2012) comprehensive taxonomy of leadership behaviours usefully sorts and aggregates reported leadership behaviours from the decades of literature into four meta-categories; however, these have been categorized from a leader-centric perspective (Parry, 2014). In contrast, the influencing behaviours identified in the present study are grounded in the context of leading and following roles within teams in the substantive field. These represent the behaviours of emergent team leadership, which are also distributed amongst team members.

To date, few studies have approached leadership from an individual-centric distributed leadership perspective, although teamwork and team effectiveness research has yielded similar concepts. Salas et al.,’s (2005) Big Five factors of teamwork involve elements of influencing (not expressly stated as such), which are distributed amongst team members. Burke et al.,’s (2006) description of leader behaviours in functional teams also involves elements of influencing.
8.9.1 Influencing behaviour: Communicating

In the present study, communicating involved initiating or taking charge of information exchange processes of the team, where the end goal was to influence the service and facilitation of team functions, processes and goals. Communicating emerged as a primary behaviour, without which other influencing behaviours were not possible. To underscore its centrality in team functioning, in this study teams that had little or no communicating almost always ended up failing.

Salas et al., (2005) found that closed-loop communication is one of three coordinating mechanisms critical to team success. The other two coordinating mechanisms, shared mental models and mutual trust, would be impossible to execute without communicating. The present study highlights that communicating is a vehicle for exercising other influencing behaviours and is critical in regards the capacity to influence (Cameron, 2011). These findings are congruent with other studies that have linked quantity and quality of communications to leadership (Rubin & Beckhard, 1972; Mast, 2002; Riggio et al., 2003; Burke et al., 2006). The work of Hawkins and Tolzin (2002) and Hogg and Reid (2006) highlight the centrality of communication in postmodern organisations and their leadership.

Burke et al., (2006) report that communicating also plays a key role in facilitating inclusion and a sense of belonging. In their study, teams unable to elicit and coordinate member contributions, and to foster a sense of belonging so as to set up a virtuous cycle of increasing belonging leading to increasing contributions, were less successful than those that were able to achieve this. In the present study, teams regularly faced time and resource pressures, and sometimes, through lack of communicating, precipitated a vicious spiral of decreasing sense of contributing, leading to a decreasing sense of belonging and ultimately to failure. Kruglanski and Webster (1996) found that members in teams facing stresses, such as time pressure and a need for closure, often engaged in less than ideal information-seeking processes and, it could also be inferred, in sub-optimal information exchanges, decreased member contributions and, ultimately, reduced communicating.
8.9.2 Listening

Listening, in this study, comprised actively paying attention to the communication of another. Listening emerged as a primary influencing behaviour that determined the extent to which members’ communications succeeded in information exchange. Muczyk and Adler (2002, p. 14) suggest that listening is ‘the essence’ of leadership that builds trust (an attribute of belonging) and ‘one of the most valuable of attributes in any human endeavour’.

Johnson and Bechler (1998) also provide affirming evidence that listening is key to leading, finding, in one of the few studies involving listening in small groups, that emergent leader(s) were perceived by other team members as being effective listeners. Their study also shows that independent raters who assessed listening and leader emergence in the teams found that emergent leaders displayed more effective listening skills (relating to the listening process rather than recall of information) than other group members. Although listening is popularly considered to be a part of communicating, informants in this study repeatedly described it as separate from communicating.

The literature review reveals that many respondents in Weinberg and McDermott’s (2002) comparative study of sports and business organisations similarly referred to listening as a distinct behaviour. That research also found that effective listening skills are regarded as the most important aspect of communication in business and sports organisations, being more important than clarity, frequency or honesty of message. In the present study, two components of listening were identified, as being ‘listened to’ and ‘listening to others’. Both components impact on members’ ability to collaborate and on their sense of belonging. Listening in the team also promoted idea collection and team learning, and helped shape ideas into solutions to meet the team challenges. Lower levels of listening usually raised levels of tension amongst members, reduced the scope and quality of ideas available to solve team problems, and usually evoked control and dominance issues.
In her study of female public relations professionals, Aldoory (1998) noted that a lack of listening often devastates the effectiveness of managers. Baker (2015) also noted the profound impact of not listening in the study of equality, and of processes on non-hierarchical groups. Together, a lack of listening and lack of communicating were the most frequent cause of team failure, while all successful teams were characterised as displaying frequent and abundant instances of listening and communicating. Heifetz and Laurie (1997) point out that many business strategies fail because leaders neglect to listen to different perspectives during strategy formulation. Platow et al., (2015) describes listening as vital to the psychological in-group process of trust and fairness.

8.9.3 Coordinating

Coordinating emerged as a secondary influencing behaviour in this research, and involved initiating or taking charge of marshalling team resources, human and non-human, towards the fulfilment of team goals. Coordinating behaviour was the influencing behaviour most frequently associated with leadership by informants in the present study, as a result of the primary role coordinating plays in completing the work of the team. Coordinating played a vital role in determining individual member contribution and, as a result of affecting ability to contribute, also impacted on members’ sense of belonging. Adopting a collaborating and belonging perspective deepens understanding of how and why teams might experience process losses or process gains, as outlined by Allen and Hecht (2004).

Coordinating is task sensitive (van Knippenberg & Sitkins, 2013), and different forms of coordinating behaviour are required at different stages of task completion. During theoretical coding in the present study, it emerged that task execution could be divided into four phases (see Figure 5.1). In the first phase, coordinating behaviour revolved around focusing the team’s resources on finding a solution to successfully executing the team task. In the second phase, coordinating centred on influencing planning. The third phase involved coordinating implementation of the
solution; and the final phase in the task cycle required influencing the monitoring and evaluation of task progress and task outcomes.

In many current studies (extant literature), a number of process tasks involved in the task execution cycle have been identified and/or described as leadership behaviours. For example, Yukl’s (2012) taxonomy of leader behaviours, identifies planning short-term activities, clarifying task objectives, and monitoring operations and performance, as three consistently identified leader behaviours. However, many of the informants in the present study identified these same behaviours as task-related, executed by all members as part of task behaviour rather than particularly as a leading behaviour. The task execution cycle developed from the present research provides a framework for understanding how the coordinating influencing behaviour varied, depending on the progress of the task.

The present research complements insights about coordinating in teams by Grant and Ashford (2008), in their study of dynamics of proactivity at work, and Larssholm and Lundholm (2013) in the context of decision-making bank teams. The present research also furthers research on coordinating mechanisms in a team context provided by Salas et al., (2005) (shared mental models, trust and closed-loop communication), and, in a distributed leadership context, by Gronn (2002) (scheduling, sequencing, planning, standardising, managing information and communicating).

### 8.9.4 Motivating

Motivating aimed to raise or sustain individual performance levels, which contributed positively to team outcomes. As a secondary influencing behaviour, motivating focused on achieving enhanced productivity through addressing team members’ sense of belonging. Motivating behaviour in successful teams was exercised more often and by more team members than in unsuccessful teams. Teams with limited motivating behaviour performed less well in terms of task completion and team cohesiveness.
Team spirit, as outlined by Bartel and Saavendra (2002), appears to be a good indicator of the presence of motivating; and members in the present study concurred with this sentiment. Conversely, when team spirit was low, there was little or no motivating occurring, with participants often feeling little affinity for their team and its members.

Empirical research into affective influence in groups has only recently become an area of research interest (Kelly & Spoor, 2005; Whiteley et al., 2012); and, although group affect was not the primary focus of the present research study, the qualitative research methodology nevertheless resulted in the emergence of some useful, empirically grounded insights. Both the collaborating-belonging cycle and the role-switching mechanism provide insights into questions around the cyclical nature of group affect raised by Kelly and Spoor (2005) and Game (2011).

In the present study, where leadership was distributed, it was found that multiple (more than one) members played a role in team motivation, and also that teams with the most leaders were highly motivated and performed the best. In related research, Sy et al., (2005); Whiteley et al., (2012), and Ashkanasy and Humphrey (2011) found that leader mood effects member mood and also team coordination and effort. The research for the present thesis has delivered an alternate, distributed perspective on how multiple leaders might contribute to group affect, and thus makes a notable contribution to the literature.

8.9.5 Committing

The behaviour of committing, identified and named by an informant in this study, constitutes another distinct contribution to the field. Committing is a situationally contingent influencing behavior, affected through total commitment to team members and team outcomes. Committing was often associated with personal sacrifice of some type. Team members committing were resilient, perseverant and enduring, able to sustain high levels of commitment both during non-pressured times and also under extremely challenging conditions. They were also perceived as
trustworthy and dependable, and members’ acknowledged the continuous efforts and contribution of these team members.

Committing had an impact on individuals’ desire to collaborate and to associate with the influencing member through belonging to the same team. The term committing is unique in the literature; although the notion of inspiration, which is an end product of this influencing behaviour, is linked with leadership and particularly with charismatic leadership. Antonakis (2006, p. 10) mentions that charismatic leaders ‘demonstrate extraordinary competence, have exceptionally good communication skills, are confident in themselves and their followers and set high expectations for themselves and their followers’. Charismatic leaders are also courageous, and followers wish to emulate them.

Pescosolido (2002), discussing how charisma and empathy is used to manage group emotion in a rowing team, provides the example of a rower who helped inspire his team’s performance through total commitment to task, complete belief in the team and members celebration of successes. Platow et al., (2015) found that charisma and trust were vital in consensual commitment in a group environment. Sheard and Kakabadse (2002) describe the horse, in George Orwell’s *Animal Farm*, as inspiring others through his total commitment to the task. However, although the topic of inspiration is often raised, no advice is given on how to provide inspiration. It is possible, though, that in exercising committing, inspiration is likely the key outcome. A direct result of being inspired is involvement in a virtuous collaborating-belonging cycle, where member and team benefit.

### 8.9.6 Risking

Risking was identified in the present study as a situationally contingent influencing behaviour that involved a willingness to take actions, on behalf of the team, under conditions of uncertainty where failure was a possibility and, sometimes in more extreme cases, a likely outcome. Not all members share the same appetite for risk (van Vugt, 2006), and willingness to associate with the team and to contribute is thus affected. In the present study, members who engaged in risking were self-confident
and resilient, and derived an enhanced sense of belonging when they were successfully able to bear the risks on behalf of the team. The risking behaviour was identified in the research context of autonomous decision-making business teams which, by design, face elements of great uncertainty in risky trading markets.

Klagge (1996) suggests that trailblazer leaders engage in risking, amongst other behaviours; but the more common reference to leaders and risk is via the term risk-taking (Lester & Brower, 2003; Antonakis, 2006; Antonakis, 2011). Some researchers have considered the notion of responsible risk taking (Amoore, 2004). This term aligns with the notion of risking behaviour, but does not include the important team-centric element of risking identified in the present research.

8.9.7 Mediating

Mediating aimed to influence team members who were in conflict to reduce or eliminate the conflict between them and restore the relationship. Mediating was identified in the present study as a situationally contingent influencing behaviour, only utilised when conflict required resolution.

Gersick (1988) found that teams did not need to experience conflict in order to perform; but Barry (1991) suggested that, in the context of autonomous teams, where there is no formal authority, there is often increased conflict related to both team tasks and team processes. Manz (1992), and Stewart and Manz’s (1995) study of self-managed groups, also note increased conflict where there is no formal leadership, and that in order to perform mediation is required to reduce or resolve conflict. Tepper et al., (2006) found that mediation was required to resolve subordinate resistance when managers were evaluating employee performance.

Hackman (2004) and Burke et al., (2006) comment that teams that are failing tend to experience much more conflict than teams that are performing. This trend was noted in the present research study. Although mediating was identified in the present study as an influencing behaviour, informants reported only limited conflict when leadership was distributed and members who were willing stepped up and stepped
back as needed. Cope et al., (2011) also found evidence that there was far less conflict when leadership was emergent and distributed amongst team members, as compared with times when single leaders were appointed and there were more frequent challenges for sole-leadership status.

### 8.9.9 Facilitating

Facilitating is the second behaviour identified by informants in this study that is not commonly identified in lists of leadership behaviours in the literature. Although not their primary focus, Rubin and Beckhard (1972) noted the importance of open channels of communication in teams. Their study found that communication is key to teamwork and, using the example of a health care team, suggested that members ‘must have open channels to all other members’ (Rubin & Beckhard, 1972, p. 326). Where channels are not open, a behaviour that influenced a freer flow of communication would go some way to mitigating the otherwise closed or blocked channel.

Whiteley et al., (2012) looked at the effects of message, source, and the context on evaluations of employee voice behaviour, and found that a combination of communicating and listening facilitated idea contribution from the characteristically quieter team members. Facilitating was motivated by the utilitarian end of ensuring that the team maximises the contributions of all members (Barsade, 2002; Baker, 2015), focusing on increasing the contribution of quieter members in the team who, not infrequently, were also thinkers who possessed useful insights into team challenges, which they seldom shared spontaneously. Facilitating increased the collaborative contribution of members and, through inclusion, enhanced their sense of belonging.

van Vugt (2006) found that facilitating was necessary to enhance the contribution of team members who were more reserved. In the present study, facilitators were described as being personally confident and also good communicators; and at least one quiet informant strategically selected this type of individual as the best means of conveying his message.
8.9.10 Exemplifying

Exemplifying was aimed at influencing team behaviour in a positive sense by providing a leading example to other team members. Described as showing the way clearly to other team members in the present study, this situationally contingent behaviour was visibly evident during observation of the decision-making process, and was usually exercised by the most dedicated and progressive team members, who seemed to almost intuitively understand what was required of them during the project.

Chartrand and Bargh (1999) note the chameleon effect of perception in teams, pointing to the importance of leading by example. In the present study, team members who exercised exemplifying often undertook the largest portion of the workload. When used in appropriate ways, empowerment can increase decision quality, decision acceptance, job satisfaction, and skill development (Yukl, 2013).

8.9.11 Encouraging

Encouraging provides a mechanism for increasing the contribution of team members by being supportive and providing confidence in the efforts of other team members. Encouraging is a situationally contingent influencing behaviour, which was usually exercised in conjunction with exemplifying. Encouraging includes leading by being supportive of other team members, and when necessary providing confidence in other team members. Although encouraging was essentially an individual action, it was aimed at influencing team behaviour in a positive sense.

Yukl et al., (2002), in their hierarchical taxonomy review of a half-century of literature on leader behaviours, note the importance of encouraging in influencing positive team performance. This behaviour was often visibly evident to the researcher in the present study through observation, and also in subsequent interviews with many informants. Mumford et al., (2011) also highlight the use of encouraging in the context of team building and alignment of team goals.
8.9.12 Exercise of influencing behaviours

It emerged that most, if not all, members in the present study exercised influencing behaviours at some time. However, although leading was distributed, it was not necessarily equally shared. This is an important distinction, as often in the literature the terms shared and distributed are used synonymously (Carson et al., 2007).

Fairhurst and Uhl-Bien (2012) call for further clarity on the use of these terms, describing them as meaning different things to different people. Some members in the present study only exercised single influencing behaviours for a short period of time; others exercised either a single influencing behaviour or a much wider range of influencing behaviours more frequently. The differentiated amount and type of influencing was not of concern to team members, however, as most team behaviours were distributed unequally to achieve the team objectives.

Members contributed what they were able to, and a key feature of teams was that members possessed a range of different but complementary skills (Hackman, 2004; Fairhurst, 2011), exercised through non-hierarchical leading and following roles. In general, teams that did not have or did not exercise requisite skills for a particular task did not succeed. However, having sufficient task-related expertise alone did not guarantee task completion.

From a leadership perspective, teams that were unable to provide all of the influencing behaviours needed at particular times, in particular contexts, were also likely to be less effective (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007). Incomplete influencing translated to sub-optimal action. Teams reached a point where sustained deficits in overall influencing, or insufficient amounts of particular, context-sensitive influencing behaviours within the team, led to individuals being able to achieve more working alone than in their team. Where the output from the sum of the parts (individual members) of a team is greater than output of the whole of the team on a sustained basis, then the worth of a team configuration of those individuals is questionable (Allen & Hecht, 2004). Such a team would be considered dysfunctional (Mumford et al., 2011).
Karakowsky and McBey (2001) highlight the importance of determining how team members might be influenced to believe their contributions are valuable and make contributions that help the team reach its goals. Kickul and Neuman (2000) found that, while cognitive ability did not link with key skills and abilities (KSAs) of teamwork, personality differences and consequent competencies did. These competencies would be exercised as, amongst others, influencing behaviours. Caza and Jackson (2011) found that, in authentic leadership, team members value contributions of unique personalities and influencing abilities.

### 8.10 Key element # 5: Context or situation

Context played a major role in determining what influencing behaviours were important; although most contexts required communicating, listening, coordinating, and motivating. The remaining six influencing behaviours - committing, risking, mediating, facilitating, exemplifying, and encouraging - were much more context-sensitive and were not always necessary. Leadership was extremely fluid and context sensitive with influence often being exercised in a concurrent manner. These findings are closely related with Ansari and Kapoor’s (1987) work on context and upward influence; and Fitzgerald et al.,’s (2013) work on distributed leadership patterns.

In the extant literature, many contingency-based approaches to leadership have long recognised the role of situation or context (Chemers, 2000; Yukl, 2011). However, to date, no researcher has been able to put forward a single set of universal leadership behaviours that would work for a sole-leader in all situations (Sorenson et al., 2011). The individual-centric distributed approach to leadership is not constrained by the requirement for leaders to be complete (Ancona et al., 2007), as others are able to simultaneously complement the leadership needs (Alvesson, 2011). The ten influencing behaviours that surfaced in the present grounded theory study provide a broad arsenal of influencing behaviours, which has wide applicability.
8.11 Understanding how leadership is distributed

A key finding of this research is that multiple (more than one) members in the team exercised leadership. In many contexts, the role of leading is dynamically shared for periods of time, dispersed not necessarily equally, amongst multiple (more than one) members in the team. Team leadership is distributed rather than focused (Valikangas & Okumura, 1997; Gronn, 2011; Parry et al., 2014). This research is not the first or only study to arrive at this finding, but it is one amongst relatively few empirical studies within the rapidly accelerating conceptual development of the new paradigm of distributed leadership (Story & Mangham, 2004; Sy, 2010). Section 8.12 briefly examines how multiple leaders operate in a team, and Section 8.13 considers two properties of distributed leadership that do not appear in previous literature.

8.12 Explanation of concurrent leadership

The present research provides some answers to the question of how teams with multiple leaders operate, posed by Day et al., (2006), Mehra et al., (2006) and Cameron (2011), among others. Acknowledging Glaser’s (1998) caution relating to the use of metaphor arising from possibilities of misinterpretation, it is nevertheless helpful to think of distributed leadership as being like liquid mercury. The complete leadership requirement of the team might be thought of as a large quantity of mercury; seldom in one globule when on a flat surface, but characteristically broken into smaller droplets. Individuals who do more of the influencing are represented as having larger amounts of the mercury, coalesced into larger globules. In the fluidity of the context, as the situation and needs of the team change, then individuals may give up some or all of their influencing, and others may temporarily increase the scope of their influence. Just as mercury droplets seem to effortlessly form and reform into globules of different sizes, according to the changing context, the source and magnitude of influence forms and reforms in the team through the use of influencing behaviours. Using this metaphor suggests that the body of literature relating to flow and peak performance (Sy, 2010) is also closely related.
While the context is relatively constant, the mercury retains its shape; but the mercury also readily adapts when new forces come into play (may break into smaller droplets or coalesce into larger globules). Due to the surface tension property of mercury, all quantities of mercury hold a more definite shape than other liquids, like water, and yet not as rigidly as any solids. In a similar way, distributed leadership, through the influencing behaviours, provides team leadership that is recognisable but much more adaptable than a less flexible single-leader approach. However, it should not be assumed that all the required influencing behaviours will always be present in a team. The quanta of available collective influencing capabilities of teams vary, as do the range of the behaviours according to the capabilities of team members. The present study also revealed that, in teams comprising between three and eleven members, a smaller sub-group of between two and six members, and most commonly three or four, emerges as the group of dominant influencers.

Dominant influencers successfully exercise much influence frequently, through a variety of influencing behaviours, in a non-domineering, highly collaborative manner, and the influencing is often described as being quite subtle. Subtle influencing behaviour was often executed in a manner that might secure buy-in, rather than being forceful or demanding. One possible reason for this observation (Wang et al., 2011) in the present research setting is that all team members enjoyed the same formal status and equal rights to choose whether or not to be influenced. Influence was more likely when members perceived that they were in some way part of the decision-making process, even if that amounted only to acknowledgement that the discretion was theirs. They wished to be respected as fellow team members and followers, rather than being seen as subordinates of any particular individual who was asserting authority not theirs to assert. Wilkinson (2007) outlined similar subtlety coming to the fore in the leadership of modern organisations faced with complex challenges. This is further articulated by Day (2011), who described the contemporary environment as unpredictable and inherently complex.

Teams with the largest groups of dominant influencers and the highest proportion of team members exercising influence were perceived as most successful in the present
research study. The teams that were most successful during the study, anecdotally, were demonstrated as having the most distributed leadership. The least successful teams had the fewest and sometimes no dominant influencers. Research by Taggar et al., (1999) found that the most successful teams had the highest aggregate of leadership behaviours from multiple members, even though the researchers did not recognise the concept of distributed leadership at the time and acknowledged only one member as the leader. In that study, the leader was the member who exercised the most leadership; and, even when other members were exercising leadership, they weren’t regarded as leaders. Brown and Trevino (2006), in their study of online distributed leadership, found that the best performing teams had the highest level of influencers. Kilduff and Balkundi’s (2011) study of a network approach to leader cognition and effectiveness found that team members exercised influence concurrently.

8.13 Properties of distributed leadership

Two properties of distributed leadership not expressly noted in the literature emerged from the present research study. Firstly, leadership (influence) was fairly but not evenly shared amongst team members. Secondly, distributed leadership is non-hierarchical and egalitarian – exercising leadership did not imply a higher rank or worth than the exercise of followership. In addition, although multiple members exercised influence, they did so as individuals rather than leading as ‘the team’. Each of these properties is now discussed.

8.13.1 Distributed leadership is not evenly shared

Distributed leadership involves sharing leadership (Burke et al., 2006; Nelson et al., 2006); but the present research study highlighted that sharing leadership is not identical to shared leadership, the latter which Pearce et al., (2007) and Day (2011) note is still a relatively primitive term. The distinction between terms is not clear in the early literature (Day et al., 2004), and they are often used interchangeably (Story, 2004; Baker, 2007). Even the researcher’s early perspective changed and clarified
over the course of the present grounded theory research study. Carsten et al., (2010, p. 543), in their argument for ‘reversing the lens’ in leadership studies, also call for greater clarity and further research into more functional definitions of the two terms. In the present study, individual capability determined which members, if any at all, exercised influencing behaviours that were needed by the team depending on context. Consequently, leading tended to be episodic; as also observed by Rabey (2005, p. 215), who suggested that leadership responds to needs and circumstances and, consequently, is ‘more situational and episodic’ than constant. Leadership can be shared in the sole-leader approach when one leader hands over leadership to another leader (Denis et al., 2013), passing the indivisible leadership parcel from one to another, with each leader exercising leadership individually and sequentially. In the present study however, it was discovered that leadership could either be undertaken individually, sequentially and/or concurrently. Influencing was often distributed amongst multiple (more than one) members, and was not necessarily shared equally; neither was it necessarily shared sequentially.

8.13.2 Distributed leadership is non-hierarchical

Distributed leadership emerged in the present study from a system wherein every person had a role to play to achieve team success, as compared with sole-leadership where the role of leader overshadows the role of the followers. The role switching mechanism that was identified in the present research provides an explanation of how the leading and following roles achieved interdependence through apparent ‘dedifferentiation’ (Gordon 2002, p. 159) or blurring of role boundaries. The present study suggests that the leading and following roles do not actually blur; rather, switching from one role to another occurs so rapidly and frequently that it appears as if roles are blurred (Gordon, 2011). With members rapidly switching roles, distributed leadership is non-hierarchical and egalitarian. This perspective contrasts starkly with the traditional view of leadership researchers in the field, quite probably formed as a result the historical influence of the hierarchical institutions of army and church (Bowers & Seashore, 1966; Sorenson et al., 2011). Occupying the leading role did not assign special status, but rather denoted that a member’s contribution to
team was influence-oriented and task-oriented at that particular time. Similarly, occupiers of the following role focused at that time solely on completing the team task, a different though equally important team role.

It was also interesting that informants in the present study noted that, although some members were more dominant than others, the dominant members were not domineering. Moreover, the influencing that members in the leading role used was frequently described as being subtle, as opposed to the leader-centric approach which can be characterized as ‘Listen to me, I am your leader!’ It was also of interest that, even where leadership was sometimes designated, non-designated leaders emerged. Carson et al., (2007) reported similar non-designated leader emergence, in their study of 59 consulting teams studied over five months. In that study appointed leaders and emergent leaders frequently embroiled the teams in conflict as they struggled for supremacy, along the lines of group formation (forming, storming, norming, performing) suggested by Tuckman (1965) as well as Manz and Simms (1986; 1993). On reflection, there was noticeably less conflict in teams in the present study than might have been expected (Sinclair, 2011), though this was not measured.

The perspective generated from the present study is supported by findings of Mehra et al., (2006), that there was less conflict in teams that had multiple distributed-coordinated leaders who recognised each other than in sole-leader or distributed-fragmented teams where there was a struggle for supremacy. De Rue et al., (2011), in their study, note this trend in the contemporary environment. It can be concluded that distributed leadership is subtle in nature yet pervasive (Reed, 2015). It happens all the time. The present research had a core focus on leadership rather than on appointed leaders, and in doing so avoided issues of management (Baruch, 1998; Bedeian & Day, 2004); and the insights generated here can be used to contrast previous studies that may have unwittingly adopted an appointee perspective.

8.14 Summary

This chapter has examined the grounded theory of distributed leadership in business teams in the context of the extant literature. The substantive theory comprised five
key elements - initiating and taking charge, team roles, role switching, influencing behaviours, and context - and each was discussed in relation to the relevant body of literature. Chapter 9 will outline the theoretical contribution of the research study, possible implications for practitioners, and limitations associated with the study; and will conclude with a summary of the main findings.
CHAPTER 9 CONTRIBUTION, IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS, FUTURE RESEARCH

9.1 Introduction

This research has highlighted the importance of designated followers and their meaningful contribution within the substantive context. The core category and basic social process emerging from this study is the understanding of how team members switch roles. This main finding of role fluidity, in conjunction with the influencing behaviours identified subsequently, provides a better understanding of how distributed leadership works and the related properties associated identified during the study.

This final chapter commences with an examination of the theoretical significance of the thesis and its contribution to the body of knowledge. This is followed by consideration of implications the study has for practitioners in the field. Limitations of the study are considered, and then implications for future study in the field are outlined. The chapter concludes with an overarching summary of the study.

9.2 Theoretical significance of the thesis and its contribution

The contribution to knowledge made by this dissertation is an empirically based, detailed analytic characterisation of a set of crucial case studies, with the focus being on the phenomenon of distributed leadership in autonomous decision-making business teams. A substantive theory, which has been grounded in the data, is presented and provides a detailed explanation as to how designated followers exercise influence at the level of the individual team members, particularly focused on leadership behaviours. The main contribution of the present methodology is in illuminating the fluidity of team roles and possible contribution non-designated leaders/followers can make in their teams. Table 9.1 outlines the theoretical significance of the present research and how the contribution to knowledge relates to areas already covered in the extant literature.
Table 9.1 Contribution to knowledge

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<tr>
<td>Non-designated followers</td>
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* My contribution
Done Already covered in the extant literature
------- Contradiction in terms

The present findings outline the differing roles that team members can and do readily espouse in their team interactions, and identifies a hierarchy of influencing behaviours used by designated followers in exercising influence as well as the basic social process used when transitioning between the roles of leading, following and disengaging.

The basic social process of role fluidity provides a unique perspective on how team members alternate between leading and following roles. Role switching contributes to increasing our understanding of emergent leadership, and provides an answer to questions by Day et al., (2004), Balkundi and Kilduff (2005) and Bligh (2011), of how leadership occurs when there is no formally appointed leader. Role switching also provides an answer to the question posed by Mehra et al., (2006), Uhl-Bien and Ospina (2012) and Baker (2015), of how leadership occurs when teams have multiple (more than one) members occupying the leading role simultaneously. The present study findings imply that leadership is distributed; and the grounded theory of distributed leadership in business teams, and the role switching mechanism in particular, provide valuable insights as to how leader emergence occurs in distributed leadership contexts, a question raised by Spillane and Camburn (2006) and Bligh (2011).
The second key contribution is in the area of behaviours and processes associated with distributed leadership, with a hierarchy of ten influencing behaviours identified. ‘Initiating’ or ‘taking charge’ of one or more of these ten influencing behaviours is the means by which distributed leadership occurs to maximise members’ collaboration and belonging. Primary influencing behaviours are used most frequently, and secondary influencing behaviours also very often. Situationally contingent influencing behaviours are used much less often and sometimes not at all, depending on the context. Identifying the influencing behaviours used by members in a leading role within a distributed context contributes to the small but growing body of research on team leadership (Staniforth & West, 1995; Komaki & Minnich, 2002; Rico & Tabernero, 2011), when trying to establish processes and functions of effective teamwork (Salas et al., 2007; Burke et al., 2011).

More particularly, when combined with role switching, the present research also provides insights into how team leaders achieve collective success, a question posed by Zaccaro and Klimoski (2002) in exploring how teams can be successful when using a collective approach; and utilizing distributed leadership, a question posed by Martinez et al., (2005) and Burke et al., (2011) when examining how exactly leadership is distributed amongst team members. In the present study, the findings regarding role switching and influencing behaviours respond well to the call by Conger and Pearce (2003) and Starbuck (2015) for a substantial investigation into the basis for shared leadership, factors that facilitate shared leadership, and the influence processes that make up shared leadership (Platow et al., 2015).

A third contribution of the present research is the extension of theoretical properties of distributed leadership not previously identified in the literature. Two broad principles of distributed leadership emerged, which provide additional insights about distributed leadership generally. The first principle, that distributed leadership is fairly but not evenly shared, highlights that distributed leadership does not mean leadership is shared equally among team members. Secondly, even though it may be shared unequally, distributed leadership was found to be non-hierarchical and egalitarian. Frequent role switching between leading and following roles by
numerous team members constrains hierarchy and promotes egalitarianism. These two findings are necessary in providing a clear definition of the interchangeably used terms, shared leadership, co-leadership and distributed leadership. Having clearer definitions of these terms will benefit the study of followership influence (Carsten et al., 2010), and furthers our understanding of the social process of leadership (Kempster & Parry, 2011).

Through a number of incidental findings relating to emotions and leadership, there were numerous insights into certain emotional aspects of the social influence process, which closely relate and provide further clarification of some aspects of the (1) within-person, (2) between-person, (3) inter-personal, (4) groups & teams and (5) organization-wide levels, outlined in the five-level model of emotion in organizations by Ashkanasy and Jordan (2008). The present research also makes valuable contributions by furthering our understanding of certain aspects of (1) group behaviour and performance, as well as (2) inter-personal relationship aspects such as trust, outlined by Ashkanasy and Humphrey (2011).

A further contribution to the literature from the present study is that it provides an important understanding of how wisdom occurs within groups in the context of a knowledge economy, as called for by Rooney et al., (2010). Understanding how followership influence occurs and assists successful teams in achieving ‘group wisdom’ is a valuable theoretical contribution, but may also have practical implications for practitioners when assessing and training groups.

A final contribution arises as a consequence of studying leadership rather than appointmentship (Baruch, 1998; Bedeian & Hunt, 2006); due to its context, the present study is devoid of issues relating to management. Although this is simultaneously a limitation discussed in the next section, studies focusing exclusively on leadership are uncommon. The manager-free leadership (De Rue & Ashford, 2010) insights generated in the present study are a useful addition to the body of knowledge, as they can be contrasted with studies that have either consciously or unwittingly adopted alternate appointee-related perspectives.
The importance of followership influence and related individual member contribution to team effectiveness was demonstrated through the grounded theory of distributed leadership in business teams (Mannion et al., 2015). The basic social process of role fluidity answers the questions posed by Howell and Mendez (2008) and Bligh (2011), by providing an explanation on how designated followers end up in a leadership role and how designated leaders end up in a followership role.

New insights into the theoretical properties of distributed leadership found during the research include:

1. Frequent role switching between leading and following roles by numerous team members constrains hierarchy and promotes egalitarianism;
2. Distributed leadership does not mean leadership is shared equally among team members;
3. Distributed leadership is subtle in nature, yet pervasive. It happens all the time.

The four-stage task execution cycle identified during the study provides additional insights into how teams make decisions and work on a functional level, and complements the work of Salas et al., (2004), Burke et al., (2006), and Burke et al., (2011). The four-stage task execution cycle links closely with the five factors and four coordinating mechanisms of effective teams described by Salas et al., (2004), as well as Parker’s (2007) findings on job role orientation and performance, and Malakyan’s (2015) findings on the organic leader-follower trade approach.

Adopting the unique perspective on the individual follower in the present research aims to provide a complementary and holistic understanding of the phenomenon of distributed leadership. Furthermore, many of the propositions generated from the grounded theory of distributed leadership in business teams could be practically advanced for training and use in innovative leadership development programs, as called for by Day (2011). An example of this could be to assist Australia to help transition the economy (post-mining phase) with a more innovative and collaborative approach to focusing on the core strengths of education and financial services.
A GROUNDED THEORY STUDY OF DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP IN BUSINESS TEAMS

(Bower & Parry, 2016). A number of possible implications for practitioners are outlined below.

9.3 Implications for practitioners (and participants)

A key pursuit of the grounded theory methodology is to help informants better understand their situation (Suddaby, 2010). Participants gained additional insights about leadership both through the interview process and when the model that emerged was shared with them for verification. These experiences were complementary to participating in the decision-making teams (Parry, 2008). A theory that is developed in a particular field can also provide new insights to practitioners through categorising the rich data and discovering and reporting patterns (Fernandez et al., 2002; Charmaz, 2014).

Practical insights that have been developed or highlighted during the present research, and which are relevant to practitioners (Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012) in the field, include the following:

1. ‘Collaborating’ and ‘sense of belonging’ play a critical role at individual, team and leader levels; understanding the importance of a virtuous cyclical relationship may encourage better participation from all team members;

2. Leadership involves ‘taking charge’ or ‘initiating’ influencing behaviours that effect team processes; understanding these concepts and including these in training or developmental programs will enhance additional leadership;

3. Members occupying a leading role may use one or more of a hierarchy of influencing behaviours, categorised according to frequency of use (which corresponds with importance to team processes), into primary, secondary, and situationally contingent categories; understanding the nature and relationship of these behaviours will enhance many training programs. It is important to incorporate the necessary rewards such as promotion and personal development to enhance such training programs;
4. Multiple (more than one) members may occupy the leading role, and this may occur sequentially or simultaneously; understanding concurrent leadership is vital in contemporary leadership development;

5. Members alternate between leading and following roles through role switching; understanding how emergent leadership occurs and team members switch roles is important and should be a core focus in developmental strategy;

6. Members can occupy a third role, of disengaging, negating the dualist perspective; understanding periodically disengaged members who are often negative or disruptive can enhance strategies to remedy such behaviour.

Given that most leadership theory and practice has revolved around extant theory developed from a leader-centric perspective, practitioners may find the theoretical framework of the present research that was developed in this research a useful aid in thinking about leader assessment from a distributed leadership approach. In particular, any practitioners involved in voluntary teams or decision-making committees could benefit by adopting a holistic approach to the development of all team members. Understanding the contribution designated followers can make in assuming a leading role is vitally important; and given the finding that most of this required leadership is expertise based, it would make sense to identify and train the required skillsets needed when facing certain tasks.

The findings of the present research suggest the need to correctly assess, encourage and reward the development of strong primary, secondary and contextual behaviours. It is further suggested the use of equity theory to drive future leadership development could be largely beneficial i.e. by focusing on rewards, promotion and personal development. This will assist in the effective functioning of team processes and encourage better participation from all team members. The present research suggests that, the more is leadership provided by individual members, the better will be the whole decision making process.
9.4 Limitations

A number of limitations that relate to the present research are outlined below.

9.4.1 Grounded theory research methodology as a limitation

Although the grounded theory research methodology approach has some critics (Charmaz, 2014), it is highly regarded and widely used in leadership research (Parry, 1998). This study adopted a traditional grounded theory methodology to probe and explore the complex field of distributed leadership. Tremendous care was taken in all aspects to ensure the validity and reliability of the research (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

9.4.2 Generalisability

A key acknowledgment that grounded theory methodology researchers need to make is that caution is required when seeking to generalise generated knowledge to situations beyond the present field of study (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The present research has limitations on generalisability, and the grounded theory of distributed leadership in business teams would need to be tested and verified before it could be extended to other research settings with any degree of confidence (Glaser & Holton, 2004). Possible areas for practical extension of the theory could include self-managed teams and committees or professional teams that operate in professional services firms.

9.4.3 Single researcher and researcher bias

An associated limitation of the present research is that of an individual researcher who served as observer, interviewer, coder and interpreter (Pettigrew, 1997). Researcher bias is a concern in qualitative methods generally (Morrow, 2005), and deserves particular focus when a single researcher is involved (Patton, 2002). Glaser and Holton (2004) implicitly acknowledge the contribution of individual researchers, although not expressly discounting the use of multiple researchers either. To moderate validity and reliability concerns, Glaser and Holton (2004) outline specific
grounded theory procedures that should be followed. In the present research, all key grounded theory methodological procedures (as outlined in Chapter 3) were followed closely. Multiple sources of data (including interviews, documents, field notes and memos), use of informant terms, and liberal reporting of informants’ voice, were employed to enhance the trustworthiness of the substantive theory (Chiovitti & Piran, 2003; Birks & Mills, 2011).

A further limitation as outlined by Glaser and Holton (2004) is researcher bias. The researcher in the present study acknowledges entering into the study with a prior interest in leadership studies and having previously worked closely with the subject organization. Further bias was avoided by reviewing the literature after the present research was substantially complete, as advised by Glaser (1998). Having a working awareness of bias (Remenyi, 2014), and subsequently drawing conclusions that are grounded in the data, are additional elements of good research practice that were used to reduce the risk of bias, and were front-of-mind during all phases of the research process. Finally, discussing the research and substantive theory with key informants and an expert audience at numerous seminars, colloquiums and doctoral workshop, also helped mitigate the risks associated with being an individual researcher (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

9.4.4 Limitations associated with the research sample

The theoretical framework generated in the present research does not claim generalizability (Glaser & Holton, 2004). The researcher advises caution around the wider application of the propositions that emerged during the present study. It is possible that both the role-switching mechanism and the identified influencing behaviours might vary in other contexts, and there may be relevance to organizational structures where no formal leader exists, including autonomous work teams. Further caution is advised as the theoretical framework was developed within an Australian context (i.e. with a low power-distance relations) and not be applicable in other countries that have high-power distance relations (Hofstede, 2005). It
follows that cultural factors (Hofstede, 2005) may affect how and which influencing behaviours are displayed, and how leadership and followership is perceived.

9.5 Implications for further research

A number of questions have been raised by the present research and warrant further study in the future. The most important of these are: generalizability of the ten influencing behaviors in different contexts; the impact of team composition on influencing behavior and the role-switching mechanism; deployment of the influencing behaviors over time; and finally, how followers influence leaders:

1. There is a question around the generalizability of the influencing behaviours identified, particularly as context plays such a central role in determining which behaviours are important at any time. Other environments may require different behaviours not identified in this research. Extending this theory more broadly would provide answers to the broader generalizability of the substantive theory;

2. There is the question of how team size would impact on the behaviours employed, and also on how the role-switching mechanism would work. Team dynamics do vary considerably with team size (Thompson, 2004);

3. There is a question of how leadership is distributed and deployed in a team over time (Mathieu et al., 2008). Understanding how the pattern of usage of the influencing behaviours varies will provide valuable insights;

4. Alternative research methodologies, in particular quantitative techniques, would provide insights as to whether certain members exercise influence using certain clusters of influencing behaviours, and whether particular influencing behaviours or clusters of behaviours occur at different times in both team and task lifecycles;

5. What particular factors lead to members being both leaders and followers or only followers? Perhaps engaging with virtue ethics literature could be a possible route to further develop the results of this study.

6. Inclusion of equity theory into future research contexts would greatly assist in the future development of leadership programs.
9.6 Summary

The core contribution of the present methodology is in illuminating the fluidity of team roles and the contribution of designated followers. In the study, leadership was distributed amongst team members in a fair manner and every person in the team had a role to play to achieve team success. Team roles were very fluid and context dependent, with influence being exercised according to expertise in the required tasks, and as such leadership was not evenly shared. Due to the fluidity and frequent switching of roles within the substantive context, there was equal status between team members irrespective of the roles that were being adopted. Consequently, there is now a greater appreciation of the contribution that designated followers can make in teams and a more meaningful understanding of distributed leadership.

This research study has developed a theoretical framework of distributed leadership in decision-making business teams. Informants and other parties associated with the research have reviewed the outlined propositions and the substantive theory that emerged and verified that these were an accurate description of their contributions in the substantive field (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Glaser, 1998). In summation, answers to the research questions are outlined below.

PRIMARY RESEARCH QUESTION

RQ: How do designated followers exercise leadership in business teams?

Outlined below are the ‘so what’ issues of when, why and how designated followers move between followership and leadership.

When do designated followers exercise leadership in business teams (move between followership and leadership)?

In the context of autonomous business teams with voluntary member participation, designated followers exercised leadership when they emerged into a leading role by stepping up to exercise influence using task-specific situational expertise (task-and/or process-related).
**Why** do designated followers exercise leadership in business teams (move between followership and leadership)?

It emerged that designated followers wished to collaborate with other team members and in doing so felt a sense of belonging. It further emerged that the fundamental tenets of team membership, namely collaboration and belonging, are highly interdependent, leading to either virtuous or vicious cycles, and to corresponding increases or decreases in both elements. Discovery of the virtuous cycle explains why team members wished to collaborate by stepping up to exercise influence.

**How** do designated followers exercise leadership in business teams (move between followership and leadership)?

Designated followers emerged into a leading role by stepping up to exercise leadership, by taking charge of or initiating numerous variations of the hierarchy of ten influencing behaviours identified, and switching from following to leading roles. This emergence of designated followers into the role of leading was done through the basic social process of role fluidity. The role-switching mechanism provides a plausible perspective on how designated followers alternate between leading and following, depending on context.

Answers to the supplementary research questions are outlined below.

**SUBSIDIARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

**RQa: Can more than one member be leader simultaneously?**

This role-switching mechanism also provides insights into how multiple (more than one) members occupy the leading role at the same time. It emerged that leadership, depending on context, was often undertaken concurrently. This research implies that leadership is distributed, with the role-switching mechanism, in particular, providing insights as to how concurrent leader emergence occurs in distributed leadership contexts.
RQb: What happens to a designated leader when another member assumes leadership?

As outlined above, leadership was often undertaken concurrently. In cases where a designated leader and designated follower(s) exercised leadership concurrently, the study reflected both appointed and emergent leadership occurring. In cases where only designated followers exercised leadership, the appointed leader was most often in a following role and occasionally in a disengaging role. The present research clearly identifies the distinction between (emergent) leadership and appointed leaders.

In the present study, a number of important theoretical propositions that emerged that are outlined below. These important findings from the substantive field make a valuable contribution to the field of distributed leadership, followership and teams:

1. Team members seek two primary outcomes from team membership, namely collaboration and belonging. A previously undiscovered cyclical relationship between these two outcomes aids in the explanation of positive and negative effects of team member contribution;

2. Influencing plays a central role in these outcomes being met, and was central to the core category of role fluidity;

3. Members in the leading role contribute by taking charge of or initiating numerous variations of the hierarchy of ten influencing behaviours;

4. Communicating and listening are primary behaviours, vital also to all other influencing behaviours;

5. Coordinating and motivating are secondary behaviours, exercised frequently;

6. Committing, risking, mediating, facilitating, exemplifying, and encouraging, are situationally contingent behaviours;

7. Those in the leading role derive a sense of belonging when others respond to their influence; and
8. In autonomous decision-making business teams, situational expertise is often a source of indirect power and provides the ability to influence and exercise leadership.

Another key set of propositions that emerged from this study relate to the fact of almost every team member occupying a leading role at some time, through the exercise of influence:

1. All team members also occupy a following role;

2. The basic social process of role fluidity articulates the mechanism for how members step up to assume a leading role and step back into a following role to allow others to assume a leading role. Often a leadership struggle can also result in a member in the leading role stepping down, in a win-lose situation, or even possibly stepping out, if the member does not become a follower but rather becomes a disengaged member;

3. In addition to the leading and following roles, sometimes a member might occupy a third team role, the disengaged member. Disengaged members are either passive or, if they have been involved in a leadership struggle and step out, are sometimes hostile for a period of time. At that time their contribution is withheld and their sense of belonging is negligible.

The present research aims to challenge and clarify many of the commonly held views of team leadership:

1. Team leadership is not the domain of a single individual; rather, team leadership is distributed among team members, who exercise leadership through the influencing behaviours identified in the study;

2. Contrary to the notion that only one person can be leader at any time, it was discovered that leadership could be undertaken individually, sequentially and/or concurrently;
3. In addition, contrary to the notion that leadership is indivisible, it was discovered that leadership was distributed among team members.

The present research findings are encouraging, as they provide a fresh perspective on how leadership is distributed within a team setting. Role fluidity occurs as a consequence of individuals leading and following and occasionally disengaging. The conceptualization is that of leader (noun) and leading (verb) and the same with respect to follower and following. It is not constrained or disabled by notions of being designated as a leader or follower (title) i.e. by the current leader-follower ontological premise that reflects leadership as an input-process dynamic (Drath et al., 2008) but should rather be seen as an emergent process that might be distributed collectively between individuals within an entity and understood as an output linked to process. Distributed leadership is about sharing not shared leadership and response is prompted in an episodic manner. Pursuing this quantum of leadership notion will provide an exciting new focus for the leadership field and may not only help develop new theory but also greatly assist in future leadership development.
REFERENCES


References


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Appendix A - Operational definitions of key terms

**Analytical memo** - a document recording researcher reflections about relationships emerging between concepts during the process of data collection and analysis.

**Appointed leader** - see definition of designated leader.

**Appointmentship** - a descriptive term used to describe team members in a designated or appointed leadership role (Baruch, 1998).

**Autonomous decision-making teams** - in the substantive context, are formally organized teams that are given high autonomy and control over their tasks, including their work methods, schedules, meetings, and task assignments etc. (Hackman, 1986; Manz, 1992; Manz & Sims, 1993) Participation is voluntary with the aim in solve complex financial challenges within the substantive context.

**Basic social process** - is a process that occurs around the core category, and may/may not be present in any given grounded theory inquiry. If present the basic social process usually has at least 2 emergent stages (Glaser & Strauss, 1967)

**Belonging (sense of belonging)** - is a process of within-team acceptance that occurs when a team member feels their contribution is valued (Parry, 2014)

**Core category** - The core category is the main theme for the people in the setting and is usually a pattern of behaviour, which summarises what is emerging from the data. Another criterion for the core category includes its frequent occurrence and takes more time to saturate than other categories (Glaser, 1978).

**Consensus** - in a decision-making team context, a situation where all members agree that in consideration of all the circumstances and options, the decision is appropriate.

**Collaborating** - to work together, especially in a joint intellectual effort.

**Committing (influencing behaviour)** - is demonstrating total commitment to team outcomes and all team members often having an inspiring effect on other team members and is often worthy of emulation.

**Commitment** - in the context of decisions made by a team, an intention by team members to support the decision, and follow through with its implementation.

**Communicating** - Initiating or taking charge of the information exchange processes of the team with the aim to influence the service and facilitation of team functions, processes and goals.
Concurrent leadership - in the context of decision-making team, is where more than one team member is exercising influence simultaneously. Often described interchangeably as concurrent, multiple members in a leading role etc.

Confidential interview - a qualitative research technique, in which research subjects are (with their consent) asked a range of confidential question by the researcher, and the interview is recorded for data analysis purposes (Bryman, 1988)

Coordinating (influencing behaviour) - is aimed at managing team resources, including financial and human capital, to complete team tasks and achieving team goals.

Cyclical relationship - a relationship characterized by recurring cycles. A positive relationship is described as a virtuous cycle, while a negative cycle is described as a vicious cycle.

Data codes/ coding - a qualitative research technique, in which the content of researcher observation notes and transcripts of interviews is organised and categorised at an increasing level of abstraction

Disengaged members - describes some members who, despite their voluntary participation, were disengaged from several of the tasks of their team often hardly participating or preferred to stand aside, taking any opportunity to disengage from team tasks. These members were not occupying leading or following roles but rather a third role of nominal or disengaged member.

Designated leader - in a decision-making team context, is an individual appointed to a leadership position often described as: (1) a designated leader (2) a formal leader (3) a leader in title (Baruch, 1998; Bedian & Hunt, 2006)

Distributed leadership - in a decision-making team context, is defined as intentional influencing of others that is exercised by multiple members, towards a common goal, through a range of influencing behaviours that emerge over time according to context and member capability (Parry, 2014)

Dyad - two or more points (nodes), which exchange energy between each other in a constant and predictable way (Salas et al., 2005)

Emergent leadership - is a type of leadership in which a team member is not appointed or elected to the leadership role; rather, leadership emerges (over time) as a result of the group's interaction. It could be momentary or for longer periods depending on how long the team member is able to exercise influence (Parry, 2014)

Encouraging (influencing behaviour) - is described as providing confidence in team members by being supportive of other team members in the efforts.
Environment (influencing behaviour) - in an organisational context, all of the external factors that constitute to competitive and operational setting (for example laws and regulations; competition dynamics; market characteristics; capital market settings; client needs)

Exemplifying (influencing behaviour) - is described as leading by example by clearly showing the way to other team members.

Facilitating (influencing behaviour) - is described as facilitating the contribution of ideas of characteristically quieter members in a team.

Followership - is defined as the duty of a person to a leader (s) and to members of a group to perform his or her role so as to benefit the group and to achieve the common purpose. (Vondey, 2012)

Followership influence - is defined by the nature of influence as exercised by non-designated leaders (followers) in the substantive context.

Formal leadership - refers to designated leaders, appointed leaders, appointmentship

Grounded theory - a research methodology in which theory emerges from, and is grounded in the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967)

Hierarchy of Influencing Behaviours - is defined as an arrangement of categories of respective influencing behaviours in a hierarchical order of primary, secondary and situationally contingent (see related definitions)

Implications for practitioners - is defined as possible conclusions that can be drawn from the research that may not be explicitly stated.

Individual or sole leader - refers to a single team member is a leadership position

Influencing behaviour - is described as an act or power of producing an effect, ie to influence, without apparent exertion of force or direct exercise of command

Informal leadership - refers to non-designated leaders

Knowledge industries - industries in which the key source of competitive advantage is vested in the knowledge/ expertise held by individual employees (Rooney et al., 2010)

Leadership - is defined as intentionally influencing others towards a common goal in a non-coercive manner. (Parry, 2008; Yukl, 2012)

Listening (influencing behaviour) - is defined as paying attention to the communication of other team members.
**Management** - a team member who is in a formal or designated leadership position. Also see designated leader, appointed leader, appointmentship.

**Mediating (influencing behaviour)** - Reducing or eliminating conflict between members and restoring relationships.

**Motivating (influencing behaviour)** - is defined as promoting and sustaining individual performance levels thereby contributing positively to team outcomes. Seeking to enhance sense of belonging.

**Multiple members** - refers to more than one member

**Multiple leaders** - refers to more than one team member being in the leading role simultaneously. Also referred to as concurrent leadership

**Non-designated leader** - in a decision-making team context, is an individual with no formal appointment to a leadership position often described as: (1) a non-designated leader (2) an informal leader (3) an emergent leader (Baruch, 1998; Bedian & Hunt, 2006)

**Nominal members** - used interchangeably with disengaged member

**Non-hierarchical** - describes a constrained hierarchy, with roles being described as egalitarian in nature.

**Organisation (noun)** - a business, company, corporation or concern, which comprises members, and has an identifiable purpose, structure, culture and systems

**Participant observation** - a qualitative research technique, in which research subjects are observed by the researcher in their normal / natural field setting (Bryman, 1988)

**Primary Influencing Behaviours** - these played a major role in other influencing behaviors and were essential in most, if not all team situations; teams could not be sustained without these influencing behaviors.

**Protocols** - is defined as a set of rules governing the exchange or transmission of information between related parties (Salas et al., 2006).

**Readings of data** - a qualitative research technique, in which coded data are analysed at progressively higher levels of abstraction, to identify linkages and relationships between concepts and phenomena (Parry, 2002)

**Risking (influencing behaviour)** - is defined as a willingness to take actions (collectively for the team) under difficult circumstances, thereby attempting to produce a positive outcome while facing uncertainty.
Appendix A – Operation definitions of key terms

**Role fluidity** - is the basic social process that explains how team members switch between the three identified roles. This is also the core category of the present study.

**Secondary Influencing Behaviours** - these behaviours were important in most team situations and, in their absence, teams functioned less efficiently or effectively.

**Shared leadership** - indicates a context where leadership is broadly distributed, such that people within a team and organization lead each other. In the current study, the distribution of leadership is uneven.

**Situational expertise** - skill or knowledge in a particular area (Hackman, 2004)

**Situationally Contingent Influencing Behaviours** – is described as behaviours that were situation dependent, emerging as important in certain contexts but not in others.

**Story line** - a qualitative research technique, in which the researcher establishes an evolving narrative to describe the relationships and phenomena which progressively emerge during an iterative data collection and analysis process (Bryman, 1988)

**Substantive context** - the context in which the study took place

**Team** - A team is a particular type of group with three features distinguishing teams from groups: (1) Team member interdependence (2) Communication (information exchange) (3) Finite lifespan (Salas et al., 2000)

**Team role** - is defined as a pattern of expectations which apply to a particular social position and which normally persist independently of the personalities occupying the position. (Sieber, 1974)

**Team performance** - is described as the act of how well the team performed

**Team process** - are defined as members’ interdependent acts that convert inputs to outcomes through cognitive, verbal, and behavioral activities directed toward organizing task-work to achieve collective goals. (Marks et al., 2001)

**Titular leader** - see definition of designated leader
Appendix B - Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol

Researcher: Ian Bower     BUHREC Protocol Number: BL - EC 12-15
Principal Supervisor: Professor Ken Parry
Project Title: A Grounded Theory Study of Distributed Leadership in Business Teams

1. Pre-Interview

This procedure will be completed prior to the interview commencing.

1.1 Obtain express consent for participation from the informant and the General Manager.

Prospective informants (all participants) to provide express consent to participate in the research. Consent will also be sought from the General Manager and they will not be included in the sample if this is not obtained.

Purpose of study: To obtain an understanding of team behaviors in the context leadership/followership.

Explain how the informant has been selected. Explain that, if selected for interviews, the informants will participate in an interview which will take around 1 hour.

Set-up interview time and place that is convenient to informant.

1.2 On meeting the informant, reconfirm continued willingness to participate.
Remind the informant of the reason for the research. Remind the informants that they may terminate the interview at any time and may also choose not to answer any particular question.

Explain that the research procedures have been subject to Ethics Committee scrutiny and that all identifying information will be kept confidential and secure.

Advise the informants that their advice as to the accuracy of data collected from them will be sought and that they will be provided with a summary of the final research findings.

Explain the purpose of audio recording and request permission for the interview to be recorded.

The informant should be shown where the pause button is and invited to feel free to use it at any time during the interview. (The interviewer should be aware that these initial exchanges serve to establish rapport with the informant)

2. **Interview**

The interview will consist of these main stages:

- Establishing rapport (largely pre-interview activity)
- Opening question
- Keeping the informant talking
- Probe questions related to observations
- Summary

2.1 Establishing rapport

Once the preliminaries as explained above have been completed, a working level of rapport ought to have been established. Rapport is developed during the remainder of the interview through attentive behavior from the interviewer.

2.2 Opening question

This defines the general area of interest and serves to get the informant talking. “I’m interested in finding out about team member behaviors and their relevance to leadership. Please tell me how you experienced these during recent team meetings”
2.3 Keeping the informant talking

The interviewer is to attempt to keep the informant talking without asking any specific questions. This could be achieved by the interviewer demonstrating, by both verbal and non-verbal behavior, that the informant has 100% attention. Techniques include nodding and smiling as appropriate, pausing and looking expectant, and repeating the last word or phrase with a questioning intonation as required.

The interviewer is reminded that it is the informant’s views and informants own language that is sought.

2.4 Probe Questions

The probe questions will be asked as they relate to leadership behavior in the team meeting. Probe questions attached.

2.5 Summary

The interviewer should ask the informant’s for a summary of the key points of they have discussed.

In concluding the interview the interviewer should:

- Ask the informant whether there are any final questions that the informant would like answered;
- Remind the informants what will happen to the data and how they can access it;
- Confirm that the informant will be asked to verify the accuracy of the data once notes have been prepared and will be provided with a find of the research summary once completed; and
- Thank the informant for their time and their willingness to be interviewed.

3. Post-Interview

These steps should be followed on conclusion of the interview.
3.1 Assign a code to the interview <Interviewer’s initials> <informant’s initials – surname first><day month><year>

3.2 Code added to consent form
Only place that code and actual identification is together.

Code added to any notes, audio recording, transcript. (Consent forms to be placed in separate file and stored in locked cabinet different from case database.)

3.3 Interviewers Summary
Within half-an-hour, but not earlier than 10 minutes after the interview, the interviewer shall make a written note of:

- anything that was particularly memorable during the interview;
- methodological successes / difficulties;
- any themes which emerged repeatedly or ‘reading between the lines’.

INTERVIEW PROMPT / PROBE QUESTIONS

“I’m interested in finding out about team member behaviors and their relevance to leadership. Please tell me how you experienced these during recent team meetings.”

- Who exercised influence in your team?
- How did they do that?

With respect to the recent meeting:

- How do you recall that affected your behavior in the team?
- Who do you think was leading during this period?
- Why do you say that?
- Did you also make a contribution?
- How did you do that?
Appendix C - Interpersonal Feedback Form

Confidential: Interpersonal Feedback Form

Participant Code: _________ Team: _________ Day: _________
Time: _________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team Member</th>
<th>Describe influencing behaviours in team meeting *</th>
<th>How do you see this team member in relation to leading / following?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Behavioral actions can include positive, negative or no/ limited contribution.
Confidential: Leadership Feedback Form

Participant Code: ________ Team: _______ Day: ______________

Time: ___________ Designated Leader: ___________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who Exercised Leadership?</th>
<th>Why do you say this?</th>
<th>How did this impact you?</th>
<th>Rank**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Please rank those you recognise as exercising leadership from 1 for most influential. Some individuals may share the same rank.
# Appendix D - Coding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core Category Role Fluidity</td>
<td>RF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about context</td>
<td>RF\Context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments relating to locations</td>
<td>RF\Context\Location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about meetings</td>
<td>RF\Context\Location\Meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>RF\Context\Location\Meetings\Burleigh</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<td>RF\Context\Location\Head Office\Meeting1</td>
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<td>RF\Context\Location\Head Office\Meeting2</td>
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<td>Comments relating to follow up discussion</td>
<td>RF\Context\Location\Follow up discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments relating to breakfast meeting</td>
<td>RF\Context\Location\Breakfast meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments relating to team</td>
<td>RF\Context\Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments relating to working together as a team</td>
<td>RF\Context\Team\working well together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about level of communication in team</td>
<td>RF\Context\Team\communicative group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about team in general</td>
<td>RF\Context\Team\general comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about team processes</td>
<td>RF\Context\Team\group process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about level of acquaintance</td>
<td>RF\Context\Team\knowing each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about power in team</td>
<td>RF\Context\Team\power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about power relating to expertise</td>
<td>RF\Context\Team\power\expert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about power relating to person</td>
<td>RF\Context\Team\power\referent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about team relationships</td>
<td>RF\Context\Team\relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about sense of sufficiency</td>
<td>RF\Context\Team\sufficient as a group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about team being an excellent team</td>
<td>RF\Context\Team\well performing group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comments about team as a team of leaders</td>
<td>RF\Context\Team\team of leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about Influencing Behaviours</td>
<td>RF\Infl Behav</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Code - influencing behaviours critical to team functioning</td>
<td>RF\Infl Behav\Primary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about communicating to influence - usually speaking</td>
<td>RF\Infl Behav\Primary\communicating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about communicating to influence - usually speaking - being vocal</td>
<td>RF\Infl Behav\Primary\communicating\vocalising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about communicating to influence through listening to others</td>
<td>RF\Infl Behav\Primary\listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Code - influencing behaviours important to team functioning</td>
<td>RF\Infl Behav\Secondary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comments about influencing marshalling of team resources towards goals</td>
<td>RF\Infl Behav\Secondary\coordinating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about influencing task by monitoring progress against plans</td>
<td>RF\Infl Behav\Secondary\coordinating\checking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commented about influencing task accuracy through questioning/restating understanding</td>
<td>RF\Infl Behav\Secondary\coordinating\clarifying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commented about influencing task progress by focusing resources and efforts</td>
<td>RF\Infl Behav\Secondary\coordinating\consolidate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about influencing task progress by selecting a course of action from alternatives</td>
<td>RF\Infl Behav\Secondary\coordinating\deciding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about executing elements of task</td>
<td>RF\Infl Behav\Secondary\coordinating\doing task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about assessing outcomes against objectives</td>
<td>RF\Infl Behav\Secondary\coordinating\evaluating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about how steps and resources to complete task</td>
<td>RF\Infl Behav\Secondary\coordinating\planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about providing solutions to problems/challenges</td>
<td>RF\Infl Behav\Secondary\coordinating\problem solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about selecting solution to pursue</td>
<td>RF\Infl Behav\Secondary\problem solving\deciding - decision making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about team contributing ideas to solve team challenges</td>
<td>RF\Infl Behav\Secondary\problem solving\provided ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about checking own progress on sub-tasks</td>
<td>RF\Infl Behav\Secondary\coordinating\reconfirm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about seeking assistance to achieve sub-task</td>
<td>RF\Infl Behav\Secondary\coordinating\seeks guidance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about influencing to raise or sustaining individual performance / contribution / collaboration</td>
<td>RF\Infl Behav\Secondary\motivating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about motivating through showing concern for team members</td>
<td>RF\Infl Behav\Secondary\motivating\caring</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comments about showing concern through affirming capability / ability to achieve</td>
<td>RF\Infl Behav\Secondary\motivating\encouraging</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comments about showing concern through highlighting team</td>
<td>RF\Infl Behav\Secondary\motivating\supporting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about coping in the context of unsuccessful efforts</td>
<td>RF\Infl Behav\Secondary\motivating\dealing with failure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comments about individuals exhibiting very strong motivation</td>
<td>RF\Infl Behav\Secondary\motivating\driving force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about influencing the team to concentrate its efforts</td>
<td>RF\Infl Behav\Secondary\motivating\focuses team</td>
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<tr>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comments about influence being used to make members feel part of team</td>
<td>RF\Infl Behav\Secondary\motivating\including</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comments about influencing team cohesiveness</td>
<td>RF\Infl Behav\Secondary\motivating\including pull team together</td>
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<td>Comments about influencing through convincing, rather than instructing/ commanding</td>
<td>RF\Infl Behav\persuading</td>
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<td>Theoretical code - influencing behaviours less frequently used</td>
<td>RF\Infl Behav\Situationally Contingent</td>
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<td>Comments about influencing through total commitment to the task, the team and individuals</td>
<td>RF\Infl Behav\Situ\committing</td>
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<td>Comments about influencing through example - part of committing</td>
<td>RF\Infl Behav\Situ\committing\example</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comments about influencing through inspiration</td>
<td>RF\Infl Behav\Situ\committing\inspiring</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comments about influencing through facilitating quieter members' contribution</td>
<td>RF\Infl Behav\Situ\facilitating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about influencing reduction or elimination of conflict and restoring relationships</td>
<td>RF\Infl Behav\Situ\facilitating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about influencing through willingness to take actions on behalf of team in face of uncertainty</td>
<td>RF\Infl Behav\Situ\risking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about influencing through in uncertainty to produce a positive outcome</td>
<td>RF\Infl Behav\Situ\risking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about reducing conflict</td>
<td>RF\Infl Behav\ Situ\ mediating</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comments about eliminating conflict and restoring relationships</td>
<td>RF\Infl Behav\ Situ\mediating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about providing confidence in team members</td>
<td>RF\Infl Behav\ Situ\encouraging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about being supportive of other team members in their efforts</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about leading by example to other team members</td>
<td>RF\Infl Behav\ Situ\exemplifying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about showing the way clearly to other team members</td>
<td>RF\Infl Behav\ Situ\exemplifying</td>
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<td>Definition</td>
<td>Code</td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about assuming responsibility to take action</td>
<td>RF\Initiating &amp; Taking Charge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about taking the first set of actions to address a task</td>
<td>RF\Initiating &amp; Taking Charge\initiating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about assuming responsibility for action/outcomes</td>
<td>RF\Initiating &amp; Taking Charge\taking charge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about assuming responsibility and issuing commands</td>
<td>RF\Initiating &amp; Taking Charge\taking charge\control</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comments about influencing through assuming responsibility and giving specific instructions</td>
<td>RF\Initiating &amp; Taking Charge\taking charge\directed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about establishing the rate at which tasks are performed</td>
<td>RF\Initiating &amp; Taking Charge\taking charge\pace-setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about changing between team roles</td>
<td>RF\Role Switching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about various team roles</td>
<td>RF\Role Switching\multiple roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about willingly moving into another role when role completed - no competition</td>
<td>RF\Role Switching\stepping back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about willingly moving into another role - after competition</td>
<td>RF\Role Switching\stepping down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about moving to a notional role - disengages from team</td>
<td>RF\Role Switching\stepping out</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comments about moving to notional role due to disinterest in team</td>
<td>RF\Role Switching\stepping out\lack of commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about moving to notional role and being negative</td>
<td>RF\Role Switching\stepping out\negative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comments on moving to notional role, being negative, and also hostile</td>
<td>RF\Role Switching\stepping out\negative\threatening</td>
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<td>Comments about willingly moving into a role after identifying a need for a specific contribution</td>
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<td>Comments about different types of roles in the team</td>
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<td>Comments about members who are influenced by others and don't wish to influence others</td>
<td>RF\Team Roles\Following\not wanting to lead</td>
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<td>Definition</td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>Comments about members influenced by others who were seen as unimportant</td>
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<td>in the team</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Comments about members being influenced by others and not initiating or</td>
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<td>Comments about members being influenced but also querying person leading</td>
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<td>Comments about members intentionally influencing others toward a common</td>
<td>RF\Team Roles\Leading</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comments about what comprises influencing team and what comprises</td>
<td>RF\Team Roles\Leading\Leadership versus team-work</td>
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<tr>
<td>completing task</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comments about members who were designated as leader</td>
<td>RF\Team Roles\Leading\appointed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comments about influencing that was undertaken by different members in</td>
<td>RF\Team Roles\Leading\distributed</td>
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<tr>
<td>the team</td>
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<td>Comments about individuals who exercised substantial influence</td>
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<td>RF\Team Roles\Leading\dominating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about influence that was exercised in different contexts</td>
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<td>opposite to forceful</td>
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<td>Comments about influence from all team members</td>
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<td>Comments about formal managerial tasks - distinct from leadership</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about members who were neither leading nor following</td>
<td>RF\Team Roles\Disengaged</td>
</tr>
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<td>Comments about notional members who did not willingly engage</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about notional members being seen as having no impact on team</td>
<td>RF\Team Roles\Dis\insignificant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Code</td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about notional members not making a contribution to team task</td>
<td>RF\Team Roles\Dis\not following</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments about notional members who were a burden to the team</td>
<td>RF\Team Roles\Dis\not following\passengers</td>
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### Appendix E - Conceptual Hierarchy of Abstraction from the Present Research

| **Basic Social Process** | **Role Fluidity**  
(Chapter 7, 8) |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| **Near-Core Categories** | **Hierarchy of Influencing Behaviours**  
(Primary, Secondary, Situationally Contingent)  
*(Chapters 4, 5, 6)* |
| **Distribution of Team Roles**  
(Collaborating-Belonging Cycle, Concurrent Leadership, Team roles)  
*(Chapter 7)* |
| **Lower-level Categories** | **Initiating / Taking Charge** | **Protocols of Influence** | **Influence Reciprocity** | **Team Performance** | **Team Roles** | **Task Complexity** | **Context** | **Emergent - Informal Leadership** | **Task Expertise** |

### Conceptual Outline of Findings from the Present Research

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</table>
| * Influencing behaviours discussed under the following topics:
| Overview; Definition; Protocols, Influencing and relationship to other behaviours; Team performance; Leadership and Summary of findings |

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A GROUNDED THEORY STUDY OF DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP IN BUSINESS TEAMS

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### Appendix E – H. A. M.

#### Chapter 6

**Findings: Situationally Contingent Influencing Behaviours**

**Introduction**

Discussions of situationally contingent influencing behaviours (using the same format as in Chapters 4 and 5)

1. **Committing**: *
2. **Risking**: *
3. **Mediating**: *
4. **Facilitating**: *
5. **Exemplifying**: *
6. **Encouraging**: *

**Summary**

#### Chapter 7

**Findings: Core Category of Role Fluidity**

**Introduction**

**Team Roles**

**Collaborating and Belonging Cycle**

**Leading and Leadership**

**Leadership Contributions / Emergent Leadership**

**Following and Followership**

**Disengaged Members**

**Context**

**Concurrent Leadership**

**Core Category of Role Fluidity**

**Summary**

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#### Chapter 8

**Role Fluidity: A Grounded Theory of Distributed Leadership in Business Teams**

**Introduction**

**Overview of Research Study**

A Substantive Theory of Distributed Leadership in Business Teams

**Properties of Distributed Leadership**

**Explanation of Concurrent Leadership (Metaphor)**

**Summary**

#### Chapter 9

**Conclusion**

**Introduction**

Theoretical Significance and Contribution of the Research

**Implications for Practitioners**

**Limitations**

**Implications for Future Research**

**Summary**

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Appendix F - Example of Research Memo

Research Memo, 20.8.2014

The leadership process is so subtle and understated in nature. Leadership is informally assumed, emergent in nature, driven by situational expertise and is unevenly distributed. Many of the leadership functions that were identified, as well as comments made about participation of all team members, seemed to have the purpose of enhancing the sense of inclusion. Once teams had developed a sense of unity, there seemed to be a tendency to downplay the roles of the individual and focus on the outcomes, usually successful, of the team as a whole.

Documentary evidence from the Interpersonal Feedback Forms and Leadership Feedback Forms reflect the elation that teams had been successful in their endeavours. It was clear that no individuals had been responsible for the ‘leadership’ of the task in question but that it was rather a team effort. On one occasion, it was apparent in Team 4 that if two members were combined, they would make the perfect leader. One has the necessary skillset in the task and the other has the ability to get the team to be completely engaged in the process.

The main or primary functions identified are communicating and listening. These behaviours are core to all team functions. Communicating processes involved ensuring that everyone was aware of what was going on and that all members have the opportunity to contribute ideas or skills to the team’s work. Listening has emerged as an individual influencing behaviour separate from communicating and involves paying attention to the communication of other team members. These two functions seem to go hand in hand in a cyclical manner to foster inclusion of all team members.

All informants repeatedly highlighted that individual team members had a primary aim of collaborating with other team members in some way that was valued by other team members, in order also to derive a sense of belonging. Team members expected...
members to contribute, which in turn fostered a sense of belonging. Influence was one contribution that team members could make to the team. There is a cyclical process in play here and further enquiry is needed to better articulate how this works.